



# NEWS

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## **Air District strengthens wood burning rule**

*Changes intended to further protect residents from fine particle pollution in wood smoke*

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Today, the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District unanimously adopted strong new provisions that will significantly improve the agency's wood burning regulation designed to further safeguard public health against the hazards of fine particle pollution.

The changes to the Air District's wood burning regulation tighten exemptions and requirements from the original rule which was adopted in July 2008. A \$3 million grant program is under development that will provide at least 50 percent or more funding for residents to change out from older wood burning devices to better and more effective home heating equipment.

"Today the Board took an important step strengthening a rule that has been successful in reducing particulate matter in the winter and delivering public health benefits," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "In addition, the Board issued a resolution directing staff to come back in five years with a proposal to ban all wood burning on Winter Spare the Air days."

Fine particle pollution is one of the biggest health threats to Bay Area residents in the winter months. The wood burning rule has been effective in reducing fine particle pollution in the region, and helping to raise awareness of the air quality health hazards of wood smoke. Staff removed an earlier draft proposal to the rule requiring fireplace or wood stove change outs when selling a home and instead adopted the real estate property disclosure requirement.

The amendments to Regulation 6, Rule 3 include the following provisions:

**Sole Source of Heat Exemption** - The amendment provides an exemption to households with no permanently installed natural gas, propane or electric heating options. Households may qualify for the "sole source of heat" exemption if the only source of heat is a wood-burning device that is EPA certified and registered in the Air District's registration program.

**Non-Functional, Permanently Installed Heater** – Households may receive a temporary 30-day exemption to repair a non-functional heater. Upon request by the Air District, claimants of this exemption must submit repair documentation for exemption verification.

**Visible Emissions Limitation** - Under the amendment, following a 20-minute start-up allowance for new fires, visible emissions of greater than 20 percent opacity and aggregate to 3 minutes in any hour would be considered an exceedance of the standard.

**Manufacturing and Sales of New Wood Heaters** - The amendment requires wood-heater manufacturers and retailers to comply with newly adopted EPA emission standards and compliance dates for all wood heaters sold or manufactured in the Bay Area.

*Continued... Air District adopts amendments to wood burning rule...*

**Requirements for Remodeling a Fireplace or Chimney** All fireplace or chimney remodels that exceed costs of greater than \$15,000 and require a local building permit are required to replace an uncertified wood burning device or fireplace with an EPA certified wood-burning device, gas-fueled or electric heater.

**Requirements for New Building Construction** – Under the amendment, wood-burning devices may no longer be installed in new building construction. New building construction must install cleaner and more efficient heating options, such as gas-fueled or electric heaters.

**Disclosure Requirements for Real Estate Property** – The amendment requires all real estate and rental properties to disclose the health hazards of PM2.5 from burning wood or any solid fuel as a source of heat.

In the spring, the Air District hosted nine workshops to discuss the initial concepts for the proposed amendments to **Regulation 6, Rule 3: Wood Burning Devices**. As a result of comment and discussion with Bay Area residents and other stakeholders during this process, the initial draft amendments were revised and the revised versions were offered for a final 30-day public comment period, which ended October 19.

The Air District will open a change out grant program for fireplaces and wood burning stoves in the spring of 2016. Funding priority will go to low income residents and high wood smoke impact areas.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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