

# News Release

09-07-07

For Immediate Release



**San Joaquin Valley**  
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

**TO:**

**Local News, Health and  
Weather sections**

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## **Air District urges schools to postpone outdoor athletic activities** *Wildfires prompt Air District to renew emergency warning*

A large wildfire in northern California continues to send a smoke plume through the Valley, prompting local air-pollution officials to urge schools to postpone outdoor athletic activity throughout Friday and possible into the weekend.

Through a letter dated today to all County Offices of Education and multiple Valley school districts, the Valley Air District strongly recommends that schools postpone all outdoor activity, including sports, in areas where smoke can be seen or smelled until the smoke dissipates, which could occur over the weekend.

Thanks to a relatively clean summer ozone season, current pollution levels in the Valley have not reached the trigger level for a mandatory federal Stage One Alert. Yet, the Valley Air District is taking preventative actions to prohibit local emissions such as all agricultural burning and is requesting that the general public postpone activities that generate air pollution. The Valley Air District is also advising the public to avoid prolonged or intense exposure to the smoke.

“Due to the adverse health effects that can be attributed to smoke, such as the aggravation of heart and lung diseases and asthma, we are strongly urging schools and residents to take steps to avoid exposure in those areas where smoke is present,” stated said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer.

The smoke plume from the Moonlight Fire in Plumas County (northeastern California) and the Lick Fire in Henry Coe State Park (Santa Clara County) is impacting air quality in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. At 8 a.m. PDT, smoke was impacting the Fresno Metro area to the greatest degree and other parts of the San Joaquin Valley are being impacted to a lesser degree. The 8 a.m. PM2.5 (fine particle) concentration at Clovis was 184 ug/m3 (the current PM2.5 standard is 65 ug/m3). At 8 a.m., satellite images indicated the plume from the Moonlight Fire had changed direction (since yesterday) and is now moving to the east over Nevada. Smoke from the Lick Fire was pooling over the Central San Joaquin Valley. Stagnant conditions are forecasted to continue today and over the weekend. Residents of the San Joaquin Valley air basin are advised to take precautions to limit health effects from the smoke. If residents are smelling smoke, then they are likely being impacted by smoke health effects.

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. Residents of 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.

An updated air quality forecast will be available by noon today. 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.



# San Joaquin Valley

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

**To:** San Joaquin Valley Superintendents and Principals

**From:** Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer

**Date:** September 7, 2007

**Re:** Postponement of outdoor athletic activities where you can see or smell smoke.

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A large wildfire in northern California continues to send a smoke plume through the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District) is strongly urging that schools postpone outdoor athletic activities in areas where you can see or smell smoke. This warning will remain in place through Friday and Saturday morning. The District will provide an update based upon conditions on Saturday morning.

Air quality monitors from Kings/Fresno County northward are showing current air-quality readings which are at the "unhealthy" or "unhealthy for sensitive groups" levels due to elevated particulate matter (PM2.5) emissions. Areas that are directly impacted by smoke may be experiencing levels that are even higher. Local air quality will fluctuate depending on smoke impacts.

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.

Thank you for your cooperation. I appreciate the inconvenience and disruption that this exceptional event is causing for everyone. However, I am sure you agree that the health of our children and the general public should always take precedence. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 559-230-6036.

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**Seyed Sadredin**  
Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer

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