



MEDIA RELEASE

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A Winter Spare the Air Alert is in effect today Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* which bans wood burning both indoors and outdoors until this alert is lifted.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy. During this *Winter Spare the Air Alert*, it is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to burn wood in their fireplaces, woodstoves and inserts, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices.

"This Winter Spare the Air Alert protects all of us, but especially those experiencing high pollution levels today and this evening," said Jack Broadbent, Air District executive officer. "It's important for Bay Area residents to refrain from burning while this Winter Spare the Air Alert is in effect, to protect their health and the health of the community."

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 from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area contributes about one-third of the harmful fine particulate pollution.

Under the new rule, through the end of February 2009, those who burn wood during *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* will receive a written warning for their first violation. A second violation could result in fines that range from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the severity of the infraction. People who burn wood as their sole source of heat are exempt from the regulation.

The new rule also bans the sale of non-EPA-certified wood-burning devices in the Bay Area, and forbids the installation of such devices in new housing construction or re-models. It places year-round prohibitions on dirty chimney smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves. For more information about the rule, see www.baaqmd.gov and www.sparetheair.org.

The daily air-quality status and details on exemptions from the Wood Burning Rule 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
- By signing up for AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org or by signing up for phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515.

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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