



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Tom Flannigan
415.215.7212 (cell)

Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Sunday, December 8 *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s fifth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Sunday, December 8, which bans the use of wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Cold weather accompanied by a high pressure system will blanket the Bay Area Sunday, trapping wood smoke close to the ground and allowing fine particulate pollution to rise to unhealthy levels.

"It's important that Bay Area residents do their part to protect their families and neighbors by not lighting up their fireplaces and wood stoves," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Wood smoke is the 'other second-hand smoke' - it's hazardous like cigarette smoke but has broader public health impacts when it builds up in our communities on cold, still days and nights."

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.

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 ticket. 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. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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