

# News Release

For immediate release

8-16-12

For: Local News, Health and  
Weather sections



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## Season's first Air Alert planned for next week *Annual program calls for action to keep ozone levels low*

### MEDIA ADVISORY

**WHAT:** News conference to announce dates for first Air Alert of season

**WHEN:** Friday, Aug. 17 at 10 a.m.

**WHERE:** Air District offices in Fresno (1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.),  
Bakersfield (34946 Flyover Court) and Modesto (4800 Enterprise Way)

**WHY:** To announce first Air Alert of 2012

As Valley schools go back into session and vehicle traffic picks up, Air District officials are gearing up for the first Air Alert episode of 2012.

The annual air quality-notification program addresses elevated ozone (smog) levels that correlate to increased vehicle use, including back-to-school traffic. About 80 percent of the Valley's ozone is caused by mobile sources. During back-to-school week, vehicle idling is also a major air-quality concern.

"We are asking people to refrain from idling their vehicles when dropping off or picking up schoolchildren," said Jaime Holt, the District's chief communications officer.

Air officials were encouraged by the public's reception to the first Air Alert notifications in 2011 and anticipate a similar response this year.

The public's help in keeping the Valley from reaching high levels of smog is not only a key measure in protecting public health, but it is also critical in the Valley's efforts to avoid the \$29 million per year federal penalty.

"Our hopes are high for repeat cooperation this year," Holt said, calling Air Alerts "a window of opportunity" for residents to prevent exceedances of the 1-hour ozone health standard.

Air Alerts are declared Valley-wide when conditions such as increased emissions, high temperatures and stagnant air flow are favorable for ozone levels to exceed federal health-based standards unless action is taken to prevent them from increasing. During an Air Alert episode, which may last for several days, residents and businesses are urged to put into place measures that reduce vehicle miles traveled, such as:

-more-

## **First Air Alert episode imminent**

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- Refraining from vehicle idling,
- Carpooling or vanpooling, and
- Avoiding the use of drive-through services.

Additional measures, including shifting ozone-creating activities such as lawn maintenance to early mornings, can help offset rising ozone levels.

In addition to health consequences, ozone exceedances can result in monetary penalties to the Valley.

There are several ways to receive notification of an Air Alert: through the District's 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463) number; at [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org); and by free subscription to an automated email list (<http://valleyair.org/list.list.htm>).

For more information about Air Alerts, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org), [www.healthyliving.com](http://www.healthyliving.com) or call a District office: in Fresno (559-230-6000) in Modesto (209-557-6400) or in Bakersfield (661-392-5500).