



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Winter Spare the Air season comes to a close

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's 2016-2017 Winter Spare the Air season ended February 28, with seven Winter Spare the Air Alerts issued and no exceedances of the federal health standard for fine particulates.

The Winter Spare the Air season ran from November 2016 through February 2017. The Bay Area benefited from abundant storm systems this winter season that brought consistently heavy rains and wind, helping disperse air pollution within the nine-county region.

"Plentiful rain helped purify our air from harmful wood smoke pollution this season, but we cannot rely on wet weather to save us from poor air quality." said Jack Broadbent, the Air District's executive officer. "Wood smoke pollution is dangerous to our communities and therefore we need residents to stop burning wood and consider replacing older, more polluting fireplaces with a cleaner heating option that will benefit our family and neighbors."

The Air District received a total of 1,542 wood smoke complaints from Bay Area residents. To date, 91 violations were issued to residents observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule this season.

2016-2017 Winter Spare the Air season - Complaints by County:

Alameda – 277
Contra Costa – 208
Marin – 231
Napa – 44
San Francisco – 46
San Mateo – 130
Santa Clara – 434
Solano – 37
Sonoma – 128
No county provided – 7

TOTAL – 1,542*

Wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the region is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area, containing harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Exposure to wood smoke has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks.

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The rule still requires, on a year-round basis, that residents who burn in a fireplace or outdoor fire pit burn cleanly using dry, seasoned firewood and not burn garbage, leaves or other material that would cause excessive smoke. Residents who exceed the visible smoke provision of the Wood Burning Rule could still be subject to a ticket, even outside the November–February Winter Spare the Air season.

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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