



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

NEWS

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***Winter Spare the Air* Season Begins November 1**

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing the beginning of the *Winter Spare the Air* season on November 1, when it is illegal to burn wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors, when a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* is called.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains many carcinogenic substances which make the air harmful to breathe. Smoke pollution from fireplaces builds up inside homes as well as in yards and neighborhoods. The fine particulate pollution in wood smoke is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions, and is known to cause more than 90 percent of the premature deaths related to air pollution.

“Wood smoke is the other second hand smoke and is unhealthy to breathe causing immediate health impacts,” said Jack Broadbent, executive director of the Air District. “This winter we’re asking Bay Area residents to consider cleaner options than wood burning stoves or fireplaces to heat their homes.”

The Air District calls *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* when weather conditions trap pollution close to the ground and air quality is forecast to be unhealthy. The *Winter Spare the Air* season runs from November 1, 2014, through February 28, 2015.

Cold temperatures and calm winds during the winter season can cause wood smoke to build up in residential neighborhoods. When air quality is forecast to be unhealthy, a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* will be called for the next full calendar day. During an alert, the use of wood-burning devices, including fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits is forbidden.

Bay Area residents can check before they burn by:

- Calling 1-877-4NO-BURN
- Visiting www.sparetheair.org or www.baaqmd.gov
- Signing up for automatic e-mail AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org
- Signing up for automatic phone alerts by calling 1-800-430-1515
- Downloading the Spare the Air iPhone and Android apps.

First-time violators of the Wood Burning Rule will be encouraged to take a Wood Smoke Awareness course to learn more about the health impacts from wood smoke and the weather conditions that lead to unhealthy air quality in the winter. Those who choose not to take the course will receive a \$100 ticket. Second violations are subject to a \$500 ticket, with the ticket amount increasing for any subsequent violations. There are also year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke and burning garbage and other harmful materials like junk mail, plastic, wood pallets and more in fireplaces and woodstoves. Residents concerned about wood smoke pollution may call 1-877-4NO-BURN or visit www.baaqmd.gov to file a complaint or to get more information.

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Continued...Winter Spare the Air Season Begins...

An exemption is available for residents and businesses that burn wood as their sole source of heat and have no other permanently installed heating source.

Last season, 30 *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* were issued, helping the region uphold federal air quality standards on all but fifteen days during the season. The Air District received a total of 5,091 wood smoke complaints from residents and a total of 267 tickets were issued to residents who were observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule. A breakdown of how the 267 violations have been resolved is included below:

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|------------------------|---|
| Took Wood Smoke Class: | 173 |
| Paid Violation: | 15 |
| Granted Exemption: | 39 seasonal exemptions 20 long term exemptions |
| Active Cases: | 2 |
| Dismissed: | 18 |
| TOTAL | 267 |

This year the air district will re-examine the wood burning rule in order to ensure that we continue to make further progress in improving air quality, especially in highly impacted areas.

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

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