



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Saturday, January 14 ***Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited***

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the fifteenth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* of the season for Saturday, January 14, 2012, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

The persistent high pressure system sitting over California continues to trap wood smoke pollution in the air.

"This has been a tough winter for anyone with breathing problems," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. "Wood smoke is hazardous to people and pets. It gets trapped in our homes and creates unhealthy air indoors and out."

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.

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. Homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt.

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 websites: www.baaqmd.gov or www.sparetheair.org
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4NO-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
- Via the Spare the Air iPhone App

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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