



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Kristine Roselius
415.749.4900

Winter Spare the Air season comes to a close

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's 2010-2011 *Winter Spare the Air* season ended February 28 with the issuance of just four *Winter Spare the Air Alerts*.

This season's four alerts fell below the historic seasonal average of approximately 10-15 alerts. The Air District exceeded the national air quality health standard on only one day this season, December 3, 2010.

"With the help of Bay Area residents and favorable weather conditions, we were able to avoid unhealthy air quality on several occasions this winter, protecting public health," said Jack Broadbent, Air District executive officer. "This 8 has been one of the cleanest winters the Bay Area has seen in several years."

Nearly 103,000 Bay Area residents are signed up for email AirAlerts, 17,636 receive phone alerts and 213,368 calls were placed to the 877-4-NO BURN line to check the daily burn status. Air District survey data preliminary results indicate that 20 percent of Bay Area households reduced their wood burning because of the *Winter Spare the Air* program and 76 percent of respondents indicated that they supported the Wood Burning Rule.

This was the third winter season that the Air District enforced a regulation that restricts wood burning in fireplaces, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits throughout the Bay Area when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy.

Those found to be burning during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* were issued a warning letter for a first offense and those that violated the rule more than once were subject to a ticket. The Air District received a total of 1,373 wood smoke complaints from residents. A total of 59 warning letters were sent to residents who were observed to be in violation of the Wood Burning Rule and two tickets have been issued in Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties.

A listing of complaints and warning letters issued by county is as follows:

Complaints by County

Alameda	209
Contra Costa	190
Marin	301
Napa	36
San Francisco	38
San Mateo	193
Santa Clara	279
Solano	25

Warning Letters by County

Alameda	8
Contra Costa	2
Marin	5
Napa	0
San Francisco	0
San Mateo	2
Santa Clara	13
Solano	0

Continued...Winter Spare the Air season comes to a close...

Sonoma	102	Sonoma	29
TOTAL	1,373	TOTAL	59

The rule still requires, on a year-round basis, that residents who burn in a fireplace or outdoor fire pit burn cleanly using dry, seasoned firewood and not burn garbage, leaves or other material that would cause excessive smoke. Residents that exceed the visible smoke provision of the Wood Burning Rule could still be subject to a ticket.

Wood smoke is a major source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Particulate matter is a dangerous pollutant that is linked to respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis and lung disease. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area contributes to 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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