



NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Air District reminds Bay Area residents to “Check Before You Burn” during the holidays

San Francisco, CA - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is reminding residents to sign up for air alerts this week in the event of possible *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* during the holidays.

Weather conditions later this week indicate that the Bay Area may experience light winds and cool dry air that stays near the ground. These weather conditions trap smoke from regional fireplaces around our homes and neighborhoods causing unhealthy breathing conditions for all Bay Area residents.

“We’re asking Bay Area residents to remember to check the burn status each day including holidays, to see if an air alert is called which bans fireplace burning,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “If air pollution reaches unhealthy levels, the Air District will issue a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*.”

The Air District posts the next day air quality forecast by 1:30 p.m. each day. Residents can sign up for email or phone air alerts of the no burn provision by:

- Signing up at www.sparetheair.org or by signing up for phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515.

Residents can check the daily fireplace burn status by going to:

- BAAQMD web sites: www.baaqmd.gov or www.sparetheair.org
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4-NO-BURN (complaints can also be filed via the hotline)

There are 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area. According to the U.S. EPA’s Burn Wise page on their website “Smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic matter burn. A major health threat from smoke comes from fine particles (also called particle pollution, particulate matter, or PM). These microscopic particles can get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause health problems such as burning eyes, runny nose, and illnesses such as bronchitis.”

During a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*, it is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves and inserts, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices.

Bay Area residents are asked to also observe the following restrictions:
NEVER burn holiday wrapping paper, glossy paper or painted wood in your

fireplace. These materials can produce noxious smoke and fumes, and release toxic compounds into the air when burned both inside and outside the home.

Wood smoke is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins such as dioxin, which is linked to increased cancer rates in adults.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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