



NEWS

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Air District Prepares for Summer Heat, Even During the Rainy Season

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is doing serious prep work for smog season

San Francisco, CA -- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) is rolling out new programs to encourage clean air practices this spring and summer.

In an unprecedented effort to reduce smog and improve overall quality of life in the Bay Area, the Air District will join the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and numerous Bay Area transit operators to reduce single passenger motor vehicle trips, particularly on Spare the Air days. Building on last year's successful, Spare the Air RIDE BART campaign, this summer's campaign will expand the number of transit agencies participating in the five free morning commute program on Spare the Air weekdays (excluding holidays). The Air District is working hard to prepare the public now for the important role they play on Spare the Air days. The single largest source of pollution in the Bay Area is motor vehicles.

"By riding transit and reducing other polluting behaviors, people in the Bay Area can make smart, healthy choices with direct benefits to themselves, their friends and family and the environment," said Air District Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. "The size of this effort illustrates the importance of this issue and a shift in approach by the collaborating agencies."

In addition to the Free Transit campaign, the Air District has other air quality initiatives directed to the general public:

- Three community based lawn mower buy back programs in May at Home Depot locations in Sunnyvale (May 7), Pleasanton (May 14) and Concord (May 21). Residents can retire a gasoline lawn mower in exchange for a \$100 rebate on a new electric mower.
- An ongoing light-duty motor vehicle retirement program that offers a \$650 incentive to scrap 1985 and older vehicles.

Although the Bay Area has remained one of the cleanest of the five major urban air basins in California, there are still several days annually when air pollution exceeds the federal and state air quality standards. The Air District relies on the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index or AQI, to convey air quality readings to the public using an easy-to-understand numbering scale that tells whether or not the air is healthy to breathe.

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2004 was the cleanest year since the start of air quality monitoring in the 1960s in spite of a growth in population of 2.3 million people and 2.5 million additional vehicles on the road since 1969. The improvement is due to stringent air pollution controls on industrial sources, increasingly cleaner motor vehicles and the cooperation of the general public in programs like Spare the Air.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is a regional agency chartered with protecting air quality and public health in the Bay Area. For more information about

- Air District programs, call 415-771-6000 or visit www.baaqmd.gov.
- to sign up for advance 24 hour notice of Spare the Air days, visit www.sparetheair.org and click on AirAlerts.
- to plan your clean air commute, visit www.511.org or call 511.

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