



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Winter Spare the Air season ends**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air District's 2009-10 Winter Spare the Air season ended February 28.

The season began November 1, 2009. This was the second winter season that the Air District enforced a regulation that restricts wood burning in fireplaces, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits throughout the Bay Area when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy.

"Historically, our winter air quality is dirtiest during the holidays, but this year we were able to avoid exceeding the health standard by calling an alert on Christmas," said Jack Broadbent, Air District executive officer. "This program is working and the public deserves the credit for both recognizing the hazards of wood smoke and reducing their burning."

More than 100,000 Bay Area residents are signed up for email AirAlerts, 16,000 receive phone alerts and nearly 400,000 calls were placed to the 877-4-NO BURN line to check the daily burn status. Air District survey data preliminary results indicate that 24 percent of Bay Area households reduced their wood burning because of the Winter Spare the Air program and 70 percent of respondents indicated that they supported the Wood Burning Rule.

Between November and February, the Air District declared seven *Winter Spare the Air Alerts*. This season's seven alerts fell below the historic seasonal average of approximately 15-20 days of unhealthy air quality. The District exceeded the national air quality health standard six days\* this season.

A total of 2,355 complaints were received by the Air District during the four-month winter season. Air quality inspectors patrolled Bay Area neighborhoods and 310 warning letters were sent to residents who were observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule. To date, eight tickets have been issued. A listing of complaints and warning letters issued by county is as follows:

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**Complaints by County**

Alameda County	360
Contra Costa County	373
Marin County	488
Napa County	83
San Francisco County	96
San Mateo County	225
Santa Clara County	457
Solano County	43
Sonoma County	230

**TOTAL 2,355**

**Warning Letters by County**

Alameda County	21
Contra Costa County	48
Marin County	65
Napa County	33
San Francisco County	0
San Mateo County	27
Santa Clara County	28
Solano County	11
Sonoma County	77

**TOTAL 310**

The rule still requires, on a year-round basis, that residents who burn in a fireplace or outdoor fire pit burn cleanly using dry, seasoned firewood and not burn garbage, leaves or other material that would cause excessive smoke. Residents that exceed the visible smoke provision of the Wood Burning Rule could still be subject to an Air District citation and ticket.

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. Particulate matter is a dangerous pollutant that is linked to respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis and lung disease. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area contributes to the harmful particulate pollution in the air.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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*\*Data not official yet*