



# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Teresa Lee: 415.749.4900**

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## **Have a Smoke-Free Thanksgiving this Year!**

During the holiday season, many Bay Area residents will consider whether to burn wood in their fireplaces and woodstoves. While for many burning wood is a tradition, the particles in the wood smoke can cause breathing difficulties for those both inside and outside of the home. Wood smoke also generates toxic air pollutants, including dioxin, benzene and formaldehyde.

Wood smoke is a major source of air pollution in the Bay Area during the winter months. Wintertime inversions can trap wood smoke pollutants at ground-level for up to weeks and a time, making air unhealthy to breathe. Numerous studies link exposure to wood smoke to health hazards including higher rates of childhood asthma, heart disease and even premature death.

To reduce your exposure to wood smoke, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is asking Bay Area residents to enjoy a smoke-free Thanksgiving by following these guidelines:

1. Break the wood burning habit this year and don't burn wood.
2. Retrofit your fireplace to burn natural gas, a cleaner alternative to wood burning.
3. If you must burn wood, burn less and use only dry, clean, seasoned wood, and nonglossy white paper. Moist, or "green" wood smolders more, producing greater amounts of harmful air pollutants.
4. NEVER burn garbage, chemically treated or painted wood, or wrapping paper which can produce noxious smoke and fumes, and release toxic compounds into the air.
5. Check the chimney. Where there's smoke, there's a bad fire. Excess smoke means that the fire isn't burning properly.

**For a free Woodburning Handbook and more information on wood burning, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or call 1-800 HELP AIR. This summer was the cleanest on record for air quality. The Air District hopes the public will continue to *Spare the Air* this winter.**

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