



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Winter Spare the Air Alert called for Saturday, January 2 ***Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited***

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season's first *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Saturday, January 2, which bans burning wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Light winds are expected to contribute to unhealthy air quality in the Bay Area, especially in the Santa Clara Valley.

"Air pollution from wood smoke is one of the greatest health threats to Bay Area residents during the winter months," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Just one burning fireplace can create unhealthy air for an entire neighborhood. It is important that the public refrain from burning, especially during these weather conditions that allow wood smoke to build up."

The 2015-2016 Winter Spare the Air season runs from November 1 through February 29. This season, new requirements are in effect. The Air District's Board of Directors unanimously adopted new provisions in October that strengthen the agency's original 2008 wood burning rule. For more information about new requirements to the rule, see the amendments press release at <http://bit.ly/1KDjbDm>.

In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area is the single largest source of air pollution, contributing about one-third of the harmful fine particulate pollution in the air. Exposure to wood smoke—like exposure to cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses, increased risk of heart attacks, and is especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions. Breathing fine particulates accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits or any other wood-burning devices during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*.

First-time violators will be given the option of taking a wood smoke awareness class, online or by mail, to learn about the hazards of wood smoke pollution instead of paying a \$100 ticket. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket, and subsequent ticket amounts will be higher.

This winter, homes without permanently installed heating, where wood stoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat, are exempt. However, starting November 1, 2016, the sole source of heat exemption will be available only if the sole source of heat is a wood-burning device that is EPA certified and registered in the Air District's registration program.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season. The daily burn status can be found:

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Continued... Winter Spare the Air Alert...

- 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 phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515
- via the Spare the Air iPhone and Android Apps

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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