



NEWS

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Air District board approves wood burning rule

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District approved new restrictions on the use and sale of residential wood burning devices, including fireplaces and wood stoves. Regulation - 6, Rule 3 has been passed in order to protect public health, especially on days when particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution is forecast to be unhealthy.

"The scientific evidence is clear that particulate matter poses a significant public health threat," said Air District Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. "The Air District's new wood smoke regulation will result in increased public awareness about the hazards of wood smoke and cleaner skies for everyone".

The new rule will:

- Restrict wood burning when air quality is unhealthy and a Spare the Air Tonight advisory is issued
- Place limits on excessive smoke (exceeding 20 percent) opacity
- Require only cleaner burning EPA certified stoves and inserts to be sold
- Require only EPA certified stoves and inserts in new construction or remodels
- Prohibit the burning of garbage and other harmful materials
- Require labeling on firewood and solid fuels sold within the Bay Area

In the Bay Area, up to 30 percent of wintertime particulate pollution is caused by wood burning. Numerous scientific studies have linked particle pollution with health problems including decreased lung function, aggravated asthma, irregular heartbeat, heart attacks, and increased rates of mortality. In 2006, the US Environmental Protection Agency strengthened nation-wide health-protective standards for particulate matter in ambient air.

It will be the responsibility of residents to check before burning, to determine if a Spare the Air Tonight advisory is in place. Information will be available through the Air District's web sites, www.baaqmd.gov and www.sparetheair.org; by calling 1-800-HELP-AIR; by subscribing to "AirAlert" e-mail or text message notification; and by checking your local newspaper, radio and TV station.

In developing the proposed regulation, the Air District reviewed similar regulations within California, such as those adopted by the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley air districts, and conducted extensive public outreach to involve all stakeholders. This outreach effort included a series of sixteen informational meetings held throughout the Bay Area to answer questions and address concerns.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is committed to achieving clean air to protect the public's health and the environment. For more information, visit www.baaqmd.gov.

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