



Spare the Air Alert

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Air District issues first *Spare the Air* alert of 2009 for ozone

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District issued the first *Spare the Air* advisory for ozone in 2009.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Monday, April 20. There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place. This *Spare the Air* Alert is before the official start of the 2009 *Spare the Air* summer season which begins in May. The Air District encourages residents to drive less and reduce their energy use.

"Today's *Spare the Air* Alert for smog underscores the need for the public to make clean air choices every day to reduce pollution levels in the Bay Area," said Air District Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. "This is a wakeup call for us all to reduce the amount of pollution we generate to avoid unhealthy air during high heat days."

Motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, industrial emissions and household chemicals contain volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides that combine with oxygen in the presence of heat and sunlight to form ground-level ozone. Breathing ozone can cause throat irritation, congestion and chest pain. It can trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema.

Long-term exposure to ozone can reduce lung function. High levels of ozone pollution are particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. Vigorous outdoor exercise should be undertaken only in the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower. The Air District issues *Spare the Air* Alerts whenever air quality is forecast to reach unhealthy concentrations.

A list of simple things the public can do to make clean air choices every day:

- Bike to work or around town
- Take public transit
- Work at home or telecommute
- Carpool and link your errands to reduce driving
- Avoid using gas-powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers
- Reduce household energy use
- Cook indoors, not on the barbecue
- Avoid using aerosol spay cleaners, paints and hairspray

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about *Spare the Air*, visit www.sparetheair.org.