

Spare the Air Winter Season Fact Sheet

Burning wood is always unhealthy for you and your family, neighbors and pets.

- Wood smoke is a major source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area – About 1/3 or more of fine particulate emissions are from wood burning.
- Exposure to wood smoke is unhealthy, even for short periods of time.

- Exposure to wood smoke - like cigarette or wildfire smoke - has been linked to increased frequency and severity of respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis, lung disease and cancer.
- In the winter, cold, stagnant air traps smoke close to the ground making it difficult to breathe.



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Pollution from wood burning fires is harmful to all of us, especially for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

- Smoke from wood burning and wildfires contains toxic, microscopic particles called PM2.5, which are so small that several thousand could fit on the period at the end of this sentence.
- Indoor wood burning is linked with an increased risk of breast and lung cancer.
- Burning wood produces unhealthy particulate pollution inside and outside your home.
- Levels of wood smoke pollution can vary significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood and build up in small pockets around homes.
- Wood smoke consists of millions of microscopic particles that are invisible to the naked eye but can easily bypass the body's natural filters and penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the blood stream.



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During a Spare the Air Alert, burning wood is prohibited.

- The Air District calls alerts when air pollution levels are forecast to be elevated. Spare the Air Alerts are usually announced by 2 p.m. the day before an alert is in effect. If a Spare the Air Alert—Burn Ban is issued, wood burning will be prohibited the next day from midnight to midnight.

- Woodsmoke from one fireplace can cause significant pollution impacts for an entire neighborhood.

Burning certain materials in a fireplace or creating excessive smoke is never allowed.

- Never burn garbage, plastics, junk mail, glossy paper or wood that has been painted or treated.

