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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Media Contacts

Heather Heinks (559) 994-7591

Jaime Holt (559) 309-3336

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 evening through Sunday evening for San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern Counties.

Northwesterly onshore flow will strengthen this evening through tomorrow evening as the weather pattern over the region transitions from low pressure to high pressure. As a result, winds will increase across the San Joaquin Valley, especially in the northern and western portions of the Valley during this time frame. The windy conditions will cause localized blowing dust in areas where soils are exceptionally dry this evening through tomorrow evening 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).