

# WOODSMOKE POLLUTION: A GROWING CONCERN

## ***Health problems associated with woodsmoke***

Research shows significant correlations between exposure to woodsmoke and a wide variety of respiratory ailments and lung cancer. Those most at risk for health problems due to woodsmoke are small children, the elderly, and people with asthma or emphysema. In addition, **woodsmoke contributes 39% of dioxin air emissions in the Bay Area and 40% of the Bay Area's particulate air pollution.** These very fine particles—invisible to the eye—are most harmful to health because they lodge deep in the lungs.



In the Bay Area, woodsmoke easily becomes a water pollution problem.

## ***Air pollution causes water pollution***

In the Bay Area, woodsmoke can easily become a water pollution problem because some of the pollutants in the air fall back into the Bay and our watersheds. The U.S. EPA has listed San Francisco Bay as impaired due to the buildup of dioxins and other contaminants in fish tissues.

## ***REDUCE POLLUTION FROM YOUR EXISTING (TRADITIONAL) FIREPLACE***

***Minimize use of your traditional fireplace. Save that romantic glow for special occasions! If you do burn, follow these guidelines:***



- Burn manufactured “densified” logs. Because logs made of compressed sawdust burn slowly at high temperatures, they burn cleaner, produce less smoke and emit 50% less carbon.
- Burn seasoned hardwood (oak, almond, madrone, apple).
- Don't burn softwoods (pine, poplar, cedar, redwood).

The elderly, small children, and people with asthma or emphysema are most at risk.

- Never burn garbage, plastic, glossy or colored paper, or scrap wood that is painted or stained.
- Make sure the fire is very hot and has good air flow. Don't “choke it down.”
- Please keep your chimney clean. Smoke traveling up clean chimneys releases less pollutants into the air.



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For a copy of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's *Woodburning Handbook*, with detailed information about how to heat cleanly with wood, call the Regional Water Quality Control Plant, (650) 329-2598, or visit [www.sparetheair.org/wbh/wbh01.htm](http://www.sparetheair.org/wbh/wbh01.htm)

A natural gas fireplace or stove eliminates 99% of the pollution generated by a traditional fireplace and is six times more energy efficient!

