



NEWS

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Another Spare the Air Alert called for Monday, June 9 *Commuters urged to find alternatives to driving alone*

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing its second consecutive Spare the Air Alert for smog and the fifth overall in 2014.

Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy again tomorrow, Monday, June 9. As high temperatures and low winds are expected to continue through the beginning of the week, motor vehicle exhaust is again expected to contribute to unhealthy levels of ozone pollution in the Bay Area.

“To avoid unhealthy air quality and congestion on Bay Area roads, it’s crucial that commuters find a better way to work than driving alone,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “The new Commuter Benefits Program may help many Bay Area residents save money on their commute. Employers with 50 or more full-time employees are now required to offer commute benefits to their employees that can help save employers and employees money while reducing air pollution and traffic congestion.”

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. Employers with 50 or more full-time employees must now register on the 511.org website and provide commuter options for their employees.

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.stacommuetips.org to find a list of commute programs and incentives available where they live and work. Employees can check with their employer to see what kind of commute benefit options are offered at their work site.

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.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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