



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2011

CONTACT: Aaron Richardson
415.749.4900

Winter Spare the Air Alert in effect for Wednesday, December 7 *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 7, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

"Cold, still weather will cause wood smoke pollution to build up to unhealthy levels tomorrow," said Jean Roggenkamp, deputy air pollution control officer of the Air District. "Exposure to wood smoke, like cigarette smoke, has been linked to increased frequency and severity of respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis and lung disease."

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.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season which runs from November 1 through February 29. 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 phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515

Wood smoke is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins which are 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 particulate pollution in the air.

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

###