



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Winter Spare the Air Alert called for December 22 *Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s fourth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Thursday, December 22, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Cool, stagnant weather conditions are expected to trap wood smoke pollution near the ground throughout the Bay Area, causing unhealthy air quality.

“To protect our families and neighbors this holiday season, it’s important that Bay Area residents not burn wood,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Show your holiday spirit this year by choosing not to burn wood to ensure your family and your neighbors enjoy a healthy holiday season.”

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*. Exemptions are available for homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat. Anyone whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning device must use an EPA-certified or pellet-fueled device that is **registered** with the Air District to qualify for an exemption. An open hearth fireplace no longer qualifies for an exemption.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season, which runs from November 1 through February 28. Bay Area residents can find out if a Winter Spare the Air Alert is in effect 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 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.

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

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. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses

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and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particles 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. For more information about Spare the Air, visit sparetheair.org.

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