



## NEWS RELEASE

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## **Winter Spare the Air Alerts called through December 31**

*Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth Winter Spare the Air Alerts for Friday, December 29 through December 31, banning wood burning, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors.

A high-pressure system continues to dominate Bay Area weather, bringing clear, calm conditions that will persist through December 31, trapping smoke near the ground and causing unhealthy air quality. To keep our neighborhoods free from wood smoke pollution, residents must not burn wood.

"Air quality will be unhealthy due to calm winds and stagnant weather conditions that allow air pollution to build up in the Bay Area," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "By not burning wood, we can help prevent harmful wood smoke pollution from making air quality worse in our region while also protecting the health of our families and neighbors into the new year."

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. Exemptions are available for homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat. Anyone whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning device must use an EPA-certified or pellet-fueled device that is registered with the Air District to qualify for an exemption. An open-hearth fireplace no longer qualifies for an exemption.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe inside and outside the home. 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:

- **Via NEW text alerts! To sign up, text the word “START” to the number 817-57**
- On the Air District Web sites: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or [www.sparetheair.org](http://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](http://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. One fireplace burning can pollute an entire neighborhood. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particulate accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). For more information about Spare the Air, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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