



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***Spare the Air Smog Alert issued for today
Air quality exceedance yesterday expected to continue this afternoon***

SAN FRANCISCO – Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is changing the forecast issued for today and declaring today the first *Spare the Air Alert* for smog in 2013.

Due to impacts from the Northern California wildfires, elevated temperatures and lighter winds than expected, the region exceeded the health standard yesterday and is forecasting a second exceedance this afternoon.

There is no free transit today and there is no wood burning ban in place. The Air District recommends residents avoid outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day, when air quality is unhealthiest.

“These high temperatures and smoke from wildfires are creating hazy skies and unhealthy air in the region,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “It doesn’t take much to cause the region to experience unhealthy air which is why this summer, we are asking residents to leave their car at home at least twice a week - take transit, work from home, carpool or bike to work instead of driving alone.”

Spare the Air Alerts are issued when ozone pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone, or smog, can cause throat irritation, congestion, chest pain, trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. Long-term exposure to ozone can reduce lung function. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. When a *Spare the Air Alert* is issued, outdoor exercise should be done only in the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower.

Smog is formed when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides from motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, industrial emissions and household chemicals combine with oxygen in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Smoke from the Tehama and Butte county wildfires continues to plague the region causing higher than normal particulate matter levels and contributing to unhealthy air quality conditions throughout the Bay Area.

Residents can help *Spare the Air* by carpooling, taking transit, biking or walking instead of driving alone. Visit sparetheair.org or 511.org for more information about commute alternatives.

Residents can check for *Spare the Air Alerts* by:

- Visiting sparetheair.org
- Calling the toll-free hotline 1-800-HELPAIR (435-7247)
- Signing up for email AirAlerts at sparetheair.org
- Downloading the *Spare the Air* iPhone or Android app
- Connecting with *Spare the Air* on Facebook, Twitter or Google+

Cooler temperatures are expected tomorrow which will help improve air quality, however, the region may continue to experience smoke impacts from the wildfires.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baqmd.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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