



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
October 31, 2012

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## ***Winter Spare the Air* Season Begins November 1**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing the beginning of the *Winter Spare the Air* season on November 1, making it illegal to burn wood, manufactured firelogs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors, when a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* is called.

The Air District calls *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* when weather conditions trap pollution close to the ground and air quality is forecast to be unhealthy. The *Winter Spare the Air* season runs from November 1, 2012, through February 28, 2013.

“We have fine-tuned the *Winter Spare the Air* program this year to be more health-protective and to address localized impacts from wood smoke.” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke has serious health impacts for Bay Area residents.”

Wood smoke pollution is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions. Weather conditions in the winter can cause soot to build up to unhealthy levels. If air quality is forecast to be unhealthy, a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* will be called for the next full calendar day. During an alert, the use of wood-burning devices, including fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits is forbidden.

Bay Area residents can check before they burn by:

- Calling 1-877-4NO-BURN
- Visiting [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)
- Signing up for automatic e-mail AirAlerts at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)
- Signing up for automatic phone alerts by calling 1-800-430-1515
- Downloading the Spare the Air iPhone and Android apps.

Beginning this season, first-time violators of the Wood Burning Rule will be encouraged to take a Wood Smoke Awareness course to learn more about the health impacts from wood smoke and the weather conditions that lead up to unhealthy air quality in the winter. Those who choose not to take the course will receive a \$100 ticket. Second violations are subject to a \$500 ticket, with the ticket amount increasing for any subsequent violations. There are also year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves. Residents concerned about wood smoke pollution may call 1-877-4NO-BURN or visit [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) to file a complaint or to get more information.

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 Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about Spare the Air, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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