



NEWS RELEASE

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Spare the Air smog season begins today

Commuters encouraged to find alternatives to driving alone as pandemic eases

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing the start of the Spare the Air smog season today, Monday, May 3.

Vehicles on Bay Area roadways are the largest source of smog and greenhouse gases in the region. The Spare the Air campaign encourages residents to drive less and look for ways to change or eliminate their commutes to help reduce smog and traffic in the Bay Area

“With traffic already at pre-pandemic levels and more employees returning to their workplaces, our air quality is at risk,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “We are asking Bay Area residents to consider commute alternatives like working remotely, taking transit and walking or biking to work instead of driving alone to reduce harmful air pollution and traffic gridlock.”

The launch of the Spare the Air smog season coincides with the start of the **2021 Air Quality Awareness Week**, a nationwide campaign to increase air quality awareness and inspire people to take steps to reduce their contribution to air pollution. This year’s campaign encourages residents to check the Air Quality Index daily to track current levels of smog, or ozone pollution, in their area.

During the warmer weather months, Spare the Air Alerts are issued when ozone pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone can cause throat irritation, congestion and chest pain. It can trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. When a Spare the Air Alert is called, limit outdoor exercise in the late afternoon when ozone concentrations are highest.

To find out when a Spare the Air Alert is in effect:

- Sign up for text alerts by texting the word “START” to 817-57
- Connect with Spare the Air on Facebook or Twitter
- Visit the www.sparetheair.org website
- Call 1(800) HELP-AIR
- Sign up for email AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org
- Download the Spare the Air iPhone or Android App

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](https://twitter.com/bayareaair), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bayareaair) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/bayareaair).

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