



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Air District asks public not to burn wood on Sunday & Christmas Eve ***Wood burning is not illegal, but strongly discouraged***

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is recommending that Bay Area residents not burn wood in their fireplaces or woodstoves on Sunday, December 23, and Monday, December 24, to prevent air quality from becoming unhealthy and a Winter Spare the Air Alert from being called on Christmas Day.

A Winter Spare the Air Alert is NOT in effect on Sunday or Monday and wood burning is not illegal, but strongly discouraged.

"The break in the blustery weather will cause smoke pollution to build on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "We are asking the public to voluntarily not burn on Christmas Eve to help reduce pollution levels and avoid the need to call a Winter Spare the Air Alert on Christmas Day."

While the weekend weather pattern has included rain and wind, weather is expected to clear on Monday, Christmas Eve, and in the earlier hours of Christmas Day which will cause wood smoke pollution to build up throughout the region. Because of the amount of burning that traditionally occurs over the holiday, the region could experience unhealthy air making it difficult for people with asthma and other respiratory conditions to breathe.

Unsettled weather is expected to return late on Christmas Day and will help push air pollution out of the Bay Area. Because weather patterns are often unpredictable, it is important for Bay Area residents to check each day before they burn. The holidays historically have had the highest levels of wood smoke pollution contributing to unhealthy air.

Wood smoke is the largest source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area. It contains harmful pollutants such as soot and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins such as dioxin. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves in the Bay Area contributes about one-third of the harmful airborne soot pollution. Wood smoke can cause breathing difficulties for many individuals, especially children, seniors and those with heart or lung conditions

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 or 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 or by signing up for phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515.

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. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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