



BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 20, 2018
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A Winter Spare the Air Alert is being extended through November 21 due to ongoing smoke impacts

Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited

SAN FRANCISCO – Due to continued smoke impacts in the Bay Area from the Camp Fire in Butte County, the Air District is extending the Winter Spare the Air Alert through Wednesday, November 21.

Burning wood, including manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, indoors or outdoors, is banned throughout this Winter Spare the Air Alert.

Shifting winds are expected to bring some relief from the smoke on Wednesday but air quality is forecast to remain unhealthy in parts of the East Bay. The rest of the region is expected to have improved air quality in the moderate Air Quality Index category. Moderate air quality is expected to prevail throughout the region on Thanksgiving Day.

"The smoke will begin to clear in much of the region, but pockets of unhealthy air quality will remain in the East Bay," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "For this reason, we have extended the Winter Spare the Air Alert and wood burning ban through Wednesday as the region's air quality begins to recover."

Follow current air quality on our [Air Monitoring Data](#) web page.

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 the air 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 alert status can be found:

- **Via text alerts. To sign up, text the word “START” to the number 817-57**
- On the Air District Web sites: www.baqmd.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.

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