



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 1, 2016

CONTACT: Tom Flannigan
415.749.4900

Air District issues first 2016 Spare the Air Smog Alert *Commuters urged to find alternatives to driving alone*

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing its first Spare the Air Alert for smog in 2016.

Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Thursday, June 2. A strong high pressure system will bring high temperatures and low winds to the Bay Area. These conditions combined with motor vehicle exhaust from traffic will generate unhealthy ozone accumulation in the region.

“As temperatures rise and the gridlock on Bay Area roads continues, finding a better way to work than driving solo, like taking transit, carpooling, walking or biking, is more important than ever,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Reducing traffic and tailpipe exhaust can improve air quality and keep our air healthy.”

The single most effective way for residents to reduce smog is to drive less. Air District survey results find that Bay Area employees are more likely to adopt alternatives to driving alone when encouraged to do so by their employer. Bay Area employers with 50 or more full-time employees are now required to offer commuter benefits to their employees. For more information about the Commuter Benefits Program, visit 511.org and click on Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program.

Spare the Air Alerts are issued when ozone pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone, or smog, can cause throat irritation, congestion, chest pain, trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. Long-term exposure to ozone can reduce lung function. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. When a *Spare the Air Alert* is issued, outdoor exercise should be done only in the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower.

To improve air quality, residents are encouraged to walk, bike, carpool or take transit instead of driving alone, not just on *Spare the Air* days, but every day. Residents can visit www.stacommuetips.org to find a list of commute programs and incentives available where they live and work.

To find out when a *Spare the Air Alert* is in effect, residents can register for email AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org, call 1(800) HELP-AIR, download the *Spare the Air* App or connect with *Spare the Air* on Facebook or Twitter.

There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place.

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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