



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Thursday, January 15 *Use of wood-burning devices is again prohibited*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's eighteenth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Thursday, January 15, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Harmful levels of particulate pollution are again expected to build in the Bay Area on Thursday. A lack of onshore winds will keep cleaner ocean air from moving air pollution out of the region. A gradual reduction in air pollution levels is expected this weekend.

"The unhealthy air we have experienced for much of 2015 is expected to make a brief comeback," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "The Air District will be revising our Wood Burning Rule this spring and consideration will need to be given to many new measures that can better control winter air pollution in the future."

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* to protect air quality around their homes and prevent further pollution build-up. Unhealthy air from the Central Valley may also contribute to unhealthy air in the Bay Area.

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. During the 2013-14 winter season, the Air District called a total of 30 Winter Spare the Air Alerts.

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. Homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt.

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

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Continued... Winter Spare the Air Alert...

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

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