

News Release

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For Immediate Release

TO:

Local News sections



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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Caution urged as air quality worsens

Weather conditions leading to unhealthy air through early next week

(Fresno, CA) – As air quality deteriorates to unhealthy levels, residents of the San Joaquin Valley are urged to protect their health and reduce air pollution-causing activities for the next several days.

“Strong high pressure is creating a lid over the region, resulting in stagnant conditions and preventing the air from mixing,” said Shawn Ferreria, a meteorologist for the Valley Air District. Low wind speeds also are contributing to the problem, he added. Winds the past few days have been recorded between calm and 8 miles per hour, slower than is typical this time of year, Ferreria said.

On Wednesday, preliminary data showed violations of federal smog standards in Stanislaus, Fresno, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties.

Today’s air quality is expected to be unhealthy for the general public in Fresno and the valley portion of Kern counties; and unhealthy for sensitive groups in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Kings and Tulare counties. Today also is a Spare the Air day valley-wide. Friday will be a Spare the Air day in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties, and possibly for other counties depending on the air-quality forecast issued this afternoon.

The forecast for Friday will be available by 4:30 p.m. at www.valleyair.org or by calling 1-800-766-4463 (Smog-Info).

Air quality is expected to be poor through early next week.

The worst summertime air quality recorded in the Valley in the past four years occurred in July 2002 in the Fresno metropolitan area, when the Air Quality Index was 202. Last year, an AQI of 201 was recorded in August in Arvin and surrounding areas of the southeastern valley portion of Kern County.

During summer months, air quality is worst in the afternoon, usually peaking between 3 and 7 p.m. Residents should reduce their exposure to unhealthy air by avoiding strenuous outdoor activities in the afternoon.

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Residents also can help improve the situation by curtailing activities that cause air pollution.

- Reduce vehicle miles by sharing a ride, organizing trips to cut down on distance traveled, and telecommuting or shopping the Internet instead of driving.
- Don't top off the car's gas tank, because doing so interferes with air-pollution controls on the gas pumps.
- Avoid the use of aerosols, gas-powered lawn equipment, oil-based paints and solvents.

Although significant progress has been made to improve air quality in the San Joaquin Valley the past 13 years, the Valley air basin still violates health-based air pollution standards. The Air District continues to adopt and amend rules to reduce emissions of ozone-forming gases and particulate matter. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.

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