



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Walter Wallace, 415.749.4900 or 415.519.4628 (cell)

Multi-day Winter Spare the Air Alerts called December 8 - 10

Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited Friday, Saturday and Sunday

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s first three *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* for Friday, December 8 through Sunday, December 10, banning wood burning, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors through midnight on Sunday.

Air quality is expected to be unhealthy in the region over multiple days due to weather conditions trapping wood smoke pollution close to the ground. A strong and persistent ridge of high pressure is setting up over the Bay Area, bringing dry, calm weather conditions to the region potentially into next week. These conditions create a temperature inversion that acts like a lid, causing unhealthy air pollution to build up.

“Unfortunately, we will have hazy skies and smoky air as wood smoke builds up throughout the region into next week,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Banning wood burning through the weekend is necessary to reduce smoke pollution in our neighborhoods and protect the health of Bay Area residents. As many of us celebrate the season with holiday parties and events, it’s important that we all to do our part to keep the air healthy by not burning wood.”

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 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. 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.

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Air District Communications Office
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