



Spare the Air Alert

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Air District issues third consecutive *Spare the Air Smog Alert* for Wednesday

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District issued the seventh *Spare the Air Health Alert* for smog in 2011.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy for the third day in a row tomorrow, Wednesday, September 21. There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place. The Air District encourages residents to drive less and reduce their energy use every day so pollution levels are lower, preventing health alerts when temperatures are high.

"This late seasonal hot spell is expected to create conditions for unhealthy air quality for the third day in a row," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "We're urging everyone to make clean air choices, such as taking public transportation, reducing energy use, and refraining from using gas-powered lawn equipment, to keep pollution levels down."

Motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, industrial emissions and household chemicals contain volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides that combine with oxygen in the presence of heat and sunlight to form ground-level ozone. Breathing ozone can cause throat irritation, congestion and chest pain. It can trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema.

Long-term exposure to ozone can reduce lung function. High levels of ozone pollution are particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. Vigorous outdoor exercise should be undertaken only in the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower. The Air District issues *Spare the Air Alerts* whenever air quality is forecast to reach unhealthy concentrations.

A list of simple things the public can do to make clean air choices every day:

- Bike to work or around town
- Take public transit
- Work at home or telecommute
- Carpool and link your errands to reduce driving
- Avoid using gas-powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers
- Reduce household energy use
- Don't use lighter fluid on the barbecue
- Avoid using aerosol spray cleaners, paints and hairspray

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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