



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 7, 2009

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SPARE THE AIR EVERY DAY ENCOURAGES CARPOOLING

**Reducing the number of Single Occupancy Vehicles on our highways
will significantly improve Bay Area air quality**

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is launching a new effort for the [Spare the Air](#) campaign encouraging the public to carpool or rideshare to reduce the number of Single Occupancy Vehicles on our highways.

Transportation is the largest source of smog pollution in the Bay Area and the region's highway congestion is the second-worst in the nation.

"We need to reduce the amount of single occupancy vehicles if we are going to make a dent in improving air pollution," said Lisa Fasano, Air District communications director. "Any ride is worth sharing – even once a week would dramatically reduce the number of cars on the road, reduce time spent commuting, reduce money spent on gas and reduce bad air in our lungs."

Every day, Bay Area commuters drive alone on more than 3.5 million trips to-and-from work. Ridesharing can dramatically reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips and improve air quality. [Spare the Air](#) encourages every person to do their part to maintain healthy air in the Bay Area by sharing a ride instead of commuting alone.

The goal of the campaign is to reduce the number of Single Occupancy Vehicles on the road and educate the public about the benefit of ridesharing and the resources available.

With ride sharing, less is more:

- *More cars in the HOV lane:* During peak commuting hours, only 17 percent of vehicles on Bay Area roads are able to travel in the HOV lanes. This year's [Spare the Air](#) campaign aims to increase the use of HOV lanes.
- *More time saved in your commute:* On the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza alone, using the HOV lane saves each vehicle an average of 20 minutes. Carpoolers can save anywhere from 5-20 minutes by carpooling across other Bay Area bridges.

- *More savings on gas money:* Given a 30-mile roundtrip commute, the average commuter will save about \$222 a month, or \$2,663 annually (*Based on a car that achieves 20 mpg, at \$3 per gallon*).
- *More time for yourself:* Carpool riders gain time back by being able to read the paper, check email on their handheld device or simply relax on their commute to work.
- *Healthier air:* During the summer months, ground-level ozone is the pollutant of concern that creates smog. Because cars and trucks are the largest source of smog pollution in the Bay Area, reducing the number of Single Occupancy Vehicles is healthier for us all.

How to Spare the Air

There are many ridesharing and carpool programs already in place. One way to begin carpooling is to join an organized rideshare using the free [511 RideMatch Service](http://511.org) through 511.org. Commuters can use this quick-match service to view ride options that work for their schedules and follow a few easy steps to connect with other commuters and share a ride.

Another option on [511 RideMatch Service](http://511.org) is vanpooling through 511.org. Go to 511.org to view a map of the more than 150 free Park & Ride lots to meet up with a rideshare and find available seats in existing vanpools. Or, start a new vanpool instead of driving or riding alone.

East Bay residents can also tap into the [Casual Carpool network](http://www.ridenow.org/carpool). "Casual carpools" or "ad hoc carpools" are informal carpools that form when drivers and passengers meet — without specific prior arrangement — at designated locations. There are more than 20 existing locations throughout the East Bay, which are listed on <http://www.ridenow.org/carpool>. Drivers drop passengers off at Fremont and Howard Streets near the Transbay Terminal in downtown San Francisco.

Car ownership isn't required to rideshare, as it's also possible to [Spare the Air](http://www.sparetheair.org) as a passenger. Options exist to fit any schedule and comfort levels. If commuters can't rideshare every day, the [Spare the Air](http://www.sparetheair.org) campaign encourages people to try for even just once or twice a week and enjoy the benefits of a smarter commute while helping protect the Bay Area's air quality.

You can also visit the following link for a quick video tutorial on the ridesharing and carpool programs mentioned above <http://www.youtube.com/bayareasparetheair>.

About the Bay Area Air Quality Management District

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about [Spare the Air](http://www.sparetheair.org), visit www.sparetheair.org.

Sign up for email AirAlerts through the EnviroFlash system at <http://baaqmdsparetheair.enviroflash.info>. With EnviroFlash AirAlerts, you will be notified when the Bay Area experiences a *Spare the Air* Day. You can also choose to receive daily air pollution forecasts.