

NEWS RELEASE

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Air District asks public to not burn wood over Thanksgiving holiday *Wood burning has negative health impacts and is strongly discouraged*

SAN FRANCISCO –The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is asking residents to not burn wood over the Thanksgiving holiday to help reduce air pollution and protect public health. As we enter the holiday season, gathering around a fireplace may be a tradition for many, but there are serious health impacts associated with wood burning.

Like wildfire or cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe. Wood smoke is a 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. Exposure to wood smoke is unhealthy, even for short periods of time.

“As we look forward to Thanksgiving traditions with friends and family, consider the impact wood smoke has on air quality and our health,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “Burning wood in the fireplace releases harmful pollutants inside and outside the home that pose real health risks. By skipping a fire and choosing cleaner heating alternatives, we can protect the air we breathe and ensure a safe and healthy holiday for all.”

In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.2 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area is the single largest source of wintertime air pollution, contributing about one-third of the harmful fine particulate emissions. 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.

Due to these health impacts, we strongly discourage wood burning at all times of the year, but it is particularly important to refrain from burning during the holidays when it is more common across the region. Wood burning can cause air quality to become unhealthy, especially in our communities and in inland valleys.

A Spare the Air Alert is NOT in effect and wood burning is allowed, but strongly discouraged.

The Air District’s [Clean HEET program](#) helps offset the cost of switching from a wood-burning stove or fireplace insert to an electric heat pump. The program is designed to improve air quality by replacing polluting wood-burning heating devices with cleaner heating options.

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 [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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