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Marsh Complex Wildfire prompts health caution

The public may experience poor air quality and should take action to protect their health

The Marsh Complex Wildfire burning west of Stockton in Contra Costa County has prompted local air officials to issue a health caution for smoke impacts in the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, and Madera, with the potential for air quality impacts in other Valley counties. The health caution will remain in place and smoke impacts are likely, until the fire is extinguished.

Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter which can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move inside to an air-conditioned or heated environment with their windows closed.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley address by visiting myraan.com. The RAAN monitors are designed to detect the microscopic PM2.5 particles that exist in smoke. Ash pieces, however, are much larger in size and will not be detected. If an area is impacted by smoke and ash fall, air quality should be considered "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if the monitor reflects a lower reading.

The public can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. In addition, anyone can follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app, available in the Apple store or Google Play.

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).