



NEWS

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Air District issues 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 seventeenth Spare the Air Alert for smog in 2016.

Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Thursday, August 18. Light winds, warm temperatures and smoke from the Soberanes Fire in Monterey County is expected to cause unhealthy ozone, or smog, levels in the Bay Area. These conditions combined with motor vehicle exhaust from traffic will generate unhealthy ozone accumulation in the region.

“We want to encourage commuters in the Bay Area to find carpool connections at work or in your neighborhood,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Until we find a way to reduce the amount of cars on our roads, we will unfortunately continue to experience unhealthy air as temperatures soar and wildfires impact the region.”

The single most effective way for residents to reduce smog is to drive less or drive electric vehicles that do not produce air pollution. 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 carpool, bike, walk or take transit to work instead of driving alone, not just on *Spare the Air* days, but every day. The public is encouraged to consider an all-electric vehicle as their next vehicle purchase to help the region reduce the amount of gas powered vehicles that contribute to unhealthy smog. Residents can visit www.stacommuetips.org to find a list of commute programs 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.baagmd.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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