

# News Release

09-08-07

For Immediate Release



**San Joaquin Valley**  
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

**TO:**  
**Local News, Health and**  
**Weather sections**

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## **Air quality emergency warning: MEDIA UPDATE** ***Wildfires continue to impact Valley air quality,*** ***high levels of smoke are moving into southern counties***

While impacts from two wildfires burning in Plumas and Santa Clara counties have decreased in the Fresno metro area over the past 24 hours, the smoke is moving further south and Kern and Tulare counties are seeing increased pollution levels due to an accumulation of smoke. Throughout the Valley, PM2.5 (particulate matter of 2.5 micros and smaller) concentrations continue to be much higher than normal. Highest PM2.5 concentrations are being reported in the south valley in Kern and Tulare counties. Area pilots report smoke from ground level to 10,000 feet.

At 10am Saturday morning, air quality was in the “unhealthy for sensitive groups” range in the Bakersfield area, upper “moderate” range in the central San Joaquin Valley and the lower “moderate” range in the northern San Joaquin Valley, yet there are indications that these levels may rise throughout the day in the southern counties. These classifications are based on the EPA’s Air Quality Index <http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=static.aqi>.

Stagnant conditions are forecasted to continue into next week. Any smoke that is transported to the valley from the Lick or Moonlight fire will tend to remain in the valley due to the overnight inversion layer (which acts as a lid, holding the smoke near the surface) and the weak wind flow.

Currently, the Moonlight fire is very active. The smoke plume is very large and dense and is fortunately being transported to the west northwest out of the Valley towards the upper Sacramento Valley and Mount Shasta. The Lick fire smoke plume is smaller than the Moonlight plume, but is still significant, and is being transported to the east to Stanislaus and Merced Counties.

Fire details at 7 am Saturday Morning:

Lick Fire, 39585 acres, 45% contained, medium growth potential

Moonlight Fire, 31294 acres, 16% contained, extreme fire behavior, extreme growth potential

Throughout the morning, air quality monitors at Clovis, Modesto and Tracy have been showing increasing impacts from the Lick Fire plume, increasing to the upper “moderate” range. Bakersfield and Visalia monitors have also been showing increasing impacts to the “unhealthy for sensitive groups” range.

“The smoke continues to impact the Valley and residents in Kern and Tulare counties need to be aware that the high pollution experienced Friday in the central Valley is now headed their way,” stated Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer.

The Air District is strongly urging residents in Valley communities most impacted by the smoke, such as Kern and Tulare counties, to postpone any outdoor activity. This includes outdoor sports activities that both adults and especially children might engage in over the weekend.

“If you can see or smell smoke, you are breathing it into your lungs and you need to take steps to remove yourself from that environment,” stated Jaime Holt, the Air District’s Chief Communication Officer. “The best thing is to stay inside with your air conditioner running.”

Smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic matter burn. The biggest health threat from smoke comes from fine particles. These microscopic particles can get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause health problems such as burning eyes, runny nose, and illnesses such as bronchitis.

Fine particles also can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases – and even are linked to premature deaths in people with these conditions.

If a resident has heart or lung disease, such as congestive heart failure, angina, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema or asthma, they may experience health effects earlier and at lower smoke levels than healthy people. Older adults are more likely to be affected by smoke, possibly because they are more likely to have heart or lung diseases than younger people. Children also are more susceptible to smoke for several reasons: their respiratory systems are still developing; they breathe more air (and air pollution) per pound of body weight than adults; and they're more likely to be active outdoors.

Localized air quality could fluctuate depending on smoke impacts. If wind patterns change unexpectedly and the Moonlight fire begins to again dump smoke directly into the Valley, pollution levels will rise even higher posing an increase threat to health. Residents throughout the eight-county air basin are advised to use caution. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors’ advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion, as conditions dictate. Residents in all areas impacted by the smoke should remain indoors to limit exposure to the particulate matter generated from the smoke.

For air-quality forecasts by county, visit <http://www.valleyair.org/> or call 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463). Forecasts are updated daily at 4:30 p.m.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.

## Tips on How to Protect Your Family from the Health Effects of Smoke

**-Pay attention to local air quality reports** and stay alert to any news coverage or health warnings related to smoke. Visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) for the latest updates.

**-Use common sense.** If it looks smoky outside, it's probably not a good time to mow the lawn or go for a run. And it's probably not a good time for your children to play outdoors.

**-If you are advised to stay indoors,** take steps to keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed — unless it's extremely hot outside.

**-Run your air conditioner, if you have one.** Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. Note: If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter.

**-Help keep particle levels inside lower.** When smoke levels are high, try to avoid using anything that burns, such as wood fireplaces, gas logs, gas stoves — and even candles! Don't vacuum. That stirs up particles already inside your home. And don't smoke. That puts even more pollution in your lungs, and in the lungs of people around you. If you have asthma or other lung disease, make sure you follow your doctor's directions about taking your medicines and following your asthma management plan. Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

**-If you have heart or lung disease,** if you are an older adult, or if you have children, talk with your doctor about whether and when you should leave the area. When smoke is heavy for a prolonged period of time, fine particles can build up indoors even though you may not be able to see them.