



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Air District asks public not to burn wood on Thanksgiving** *Wood burning strongly discouraged but not illegal*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is recommending Bay Area residents not burn wood in their fireplaces or woodstoves on Thanksgiving Day to prevent air quality from becoming unhealthy.

A Winter Spare the Air Alert is NOT in effect on Thanksgiving Day and wood burning is not illegal, but strongly discouraged.

"Because stagnant weather and high pollution levels have persisted in the region, the Air District is asking that Bay Area residents not burn wood on Thanksgiving Day to help reduce pollution levels," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "To protect our families and neighbors from the hazards of wood smoke, please refrain from using fireplaces or wood stoves."

Two Winter Spare the Air Alerts were called earlier in the week due to a high pressure system and accompanying cold snap that have lingered across the region. These weather systems trap wood smoke close to the ground and allow fine particulate pollution to build up. While conditions have improved slightly, the region continues to have elevated levels of fine particulates.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe. Wood smoke is the major source of air pollution in the Bay Area in the wintertime and is especially harmful to children, the elderly and people with respiratory conditions.

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 phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515
- Via the Spare the Air iPhone and Android Apps

In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area is the single largest source of air pollution, contributing about one-third of the harmful fine particulate pollution in the air. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particulate accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://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](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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