

Fresno ties a record for heat, and no relief is coming anytime soon

Fresno Bee Staff

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Fresno tied a heat record that had stood for more than a century when the thermometer topped out at 109 degrees Tuesday.

The previous all-time high for Aug. 29 was 109, set in 1915, the National Weather Service said. A new record-high overnight low also was set – 80 degrees, exceeding the record high minimum for the date of 76, also set in 1915.

New records were also set in Hanford, where the high was 112, and in Madera, where the high was 108. The old record for both cities was 106, set in 2007.

There will be slight relief Wednesday and Thursday when a storm system moves through the Pacific Northwest. That development will send winds from the Pacific toward California, and minor cooling will occur. No records are expected to be broken, and Fresno will see its high drop to 103 degrees Wednesday and 105 on Thursday.

But then the heat ramps back up Friday and into the Labor Day weekend. Highs will range from 106 to 110 degrees as the high pressure responsible for the hot weather stays in place.

At least two central San Joaquin Valley high schools have delayed the start of its Friday night football game because of the forecast.

Steven Annema, athletic director at Central Valley Christian in Visalia, said the school will start its junior varsity and varsity home games against Bakersfield Christian one hour later than scheduled, at 6 p.m. and 8:15.

San Joaquin Memorial said its games against Lemoore High School would start at 6 p.m. for junior varsity and 8 p.m. for varsity. That's an hour later for JV and a half-hour later for varsity players.

Air quality worsens

The stagnant atmosphere, coupled with the numerous wildfires burning in the Sierra nearby, are making for poor air quality. Smoke emissions remain trapped in the Valley air basin and spikes in ozone and particulates can occur, especially in afternoon hours.

"The businesses and residents of the Valley have done so much to reduce summertime pollution that it is unfortunate when these wildfires overwhelm that great work," stated Seyed Sadredin, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "However, the public needs to be advised that while these fires burn and bring smoke into the Valley, they need to take the appropriate steps to protect their health."

The key advice: Stay indoors, especially if you have existing respiratory conditions.

As Merced heats up and wildfires burn, unhealthy air quality spikes

By Monica Velez

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The mix of scorching temperatures and nearby wildfires resulted in higher rates of unhealthy air throughout Merced and the rest of the Central Valley, air quality officials reported.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a health cautionary statement Valley-wide, according to a news release. Smoke from wildfires burning in Mariposa County, the South Fork Fire and Empire Fire, are impacting air in different Valley locations, officials said, as well as emissions from recent Fresno County fires, Flat Fire and Hill Fire.

Until the wildfires are extinguished, the statement said, poor air quality will continue to be a concern.

"The businesses and residents of the Valley have done so much to reduce summertime pollution that it is unfortunate when these wildfires overwhelm that great work," said Seyed Sadredin, executive director of

the Valley Air District in a statement. "However, the public needs to be advised that while these fires burn and bring smoke into the Valley, they need to take the appropriate steps to protect their health."

Since Saturday, air quality in Merced has reached unhealthy levels in ozone pollution for sensitive groups, according to the Valley Air Districts Real-Time Air Advisory data. Sensitive groups include children, seniors and anyone with heart or lung problems.

Ozone is the dominant pollutant in the summertime, officials said, and is formed when a variety of pollutants, from things like cars and factories and baked in the sun. Rates of unhealthy air are expected to continue throughout the week based on weather conditions, Valley Air District officials said.

On Wednesday and Thursday temperatures in Merced are expected to stay between 100 and 105 degrees, said William Peterson, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Hanford. Going into the weekend, he said, temperatures will climb up to 105 to 110 degrees.

Williams advises people to stay out of the heat during the hottest point of the day, between 3 p.m. and 7. Spikes in unhealthy also tend to be during the highest temperatures of the day, according to Valley Air District data.

"Stay in cool areas, check on elderly and pets and I hope it (the heat) comes to an end soon," Williams said.