



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Seventh consecutive *Winter Spare the Air Alert* called for Thursday, January 8** *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

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

A high pressure weather system is still in place over the region, resulting in cold, calm weather, along with unhealthy air quality. The Bay Area exceeded the federal health standard on Tuesday. The resilient ridge of high pressure is preventing winds or a weather system from moving into the region to clean out the wood smoke build up. This weather system is forecast to remain in place throughout the week.

“Much of Northern California has been under a burn ban for the past week,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “We need everyone in the Bay Area to be vigilant and not burn in their fireplace or wood stove.”

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.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe inside and outside the home. 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.

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](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 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. One fireplace burning can pollute an entire neighborhood. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particulate 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.

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