



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## ***Winter Spare the Air Alert in effect for New Year's Day*** ***Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited***

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the first *Winter Spare the Air Alert* of the season for Tuesday, January 1, 2013, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

"Current weather conditions are expected to allow air pollution to build up to unhealthy levels on New Year's Day," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Sitting by the fire during the holidays may conjure up fond memories, but it's important that everyone forgoes burning during this alert so we can all enjoy a happy, healthy holiday."

A cold, still weather pattern is currently in place and 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, wood smoke and other pollution trapped under this lid of warm air can build up rapidly to unhealthy levels throughout the region.

Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particles or soot accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

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. An exemption is available for residents and businesses that burn wood as their sole source of heat and have no other permanently installed heating source.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season which runs from November 1 through February 28. The daily burn status can be found:

- On the Air District Web sites: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or [www.sparetheair.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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