



NEWS RELEASE

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Air District urges residents to prepare now for wildfires and warns of fireworks dangers

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is urging Bay Area residents to take action to protect their health before major wildfires impact the region and is warning residents of the dangers of lighting fireworks this Fourth of July.

Setting off personal fireworks displays is especially dangerous this year given the drought and extremely dry conditions. Fireworks can cause high levels of particulate matter close to the ground and significantly increase the risk of wildfires and further smoke impacts.

“Unfortunately, wildfires and heavy smoke have become a common occurrence in the summer and fall here in the Bay Area as climate change drives more extreme weather that super-charges wildfires,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “It’s critical that we prepare now for what will likely be a challenging wildfire season so we can protect our health when wildfire smoke blankets the region.”

“The Bay Area saw a dramatic increase in illegal fireworks last year resulting in more than 30 preventable fireworks-related fires in San Jose alone and that cannot happen this year,” said Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez who is also chair of the Air District Board of Directors. “The vegetation in the East San Jose Foothills is excessively dry because of our historic drought. It is potentially a lethal combination to add illegal fireworks to that scenario. We cannot put people’s lives at risk, their property and air quality.”

During wildfires, air pollution has real and significant health consequences, even for those without pre-existing conditions. Bay Area residents can prepare for wildfire smoke by following these tips:

- Weatherize the home in preparation for wildfires by replacing or refurbishing old, leaky windows and doors; use caulking to seal the openings.
- Consider purchasing a non-ozone producing air purifier to create a cleaner air room in the home.
- Consider purchasing a MERV 13 or greater filter for your HVAC system.
- Consider upgrading to an HVAC system that allows for both heating and cooling and has the mechanism to switch to recirculate to prevent smoke from entering the space.
- Individuals with health conditions should talk to their physicians to develop a personal plan for smoke.

- Identify locations in your community that have cleaner filtered air spaces such as indoor shopping malls, local libraries, cooling centers, community centers, civic centers and local government buildings.
- Make a plan to go to a cleaner air location if you are unable to seal your home or if dense smoke occurs during hot weather events.

Wildfire preparedness tips, school air quality recommendations, information on air quality data and more is available at www.baaqmd.gov/wildfiresafety.

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](#).

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