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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

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Health Caution: High wind and blowing dust expected for Kern and Kings Counties

Potential for elevated PM10 poses health concern

Strong easterly winds with gusts up to 50 mph are expected Thursday, Dec. 3 through Friday morning, Dec. 4, creating blowing dust and elevated concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10) in Kern and Kings Counties. The National Weather Service Hanford has already issued a Wind Advisory for Bakersfield for tomorrow. Toward that end, local air pollution officials are issuing a health caution for Kern and Kings Counties due to PM10 from wind-blown dust. The District recommends that residents in those areas use caution and avoid exposure to blowing dust caused by windy conditions. In addition, smoke from residential wood burning devices can add additional pollutants to the air, further compounding the unhealthy air quality produced during these high wind events. The District urges Valley residents to refrain from using wood burning devices.

Windy conditions in areas where soil is exceptionally dry often creates unhealthy concentrations of (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).