



MEDIA ADVISORY

**For Immediate Release
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Winter Spare the Air Alert 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* today which bans burning wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors, until the alert is lifted.

“Although the Bay Area is experiencing spring-like weather, particulate pollution has reached unhealthy levels,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Particulate pollution is associated with a multitude of serious health risks, and is particularly harmful to children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems.”

Winter Spare the Air Alerts often occur when there is an inversion - a layer of warm air that acts as a lid over a layer of cooler air. During the winter, inversions most commonly form in the evening and overnight when the ground cools the layer of air closest to the earth.

“Some Bay Area residents may experience difficulty breathing on days like today,” said Dr. Scott Campbell, attending physician with Kaiser Permanente San Francisco’s Emergency Department. “Studies have indicated that hospitalizations and emergency room visits increase after episodes of high particulate matter.”

It is important for people to check before they burn each day until they hear that the alert is lifted. Residents can check before they burn by calling 1-877-4-NO-BURN or they can sign up for email AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org or Phone Alerts by calling 1-800-430-1515.

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 use their fireplaces, woodstoves and inserts, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices.

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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