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Gusty winds prompt health caution

Blowing dust poses potential health concern Valley-wide

The potential for blowing dust as a result of gusty winds has prompted local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement Saturday afternoon through Sunday morning for San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern Counties.

A low pressure system will move into the region today and produce gusty winds as the system's dry cold front passes through the Valley. The strong winds will cause localized blowing dust in areas where soils are exceptionally dry this afternoon through tomorrow morning and create unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10). Exposure to particulate pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion, depending on their local conditions.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).