



NEWS RELEASE

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Air District issues Spare the Air Alerts through Wednesday

Wildfire smoke causing unhealthy air quality

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing Spare the Air Alerts for wildfire smoke for today, Tuesday, August 18 and tomorrow, Wednesday, August 19, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors.

Wildfire smoke from numerous fires sparked by lightning over the weekend is expected to cause elevated levels of particulate pollution in the Bay Area. Air quality is forecast to be unhealthy and smoke impacts are possible throughout the region. It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits or any other wood-burning devices during a Spare the Air Alert for particle pollution.

“Multiple wildfires inside and outside of the Bay Area are creating an unhealthy breathing environment,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “With the added risk of COVID-19 on respiratory health, it’s crucial that we all do our part to reduce air pollution and take precautions to reduce exposure.”

Spare the Air Alerts are issued when ozone or particulate matter pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. If the smell of smoke is present or visible, it is important that Bay Area residents protect their health by avoiding exposure. If possible, stay inside with windows and doors closed until smoke levels subside. If temperatures are too hot indoors, visit an air-cooling center or other building that provides filtered air. It is also recommended that Bay Area residents set air conditioning units and car vent systems to re-circulate to prevent outside air from moving inside.

Smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing coughing, a dry scratchy throat and irritated sinuses. Elevated particulate matter in the air can trigger wheezing in those who suffer from asthma, emphysema or COPD. Elderly persons, children and individuals with respiratory illnesses are particularly susceptible to elevated air pollution levels and should take extra precautions to avoid exposure.

To find out when a Spare the Air Alert is in effect, residents can sign up for text alerts by texting the word “START” to 817-57, register for email AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org, call 1(800) HELP-AIR, download the Spare the Air App or connect with Spare the Air on Facebook or Twitter.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](http://www.bayareaairquality.org) 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](#).

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