



BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT

# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
October 28, 2015

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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 Sunday, November 1. During a *Winter Spare the Air* Alert, it is illegal to burn wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors, during the *Winter Spare the Air* season from November 1 – February 29.

This season, new requirements will go into effect. The Air District's Board of Directors unanimously adopted strong new provisions recently that will significantly strengthen the agency's wood burning regulation to further safeguard public health against the hazards of fine particle pollution. The changes to the Air District's wood-burning regulation tighten exemptions and requirements from the original rule which was adopted in July 2008.

"Air pollution from wood smoke is one of the greatest health threats to Bay Area residents during the winter months," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "The strengthening of this successful rule underscores our commitment to reducing the health impacts from this local and regional air pollutant."

Changes from the original rule include the "sole source of heat" and broken heater exemptions. 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. Starting November 1, 2016, this exemption will be considered only if the sole source of heat is an EPA-certified device and is registered with the Air District. The broken heater exemption is now only for 30 days versus the entire winter season. For more information about new requirements to the rule, see the amendments press release at <http://bit.ly/1KDjbDm>.

Also new this winter, when weather conditions are present for wood smoke build-up, the Air District will call *Winter Spare the Air* Alerts up to three days in advance to avoid air pollution that exceeds federal standards. This will likely increase the number of *Winter Spare the Air* Alerts in the future.

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. Fine particulate pollution is known to cause more than 90 percent of the premature deaths related to air pollution.

To support the move towards cleaner heating sources, the Air District is developing a \$3 million grant program that will provide at least 50 percent or more funding for residents to change out from older wood-burning devices to better and more effective home-heating equipment.

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. Cold temperatures and calm winds during the winter season cause wood smoke to build up in communities. When air quality is forecast to be

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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](http://www.sparetheair.org) or [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)
- Signing up for automatic e-mail AirAlerts at [www.sparetheair.org](http://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 violators 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](http://www.baaqmd.gov) to file a complaint or to get more information.

Last season, 23 *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* were issued, helping the region uphold federal air quality standards on all but six days during the season. The Air District received a total of 3,834 wood smoke complaints from residents and a total of 155 tickets were issued to residents who were observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule. A breakdown of how the violations were resolved is included below:

2014-2015 Winter Spare the Air Violations

Took Wood Smoke Class:	93
Paid Violation:	18
Granted Exemption:	23 seasonal exemptions 10 long term exemptions
Active Cases:	0
Dismissed:	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155</b>

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 region. For more information about Spare the Air, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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