

Expect near-record highs in Fresno for first four days of June

By JoAnna Kroeker

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The first week of June will broil Fresno locals with a heat wave of near-record highs, the National Weather Service in Hanford said.

Meanwhile, the hot weather has Valley air quality and sports officials as well as farmers on alert.

Wednesday and Thursday will approach the 1910 scorching record of 105 with highs of 103. The heat wave will peak Friday with a high of 104, and drop – barely – to a high of 103 on Saturday. The highs will drop to 99 and 95 at the beginning of the second week of June.

During this heat wave, Fresno's temperatures will be within a few degrees of the record highs of 105 to 107 degrees for the first week of June, meteorologist Brian Ochs said.

"People won't be used to it getting 105 degrees yet, and since we are looking at near-record highs, that might become an issue," Ochs said. "With record highs going back to 1887, this is the warmest weather we've seen in quite some time in early June."

However, an early heat wave does not necessarily indicate a hotter summer, because the arrival of heat waves depends on the season, meteorologist Jim Dudley said.

While records for heat waves in the first week of June were generally set over a century ago, on average the first 100-degree day in Fresno is June 1. Friday's high of 98 degrees just missed. Dudley said this means Fresno's weather is right on track.

Ochs recommended drinking plenty of water and staying indoors or limiting activities outdoors whenever possible from 11 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m., the hottest part of the day.

Even though it's heating up, some kids don't want to stay indoors.

Splash parks are the best compromise for kids who want to play outside and parents who want to keep them out of the heat, Fresno mom Serena Garcia said. She admitted that even though she seldom plans on playing in the splash park, she'll get in anyway once it gets hot enough.

Tracy Ackles, another mother who lives nearby, said Dickey Park is free and more fun than big water parks like the Island Waterpark.

Her daughter, Tracy, said lots of kids turned out to play at the splash park on Monday. "My cousin was here and she kept on dragging me in the water."

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District officials expect the air quality this week to be moderate. The end of the week could bring unhealthy air for sensitive groups like children, seniors and people with chronic respiratory diseases.

Air district spokeswoman Heather Heinks said this week is the start of ozone season. [Ozone](#) forms in heat and sunlight, combining oxides of nitrogen from fuel combustion and reactive organic gases from paint, gasoline and dairies. It damages skin and eyes, triggers heart disease, leads to lung problems such as asthma and contributes to premature death.

Heinks suggested people carpool, take their lunch to work, avoid drive-thrus, water their plants in the early morning and stop idling their vehicles, especially in front of schools.

"All those things produce unnecessary emissions that will affect us this week and create ozone," she said.

Spikes in ozone levels usually happen between 2 and 5 p.m., Heinks said, but the Valley doesn't typically get the worst levels until late summer.

That means now is the time for people to change habits that affect pollution, she said. Residents can sign up for air quality updates at Valleyair.org/raan.

The California State Track and Field Championships will be held Friday and Saturday at Buchanan High in Clovis. Heinks said athletic organizations should pay attention to the air quality

updates, and athletes should stay hydrated and find shade. Those with respiratory issues should follow their doctor's orders.

California Interscholastic Federation officials announced Tuesday afternoon that they are working with Clovis Unified and meet management to modify the schedule on both days, due to the projected high temperatures. A new schedule will be announced Wednesday by 5 p.m.

State labor department officials reminded employers that in high heat advisories, it is important to keep their outdoor workers safe from heat-related illness.

California has a strict policy to prevent heat illnesses that includes providing access to shade, making fresh drinking water available, training supervisors and having a plan for how to deal with the onset of heat illness.

"What you want to do is make sure people rest in the shade and drink water," said Peter Melton, spokesman for the Department of Industrial Relations. "If they start to get sick, it is late in the game."

Melton also reminded employers that investigators with the Department of Occupational Safety Health Programs, or Cal/OSHA, will be visiting work sites to make sure workers are being protected.

Fresno cooling center facilities will not open until the weather service in Hanford forecasts 105-degree days, said Steve Primavera, a Fresno recreation supervisor. On those triple-digit days, the centers will be open from noon to 8 p.m.

Cooling stations are at the Ted C. Wills Community Center, Frank H. Ball Neighborhood Center, Mosqueda Community Center, Pinedale Community Center and Romain Neighborhood Park.

Merced temperatures reaching triple digits this week

By Monica Velez

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Summer's official start is still weeks away, but temperatures are heating up, which means residents should be prepared for the health and environmental risks that come along with triple-digit thermometer readings.

High temperatures are expected to reach 101 on Wednesday and Thursday, according to Bill Peterson, hydrometeorological technician for the National Weather Service. It will heat up slightly, reaching 103 on Friday and 104 on Saturday, he said. Winds are expected to be light and variable for the week, between 5 mph and 10 mph.

After Saturday, temperatures are expected to cool, dropping to 99 degrees on Sunday and 94 degrees on Monday.

Higher temperatures lead to higher ozone pollution in the valley, said Heather Heinks, outreach communication manager for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"We are entering ozone season," Heinks said.

Ozone pollution is the result of chemical reactions from sources, such as gasoline, that can bake in the hot sun and become a pollutant people breathe in. Heinks said people with respiratory issues have the potential to see symptoms worsen due to the higher levels of pollutants.

Shortness of breath and irritation in the throat are some symptoms that can occur as a result of more ozone pollution. Heinks said the No. 1 thing the Pollution Control District encourages people in the valley to do is keep track of the ozone pollution levels in the air at <http://www.valleyair.org/>.

"Increase in ozone with heat comes with high pressure that brings heat and traps anything it creates," Heinks said.

The Merced City School District receives a daily report from the Pollution Control District so it can keep track of the pollution. On the days the air is measured to be unhealthy for people, recess and outdoor activities are moved inside at elementary and middle schools.

“On days with excessive heat, the schools will limit outside activity,” said Sara Sandrik, public information officer for the Merced City School District.

Sandrik said kids also are reminded to stay hydrated, and every middle school has hydration stations where students can refill personal water bottles.

Keeping up with ozone pollution levels will tell people when they should try to stay inside. The air usually is worst during the hottest periods of the day, 2 through around 6 p.m, Heinks said.

“We expect to see ozone levels creeping up in the afternoons this week,” Heinks said.

The hottest period of the day is also when there is a higher chance of a fire spreading, said Billy Alcorn, deputy chief of the Merced Fire Department. Afternoon temperatures create a higher risk of fire sparking or spreading because the humidity is so low and the vegetation is more dry.

“The hotter weather there is, the dryer the land and vegetation get,” Alcorn said.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection recommends that property owners clear all vegetation 100 feet from structures, Merced County Fire Department Capt. Jeff Cole said.

Residents should be aware of all the dead, dry trees and plants around their yards and any empty houses that have dying plants as well, Cole said.

“It’s like a Roman candle when you have a dead tree hanging there with dead leaves,” Cole said.

On Tuesday, the fire department held a hands-on training event in a vacant lot covered in dry vegetation along Yosemite Avenue and El Redondo Drive.

Residents who need help in clearing vegetation or wish to report dry vegetation behind their neighborhoods can call the fire department at 209-385-6891.

“The biggest thing for us is we help out the property owner by taking care of all his weeds and we get live training, which is invaluable,” Alcorn said.