



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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***Winter Spare the Air* Season Begins November 1**

SAN FRANCISCO – November 1 marks the start of the *Winter Spare the Air* season when burning wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors, is illegal when the Bay Area Air Quality Management District calls a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*.

Alerts are called when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy due to weather conditions that trap the smoke close to the ground. The season runs from November 1, 2011, through February 29, 2012.

“Wood burning is a major source of soot, the most harmful air pollution in the Bay Area in terms of its impact on public health,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “It is vitally important for Bay Area residents to check before they burn this winter and to reconsider the way they heat their homes.”

“Breathing in soot from wood burning can wreak havoc on your lungs,” said Jane Warner, President of the American Lung Association of California. “When you burn wood, not only are you exposing yourself to this hazardous pollutant, but you’re exposing your whole neighborhood.”

Fine particulate pollution or soot from wood burning fires is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

Wintertime weather conditions can cause soot to build up and reach unhealthy levels. If air quality is forecast to be unhealthy, a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* will be called for the next full calendar day. During an alert, the use of wood-burning devices, including fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits is forbidden.

Bay Area residents can check before they burn by:

- Calling 1-877-4NO-BURN
- Visiting www.sparetheair.org or www.baaqmd.gov
- Signing up for automatic e-mail AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org
- Signing up for automatic phone alerts by calling 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. There are also year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves. To report a suspected violation, residents may call 1-877-4NO-BURN or visit www.baaqmd.gov.

An exemption is available for residents and businesses that burn wood as their sole source of heat and have no other permanently installed heating source.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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