



Spare the Air Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 20, 2011

CONTACT: Kristine Roselius
415.749.4647 (office)
415.519.5419 (cell)

Air District issues first *Spare the Air Smog Alert* of 2011

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District issued the first *Spare the Air Health Alert* for smog in 2011.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Tuesday, June 21. There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place. The Air District encourages residents to drive less and reduce their energy use.

"Pollution in our air every day creates smog when temperatures are high," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "This alert is a reminder to us all that we must reduce the amount of pollution we generate every day to avoid unhealthy air when the weather turns hot."

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.

"Smog irritates the respiratory system, and can reduce lung function, making it more difficult to breathe, especially in children. It also can aggravate asthma and make people more sensitive to allergens, such as dust mites, pets, and pollen, and worsens chronic lung diseases," said Dr. Thomas Addison, a pulmonologist with Kaiser Permanente San Francisco. "By taking steps to reduce emissions, Bay Area residents help all of us breathe easier."

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



Spare the Air Alert

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

###