



NEWS RELEASE

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Air District issues Spare the Air Alerts through Friday

Advisory upgraded to Spare the Air Alerts due to deterioration of air quality from West Coast wildfires

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing Spare the Air Alerts due to wildfire smoke for today, Thursday, August 19, and tomorrow, Friday, August 20, which ban burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors.

The air quality advisory for smoke that was in place has been upgraded to Spare the Air Alerts due to the expected deterioration of air quality conditions from explosive wildfires in Washington, Oregon and Northern California. These wildfires have generated a large smoke plume covering nearly the entire state of California and hundreds of miles offshore. Air quality is expected to degrade to ‘unhealthy for sensitive groups’ Air Quality Index levels in most of the Bay Area with pockets of ‘unhealthy’ air quality at higher altitudes. 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 burning on the West Coast are expected to cause unhealthy air quality throughout the region,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “As respiratory health is top of mind for all of us during the pandemic, it’s crucial that residents take steps to avoid exposure to unhealthy air.”

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](#) 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 sparetheair.org.

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