

News Release

For immediate release

7-28-11

Attn: Local news, weather and assignment editors



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Lion Fire smoke caution for mountain and foothill areas

A health cautionary statement is expanding to include mountain and foothill areas in more counties because of smoke from the Lion Fire, which continues to burn in the Golden Trout Wilderness area of the Sequoia National Forest.

The health cautionary statement is in effect for the mountains and foothills of Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare (especially Kennedy Meadows, Ponderosa, Johnsondale, Springville, Camp Nelson, and Three Rivers) and Kern counties. However, there continue to be no impacts on the Valley floor.

"We are monitoring the situation to ensure protection of public health of all residents in the area," said Rick McVaigh, the Air District's Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer. "We will continue to provide updates until the fire is out."

Residents in affected areas are urged to take precautionary measures as appropriate for their local air quality conditions and health situations. Whenever residents smell smoke or can see smoke at ground level in their immediate area, they should take action to avoid exposure.

Smoke contains particulate matter, a form of pollution that is dangerous to human health. High levels of particulate matter – small pieces of airborne material such as soot and ash – can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

In the event of exposure to smoke, people with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

More information on the Lion Fire can be found at the Fire Incident Information website, www.inciweb.org/incident/2400.

The Air District provides current air quality information as well as forecasts that take fire impacts into account. For air-quality forecasts by county, residents can call toll-free (1 800 SMOG INFO) or visit www.valleyair.org.

For more information about the Valley Air District, call a regional office: in Fresno, 559-230-6000; in Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; and in Modesto, 209-557-6400.

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