



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Saturday, January 25

Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's thirtieth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Saturday, January 25, which bans the burning of wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

A high pressure system with dry, still conditions has settled in over the region and will cause air pollution to build up to unhealthy levels again on Saturday.

"This season's thirtieth Winter Spare the Air Alert ties the record set in 2006," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Air pollution has been a serious problem during this dry, stagnant winter and it's important that residents refrain from burning wood to protect public health in their neighborhoods, communities and throughout the region."

It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits or any other wood-burning devices during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*. Homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe. Wood smoke is the major source of air pollution in the Bay Area in the wintertime and is especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions.

First-time violators will be given the option of taking a wood smoke awareness class, online or by mail, to learn about the hazards of wood smoke pollution in lieu of paying a \$100 ticket. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket, and subsequent ticket amounts will be higher.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season, which runs from November 1 through February 28. The daily burn status can be found:

- On the Air District Web sites: www.baaqmd.gov or www.sparetheair.org
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4-NO-BURN (complaints can also be filed via the hotline)
- By signing up for AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org or phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515
- Via the Spare the Air iPhone and Android Apps

In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area is the single largest source of air pollution, contributing about one-third of the harmful fine particulate pollution in the air. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particles accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

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.

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