



NEWS RELEASE

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Winter Spare the Air season comes to an end

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's 2017-18 Winter Spare the Air season ended February 28, with 19 Winter Spare the Air Alerts called from November through February.

Throughout the season, a persistent high-pressure ridge blocked storms that would have helped disperse air pollution. Although there were some storms in the first half of the winter season, what followed was prolonged dry, stable weather patterns that allowed wood smoke pollution to build up.

"Despite the recent rain, dry, still winter weather has become the norm in the Bay Area which significantly increases wood smoke pollution health impacts throughout the region," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Cleaner heating solutions are needed to protect the health of our families and neighbors inside and outside our homes."

The 2017-18 Winter Spare the Air season included long stretches of alerts – up to eight days in a row in December – due to unusually stagnant weather. All 19 alerts were called in December and January.

First-time violators of the Wood Burning Rule are encouraged to take a wood smoke awareness course to learn more about the health impacts of wood smoke and the winter weather conditions that lead to unhealthy air quality. Those violators who choose not to take the course will receive a \$100 ticket. Second violations are subject to a \$500 ticket, with the amount increasing for any subsequent violations.

This season, the Air District received a total of 2,177 wood smoke complaints from Bay Area residents. To date, 128 violations were issued to residents observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule.

Complaints by County:

Alameda – 367
Contra Costa – 363
Marin – 306
Napa – 86
San Francisco – 88
San Mateo – 211
Santa Clara – 362
Solano – 60

Sonoma – 306
No county details provided – 28

TOTAL – 2,177

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 increased risk of heart attacks.

The Wood Burning Rule still requires, on a year-round basis, that residents who use their fireplace or outdoor fire pit burn cleanly using dry, seasoned firewood and that they not burn garbage, leaves or other material that would cause excessive smoke. Residents who exceed the visible smoke provision of the 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](#) 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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