



An overview of the WOOD BURNING RULE in the Bay Area

WHY IS WOOD SMOKE SO HARMFUL?

Smoke from wood burning and wildfires contains toxic, microscopic particles called PM_{2.5}, which are so small that several thousand could fit on the period at the end of this sentence.

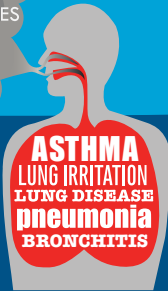
These particles can easily penetrate the lungs and enter the bloodstream and cause immediate health impacts as well as long term respiratory and heart problems.

Wildfires and wood burning are the largest source of fine particulate pollution in the Bay Area.

When PM_{2.5} is forecast to reach unhealthy levels year-round, the Air District issues a **Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban** to notify the public that air quality is forecast to be unhealthy and that wood burning is prohibited. The alert may be called up to three days prior to the expected unhealthy air event to protect public health and keep pollution levels from building up.

GASES
SOOT FINE
dioxins PARTICLES
carbon monoxide
Volatile Organic
Compounds

1 in 7
BAY AREA RESIDENTS
SUFFER FROM A
RESPIRATORY ILLNESS



The hazards of second-hand cigarette smoke are well known, but many people may not realize that smoke from wood burning and wildfires contains a similar group of unhealthy compounds. With the changing climate, wildfires are becoming increasingly frequent and severe, causing smoke impacts throughout the Bay Area.

Approximately one million fireplaces and wood stoves across the nine-county region are a major source of wintertime particulate pollution — the tiny particles that contribute to an array of health concerns, from asthma to heart attacks to cancer, and in severe cases, death.

Wood smoke is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

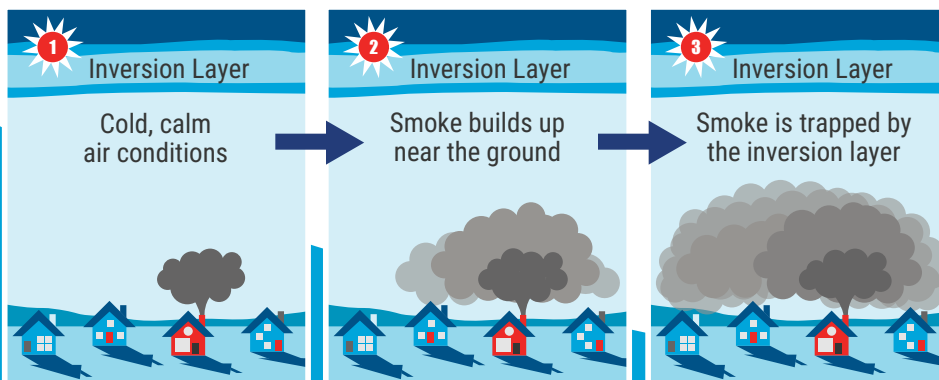


WOOD BURNING RULE

The Air District amended the Wood Burning Rule in 2025, to further protect residents from the harmful health impacts of wood smoke. **The rule makes it illegal to burn wood, manufactured firelogs, pellets or any other solid fuel indoors and outdoors when a Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban is in effect.** The amendments to the rule allow the Air District to ban wood burning anytime of the year when particulate pollution becomes unhealthy rather than only during winter months.

Typically, by 2 p.m. each day, the Air District will issue an air quality forecast for the next day. **If a Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban is issued, wood burning will be prohibited the next day from midnight to midnight.**

Residents who fail to comply with the Wood Burning Rule are subject to penalties. First-time violators can choose to take a wood smoke awareness course instead of paying a \$100 ticket. Second violations are \$500 and increase with each additional ticket.



During cooler winter months, a **Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban** is called when a temperature inversion traps smoke near the ground.



IT'S YOUR AIR. PROTECT IT.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The rule also has additional requirements including, but not limited to:

- Prohibits dense smoke, which is often caused by burning unseasoned wood with excess moisture
- Prohibits the burning of garbage or other inappropriate material such as junk mail, pallets or treated wood
- Prohibits the installation of wood-burning devices in new construction
- Requires landlords in areas with natural gas service to provide a form of heat, other than a wood-burning device, to their tenants.

**IT IS ILLEGAL TO
BURN WOOD DURING
A SPARE THE AIR
ALERT—BURN BAN.**



**Illegal to use during a
Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban.**

Consider converting to an electric fireplace or heat pump. With increasing access to renewable energy sources in the Bay Area, electric heating devices are becoming the cleanest option to protect air quality and the climate.

ABOUT THE AIR DISTRICT

The Bay Area Air District is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, southwestern Solano and southern Sonoma counties.



**For more information about
the Wood Burning Rule:
sparetheair.org/woodburnrule**

**Sign up for text, email or phone
alerts at sparetheair.org/alerts**

**For the air quality forecast, call
1-800-HELP-AIR (435-7247)**



**Check if a
Spare the Air—Burn Ban
is in effect or file a
Wood Burning Complaint
1-877-4NO-BURN
(1-877-466-2876)
baaqmd.gov/complaints**

Connect with us @SpareTheAir



**More info at sparetheair.org
or baaqmd.gov**



www.baaqmd.gov



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