



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 30, 2010

CONTACT: Kristine Roselius
415-749-4647 (office)
415.519.5419 (cell)

Winter Spare the Air Alert in effect for Wednesday, December 1 *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s first *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Wednesday, December 1, which bans burning wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors.

“Wood burning is the leading cause of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area during the winter months,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Smoke from one person’s fire pollutes the air around surrounding neighbors’ homes.”

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy due to weather conditions that will trap the smoke in the air close to the ground. 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.

Wood smoke is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as hazardous soot 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 soot in the air. Wood smoke can cause breathing difficulties in many individuals, especially children, seniors and those with heart or lung conditions

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.

Those who burn during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* will receive a warning for the first violation; a second violation is subject to a \$400 ticket. The ticket amount will increase with any subsequent violations. Residents and businesses that burn wood as their only source of heat are exempt from the regulation.

There are also year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves.

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

#