

News Release

09-22-06

For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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TO:
Local News, Health and Weather
sections

Yolo fire causing heavy smoke in north Valley **Wildfire smoke elevates particulate levels; officials urge caution**

A large wildfire in Yolo County near Zamora that started today is creating air-pollution problems in the northern portion of the San Joaquin Valley, and could create air-quality concerns in San Joaquin, and, to a lesser extent in Stanislaus and Merced counties.

Officials at the Valley Air District urge residents in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties to use caution and common sense when conducting outdoor activities. Smoke is a source of particulate pollution, which can have serious negative health effects.

"If you can smell smoke, then it's probably at a strong enough concentration to cause health effects," said Evan Shipp, a District meteorologist.

The fire has diminished in the last few hours, but the smoke remains. It is expected that once the fire is out, smoke will disperse on strong north winds today.

Exposure to smoke and other particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposure to particle pollution has been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Residents in affected areas are advised to use caution when smoke is present. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality when smoke is present. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

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 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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