



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Prevent a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* this Christmas** ***Residents asked to reduce wood burning***

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air District is asking the public to voluntarily curb wood burning this weekend to avoid a Winter Spare the Air Alert, and to ensure that all residents have a healthy holiday weekend.

"This is the time of year where many residents choose to burn wood in their fireplaces but this creates unhealthy air both inside and outside the home" said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "We're asking residents to give the gift of clean air to their families and cut back on wood burning."

During the holidays, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area can trigger asthma attacks making it difficult for people to breathe, especially children, seniors and those with heart or lung conditions. 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.

"When wood smoke is inhaled, it is absorbed into the lungs and blood stream and can decrease lung function, irritate the airways, aggravate asthma and chronic bronchitis, and increase the severity of other respiratory illnesses," said Peg Strub, chief of the Department of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology for Kaiser Permanente San Francisco.

If air quality is predicted to be unhealthy over the holiday weekend, the Air District will issue a Winter Spare the Air Alert by 2 pm the day before the alert is in effect. During a Winter Spare the Air Alert the burning of wood, manufactured logs or any other solid fuel is prohibited.

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](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or [www.sparetheair.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about *Spare the Air*, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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