



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eighth *Winter Spare the Air* Alert called for Wednesday, December 21
Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's eighth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Wednesday, December 21, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

The cold, still weather pattern that traps air pollution in the Bay Area will continue through mid-week. During these weather conditions, the earth cools the air close to the ground, which creates an inversion layer of warmer air above. When there is no wind, pollution trapped under this lid of warm air can build up rapidly to unhealthy levels.

"The current weather pattern that is trapping air pollution close to the ground will stay in place and keep pollution levels high likely into the holiday weekend," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "It is critical that Bay Area residents refrain from burning wood to reduce air pollution levels and protect public health."

People in the Bay Area may be experiencing a dry throat or cough. Those with asthma or other respiratory conditions are recommended to keep their inhalers with them and try to limit outdoor exercise.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy due to weather conditions that will trap the smoke in the air close to the ground. During this *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.

The public must check before they burn during the *Winter Spare the Air* season which runs from November 1 through February 29. The daily burn status can be found:

- On the Air District 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)
- By signing up for AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org or phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515

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 which are linked to increased cancer rates in adults. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area contributes about one-third of the harmful particulate pollution in the air.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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