



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Ralph Borrmann
415.749.4900

Air District asks public not to burn wood on Thursday and Friday ***Wood burning is not illegal, but strongly discouraged***

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is recommending that Bay Area residents not burn wood in their fireplaces or woodstoves on Thursday, December 22 and Friday, December 23, to prevent air quality from becoming unhealthy.

A *Winter Spare the Air Alert* is NOT in effect on Thursday or Friday and wood burning is not illegal, but strongly discouraged.

"The weather is once again trapping wood smoke pollution in the Bay Area the way cigarette smoke used to fill restaurants, bars and airplanes 30 years ago," said Jack Broadbent, Executive Officer of the Bay Area Air District. "The inversion layer, coupled with light winds, is like closing all the windows and doors and trapping the air pollution throughout the Bay Area."

The Bay Area is experiencing one of the driest December's on record. The current weather pattern is trapping wood smoke pollution over most of northern and central California including Reno, Nevada. Wood burning bans are in effect in the greater Sacramento County area and San Joaquin Valley. The long range forecast suggests a continuation of dry possibly cold weather through the Christmas holiday. It is important for Bay Area residents to check each day before they burn and make plans for alternate heat while the pollution trapping pattern persists.

Wood smoke is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area. It contains harmful pollutants such as soot and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins such as dioxin. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves in the Bay Area contributes about one-third of the harmful airborne soot pollution. Wood smoke can cause breathing difficulties for 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 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 by signing up for phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515.

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. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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