



# NEWS

[www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)

**For Immediate Release  
Tuesday, December 23, 2003**

**Contact: Teresa Lee: 415.749.4900**

**New Health Studies Site Dangers of Wood Smoke  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON GIVE THE GIFT OF CLEANER AIR!**

During the holiday season, many Bay Area residents will consider whether to burn wood in their fireplaces and woodstoves. While for many burning wood is a tradition, the particles in the wood smoke can cause breathing difficulties for those both inside and outside of the home.

Wood smoke is a major source of air pollution in the Bay Area during the winter months. A recent health study conducted at the University of Southern California linked exposure to wood smoke during infancy to higher rates of childhood asthma. A second study, financed by the National Institute of Environmental Health, linked exposure to soot particles to heart disease.

To reduce your exposure to wood smoke, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is asking Bay Area residents to give the gift of cleaner air this holiday season by following these guidelines:

- 1. Break the wood burning habit this year and don't burn wood.**
- 2. Retrofit your fireplace to burn natural gas, a cleaner alternative to wood burning.**
- 3. If you must burn wood, burn less and use only dry, clean, seasoned wood, and nonglossy white paper. Moist, or "green" wood smolders more, producing greater amounts of harmful air pollutants.**
- 4. NEVER burn garbage, chemically treated or painted wood, or holiday wrapping paper. Burning these materials can produce noxious smoke and fumes, and release toxic compounds into the air. Reuse or recycle gift-wrap instead.**
- 5. Check the chimney. Where there's smoke, there's a bad fire. Excess smoke means that the fire isn't burning properly.**

For a free Woodburning Handbook and more information on wood burning, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or call 1-800 HELP AIR.

# # #