



NEWS

**For Immediate Release
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Winter Spare the Air Alert in effect for Friday, December 25 *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited on Christmas Day*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the third *Winter Spare the Air Alert* of the season for Friday, December 25, 2009, which bans burning wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors.

Stagnant weather conditions and wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves in the Bay Area, will bring the region into the “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” category of the U.S. EPA’s Air Quality Index. Children, adults, and especially people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, are advised to limit outdoor exertion.

“Air quality is unfortunately forecast to be unhealthy on Christmas Day, and the Air District is taking steps to protect public health by issuing a *Winter Spare the Alert*,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Please remember this holiday season that children, the elderly and those with heart and lung problems are most susceptible to the harmful effects of wood smoke.”

During this *Winter Spare the Air Alert*, it is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves and inserts, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices. Homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt.

The public must check before they burn during the *Winter Spare the Air* season which runs from November 1 through February 28. The daily burn status can be found:

- On the Air District Web sites: www.baaqmd.gov or www.sparetheair.org
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4-NO-BURN (complaints can also be filed via the hotline)
- By signing up for AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org or by signing up for phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515.

Wood smoke is a major source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins such as dioxin, which is linked to increased cancer rates in adults. In the winter, wood smoke contributes about one-third of the harmful particulate pollution in the air.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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