



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 11, 2017
CONTACT: Walter Wallace, 415.749.4900

Fifth consecutive Winter Spare the Air Alert called for December 12

Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing the season’s fifth *Winter Spare the Air Alert* for Tuesday, December 12, banning wood burning, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors for 24 hours.

Air quality is expected to be unhealthy in the region tomorrow due to weather conditions trapping wood smoke pollution close to the ground. A strong and persistent ridge of high pressure is still in place over the Bay Area, bringing dry, calm weather conditions to the region until later this week. These conditions create a temperature inversion that acts like a lid, causing unhealthy air pollution to build up. **Smoke from the Southern California wildfires is currently offshore, but remains above the inversion layer, creating vivid sunsets but not contributing to already poor air quality.**

“This crisp, still, cool weather is again causing unhealthy, hazy air and trapping wood smoke pollution in our neighborhoods,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Even one burning fireplace can pollute the air for all the surrounding neighbors and cause unhealthy air to build up inside your home. Thank you to everyone for continuing to do your part to improve air quality by not burning wood in your fireplace.”

It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits or any other wood-burning devices during a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*. Exemptions are available for homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat. Anyone whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning device must use an EPA-certified or pellet-fueled device that is registered with the Air District to qualify for an exemption. An open-hearth fireplace no longer qualifies for an exemption.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make it harmful to breathe inside and outside the home. Wood smoke is the major source of air pollution in the Bay Area in the wintertime and is especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions.

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 in lieu of paying a \$100 ticket. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket, and subsequent ticket amounts will be higher.

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:

- **Via NEW text alerts! To sign up, text the word “START” to the number 817-57**
- 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

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. One fireplace burning can pollute an entire neighborhood. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particulate accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

#

Air District Communications Office
375 Beale Street, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94105
[Air District Homepage](#) | [News Releases](#)