



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First *Winter Spare the Air* Alert of season called for Monday, November 25** *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s first *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Monday, November 25. This alert bans the burning of wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Just like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that are extremely harmful to breathe. This first *Winter Spare the Air Alert* has been called due to a cold, still weather pattern that has allowed air pollution to rise to a level that is expected to be unhealthy in the region.

“In the wintertime, wood smoke is a hazard to public health in the Bay Area,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “It’s the ‘other second-hand smoke’ with many of the same hazards as cigarette smoke, and it’s especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions.”

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.

First-time violators will be given the option of taking a wood smoke awareness class, online or by mail, to learn about the hazards of wood smoke pollution in lieu of paying a \$100 penalty. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket, and the ticket amount will increase for subsequent violations.

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 email 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 particles 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 *Winter Spare the Air*, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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