

# About the Spare the Air Program

- Spare the Air was created in 1991 by the Bay Area Air District to alert residents when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy and to share information on ways to reduce air pollution.
- From easy, everyday tools—such as commute tips—and air quality resources, such as explanations of major air pollutant sources and their health effects, Spare the Air focuses on educating and helping residents choose actions that will improve air quality and make the Bay Area a healthier, more enjoyable place to live.
- Spare the Air encompasses seven full Bay Area counties as well as half of Solano and Sonoma counties. Counties are organized into five reporting zones, with the [Air Quality Forecast Map](#) showing the air quality forecast for the region.
- Spare the Air in summertime: During the [summer months, ozone pollution](#) (also known as smog) can become a health problem in the Bay Area. The Air District issues Spare the Air Alerts on days when [air quality is forecast](#) to be unhealthy and urges residents to drive less and reduce activities that add to pollution like mowing the lawn. Residents who are sensitive to unhealthy air are advised to limit their time outdoors, especially in the afternoon, when temperatures are warmer and ozone levels rise.
- Spare the Air in the wintertime: During the [winter months](#), or during wildfire events throughout the year, [particulate matter pollution](#) can reach elevated levels in the Bay Area. On days [when particulate matter levels are forecast](#) to be high, the Air District issues a Spare the Air Alert, making [wood burning illegal](#) throughout the Bay Area. On these days, residents are advised to limit their time outdoors, especially those sensitive to air pollution.

