



NEWS RELEASE

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A Winter Spare the Air Alert is being extended through Friday, November 16, due to smoke impacts from the Butte County fire

Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited this weekend

SAN FRANCISCO – Due to heavy smoke moving into the Bay Area from the extensive Camp Fire in Butte County, the Air District is extending the Winter Spare the Air Alert through Friday, November 16.

Burning wood, including manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, indoors or outdoors, is banned throughout this Winter Spare the Air Alert.

The Bay Area is continuing to experience heavy smoke from the Camp Fire in Butte County. Air quality continues to be unhealthy through much of the region and these conditions are expected to persist through Friday at least. While weather conditions will vary somewhat throughout the week, air quality is expected to remain unhealthy because there is so much smoke trapped at the surface and surrounding the region.

“Our hearts go out to the residents of Butte County as the Camp Fire continues to rage on,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “Unfortunately, smoke from the fire continues to blanket all nine counties of the Bay Area, which is why we have called the mandatory Winter Spare the Air Alert through Friday. Any additional smoke from Bay Area chimneys could push the region into an even higher unhealthy air quality level, which puts us all in jeopardy.”

The public should limit outdoor activity as much as possible during this alert, and continue to listen to health information from their local authorities. If air quality is unhealthy in your area, **the first and best option is to stay indoors with windows and doors closed.** Masks should not be used instead of remaining indoors, but if worn, they should be a new, clean N95 mask or greater, securely strapped for a tight seal. Masks are not suitable for men with beards or young children.

Follow current air quality on our [Air Monitoring Data](#) web page.

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 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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