



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Third consecutive Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Friday, January 18 *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's sixth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Friday, January 18, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Three consecutive alerts have been called this week due to a regional high pressure system that continues to build across the West Coast and will likely stay in place until early next week. Light, offshore winds and cold overnight temperatures are expected to trap wood smoke pollution near the ground, creating unhealthy air quality in the region.

"Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke has immediate health impacts for both residents inside the home and surrounding neighbors as well," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "When a Winter Spare the Air Alert is called, wood smoke pollution sits in our neighborhoods creating unhealthy air for Bay Area residents."

It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*. Homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt.

Starting this winter, first-time violators will be given the option to take a wood smoke awareness class, online or by mail, to learn about the hazards of wood smoke pollution in lieu of paying a penalty. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket and subsequent ticket amounts will be higher.

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 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
- 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 particles accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

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.

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