



NEWS

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Air District issues first 2014 Spare the Air Smog Alert *Commuters urged to find alternatives to driving alone*

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing its first Spare the Air Alert for smog in 2014.

Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Monday, May 12. High temperatures and low winds, paired with motor vehicle exhaust, are expected to cause unhealthy ozone accumulation in the Bay Area.

“As our economy improves and traffic congestion increases on Bay Area roads, it’s more important than ever to find a better way to work than driving alone,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “By driving less and choosing commute alternatives such as carpooling or taking transit, we can lower air pollution levels in the region and in our communities.”

The single most effective way for residents to reduce smog is to drive less. According to recent census data, more than 37 percent of Bay Area employees commute alone to work each day. Air District survey results also find that Bay Area employees are more likely to adopt alternatives to driving alone when encouraged to do so by their employer.

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.

To improve air quality, residents are encouraged to walk, bike, carpool or take transit instead of driving alone, not just on *Spare the Air* days, but every day. Residents can visit www.stacommutehints.org to find a list of commute programs and incentives available where they live and work.

To find out when a *Spare the Air Alert* is in effect, residents can register for email AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org, call 1(800) HELP-AIR, download the *Spare the Air* App or connect with *Spare the Air* on Facebook or Twitter.

There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baagmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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