

## **Thousands without power throughout Fresno as high winds continue to cause problems**

By Larry Valenzuela

Fresno Bee, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021

Power outages were reported by PG&E throughout Fresno on Monday evening as high winds continue.

A low-pressure weather system that moved into the central San Joaquin Valley has resulted in many reports of power lines and trees down.

According to the PG&E Outage Map, outages have been reported throughout the city with a majority reported in central Fresno affecting 2,424 customers. PG&E spokesman Denny Boyles said that the outage in central neighborhoods was weather-related, but there was no time estimate for power restoration.

Another pocket of outages was reported near Ashlan and Highway 99, affecting around 1,097 customers, and another 2,119 affected in southeast Fresno.

The high winds are blowing dust and sand causing lower visibility and increasing particulate matter 10 microns or smaller, (PM10) in the air, creating hazardous breathing conditions, especially for those with breathing and lung conditions.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District urged people with heart or lung disease to follow doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure.

## **High winds topple trees in Fresno area, snarling traffic and canceling fair's horse racing**

By Jim Guy

Fresno Bee, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021

A low-pressure weather system moving into the central San Joaquin Valley prompted officials with the National Weather Service in Hanford to issue a wind advisory and a Red Flag Warning on Monday.

Gusty winds blew down tree limbs, caused power outages and made travel difficult at times in the Fresno area.

The Big Fresno Fair called off its scheduled horse races due to the unhealthy air quality index "for the safety of our horses and jockeys," Fair Deputy Manager II Lauri King said in a news release.

King said staff had determined it's unsafe to compete with the AQI is above 150 — and Monday's AQI was 225, King said, when the decision was made to cancel the races.

King said the fair will aim to add Monday's scheduled races to Friday's card.

King also said anyone who bought horse racing tickets Monday can obtain a refund at the horse racing box office. If they were purchased in advance or online, a refund will be provided automatically within five business days.

Kearney Park in Fresno also was closed for the day due to the high winds.

The weather service noted that the front is moving in from Northern California and the strongest winds will be in the Kern County mountains and the Kern desert areas, including Grapevine, Tehachapi and Walker passes.

## **High winds kick up dust in Kern County**

By Emma Gallegos

The Bakersfield Californian, Oct. 11, 2021

High winds kicked up dust, tumbleweeds and tree branches in Kern County on Monday.

For those who might have been hoping for some wind to clear out the haze of smoke from wildfires that's blanketed the Valley, they have found that wind truly is a "double-edged sword," said San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District spokeswoman Heather Heinks.

The lack of precipitation in the Valley, dry soil and high winds created the conditions for a dust storm Monday, according to Heinks.

When the winds began to stir Monday morning, the district updated its advisory to an alert that will last until 11 a.m. Wednesday.

It warns residents that particulate matter from dust can cause serious health problems, such as aggravating lung disease, triggering asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increasing the risk of respiratory infections. Heinks notes events like these particularly affect older adults and young children.

Kern County Public Health Services Department spokesman Michelle Corson said that because valley fever is prevalent in Kern County, it is especially important residents avoid going outside on windy days.

"Stay inside and keep windows and doors closed when it's windy outside and the air is dusty, especially during dust storms," she advised. "While driving, keep car windows closed and use recirculating air, if available."

On Monday, there were wind gusts up to 35 mph in Bakersfield, though in a few areas in the south valley it was closer to 40 mph, according to Jim Bagnall, meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Hanford.

In the mountains of Kern County, gusts were much higher. In the Tehachapi area, gusts reached 45 to 55 mph. Over some of the highest ridges in Kern County, the National Weather Service measured gusts up to 70 mph. The Mojave Desert was also recording high gusts up to 70 and 75 mph, Bagnall said.

Winds were expected to diminish in the evening and be lighter on Tuesday.

This week's wind is because the San Joaquin Valley is between a low-pressure storm system sliding through the Great Basin and high-pressure system over the Pacific Ocean along the coast.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District recommends that residents visit [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) or download the "EPA AirNow" app for android or iPhone. They can also call the Bakersfield District office at 661-392-5500 for more information.

## **KNP Complex Fire update: Gusty winds to challenge hard-fought containment, limit aerial crews**

By Joshua Yeager

Visalia Times-Delta, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021

Containment of the KNP Complex Fire burning in Sequoia National Park increased to 30% after a winter storm delivered some much-needed rain across the parched Sierra Nevada.

Now, firefighters could experience whiplash as gusty winds prompt air quality alerts Valleywide. Winds will challenge newly established fire lines on the KNP Complex, but fire managers are reasonably confident that conditions overall will stay positive for sequoia firefighters.

"The big story today is the weather," said Dennis Burns, fire behavioral analyst for KNP Complex North Zone. While some rain and snow are expected at high elevations, "the big story behind that is winds."

Strong northwesterly winds are forecasted across the area, but Burns says firefighters are not expecting any major problems with the fire itself. The bigger issue, he said, "are winds down here on the Valley floor that will limit helicopters" from making water and retardant drops.

"Fortunately, where the fire's sitting, we don't think that's going to be an issue," he said.

Over the weekend, the KNP Complex was split into two zones to help with containment and management efforts.

The North Zone is operating out of Hume Lake and the South Zone is operating out of Three Rivers, Silver City and Visalia. The dividing line starts near Eshom Valley and runs southeast toward Moro Rock and Giant Forest.

"We're going to have some high winds down low, so firefighters are going to be really diligent watching and monitoring to make sure we don't have any escape of the fire," said Chad Cook, a section chief on the South Zone.

He added that crews will begin moving heavy equipment down from the fire line and begin work on suppression repair, meaning firefighters will return the landscape to its natural state in areas that were affected by dozer lines and other firefighting tactics.

Many areas of the fire have strong containment lines established, Cook said. Firefighters are waiting until major winds challenge and stress those lines before painting them black on the map and counting them toward the fire's containment percentage.

The KNP Complex has scorched more than 87,000 acres in Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks, as well as Sequoia National Forest. The blaze may have killed hundreds of giant sequoia trees, park officials said.

An abundance of dead trees has made it difficult to access burned groves and assess the damages, Burns said.

Between the two zones, more than 2,000 firefighters from across the country have rallied to defend the parks and surrounding communities in Tulare and Fresno counties.

### **Winds spark air quality, visibility concerns across Tulare County**

For the past several weeks, Tulare County residents have been no stranger to unhealthy air, driven by wildfire smoke from the SQF Complex and Windy fires burning above.

Gusty winds blowing across the San Joaquin Valley on Monday and Tuesday, however, are whipping up dust and dirt — not wildfire smoke. These particles are similar to those emitted by wildfires, damaging sensitive residents' lungs and reducing visibility.

Around 2 p.m. Monday, California air monitors reported Air Quality Index levels at 451, or "hazardous," in Visalia. The index typically maxes out at 500.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued an air quality alert through Tuesday evening.

"Strong winds often cause localized blowing dust in areas where soils are exceptionally dry—creating unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller," the district said in its advisory. "The district recommends that residents in affected areas remain indoors with window and doors closed, avoiding exposure to blowing dust."

### **California wildfires destroy mobile homes; 1 man burned**

The Bakersfield Californian, Oct. 12, 2021

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Destructive California wildfires driven by intense winds caused damage at two mobile home parks, destroying some trailers, and one person suffered burns, officials said.

The fires on Monday also toppled trees, whipped up blinding dust clouds and forced the a utility to cut power to thousands of customers in an effort to prevent wildfires.

Although the winds were easing on Tuesday, about 30 structures were destroyed Monday afternoon when wind-driven flames roared through the Rancho Marina RV Park in Sacramento County, River Delta Fire District Deputy Chief Hugh Henderson told [ABC10-TV](#). No injuries were reported and the cause remained under investigation.

In San Joaquin County, a man suffered burns and about five mobile homes were damaged by flames that raced through the Islander Mobile Home Park, Lathrop-Manteca Fire Chief Josh Capper told [Fox40-TV](#).

The injured man suffered severe third-degree burns over most of his body, Capper said.

On the south Santa Barbara County coast, the Alisal Fire had scorched more than 9 square miles (23 square kilometers) by early Tuesday and remained completely uncontained.

The fire erupted Monday afternoon on a ridge and blasted down toward the ocean, forcing closure of U.S. 101, the only major highway on that section of the coast. Evacuation orders were issued for several areas of the lightly populated region.

The winds arrived Monday as a low-pressure system moved from Oregon toward the Great Basin. Red flag warnings for critical fire danger remained in effect Tuesday for much of the interior of Northern California, with lesser wind advisories continuing in Santa Barbara County.

In anticipation of the wind event, the Pacific Gas & Electric utility shut off power to about 24,000 customers in targeted areas of 23 counties to prevent fires from being started if gusts damaged electrical equipment.

PG&E said Monday night that its meteorologists had begun issuing “all-clear” advisories for portions of the areas affected by the public safety power shutoff and crews were patrolling de-energized lines to check for damage before restoring electricity.

PG&E equipment was blamed for a 2018 fire that wiped out most of the town of Paradise in Butte County. The company filed for bankruptcy and pleaded guilty to 84 counts of involuntary manslaughter. PG&E also faces numerous criminal charges for fires caused by its fraying equipment, including involuntary manslaughter charges filed last month in connection to a wildfire near the city of Redding last year that killed four people.

Windy weather is a nightmare for firefighters in a state where heat waves and historic drought tied to climate change have left forests and brush tinder-dry. Fires that began in late summer are still burning after destroying hundreds of homes.

In the Sierra Nevada, the KNP Complex fire that may have burned hundreds of giant sequoias was only 30% contained. On Monday, a firefighter was struck by a rolling rock. The firefighter was airlifted to a hospital and is in stable condition, fire officials said.

## **High winds prompt PG&E to shut power to 25,000 in California**

By Associated Press

The Bakersfield Californian, and the Business Journal, Monday, Oct. 11, 2021

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Pacific Gas & Electric began shutting off power to about 25,000 customers in central and northern California Monday and Southern California Edison warned it may do the same for up to 9,000 of its customers as high winds toppled trees, downed power lines and ignited fires that forced people to flee from their homes.

At least a half dozen mostly small fires broke out across the state, challenging firefighters as they tried to contain the blazes amid the blustering wind.

West of Santa Barbara, authorities ordered the mandatory evacuation of campsites, cattle and horse ranches near Refugio State Beach and shut U.S. 101 — the only highway along the coast — as winds pushed a fire that started in the Los Padres National Forest toward the beach, U.S. Forest Service spokesman Andrew Madsen said.

The fire was driven through dense chaparral by winds gusting to 70 mph (112 kmh). It had grown to at least 4.5 square miles (12 square kilometers) by nightfall and threatened perhaps 100 homes, ranches and other buildings, authorities said.

About 200 firefighters were battling the flames and trying to protect homes and buildings but aircraft couldn't help because they were grounded by the high winds, fire officials said.

In the San Joaquin Valley, a grass fire north of Madera prompted evacuations east of State Route 99. Meanwhile, firefighters in Fresno rescued three people trapped in their home after a tree fell on it.

California already has seen massive fires this year, including one that may have burned hundreds of giant sequoias in groves in Sequoia National Park in the Sierra Nevada. On Monday, a firefighter with a hand

crew working on the blaze was struck by a falling rock. The firefighter was airlifted to a hospital and is in stable condition, fire officials said.

Forecasters issued a red flag warning for extreme fire danger from gusty winds. The warning extends until late Tuesday. The strongest winds are expected most of Monday, said Hannah Chandler-Cooley, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

The planned outages are necessary because high winds, combined with low humidity and drought-ravaged vegetation, could raise the risk of trees falling on power lines and spark a fast-spreading wildfire, PG&E said in a statement. Heat waves and historic drought tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight in California and the rest of the U.S. West.

On the Central Coast, a tree fell onto power lines at Hearst San Simeon State Park, sparking a small fire in the brush, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection tweeted.

Winds were expected to pick up Monday afternoon to evening in Southern California, with projected gusts of 50 to 70 mph (80 to 113 kph). SoCal Edison began turning off power to a customers in parts of Los Angele and Ventura counties to reduce the threat of wildfires.

The National Weather Service said blowing dust was widespread from the Sacramento Valley, across the San Joaquin Valley and into the high desert Antelope Valley north of Los Angeles. Caltrans said sections of State Route 138 near the Antelope Valley city of Lancaster and State Route 14 were shut down because of the dust storm and several overturned trucks blocking the roadway.

Strong winds knocked down a tree, destroying three parked cars and damaging a home in the coastal town of El Granada, in San Mateo County, CalFire said.

No one was injured, but photos from the scene showed the tree also took down power lines.

PG&E said it expects to begin restoring power Tuesday afternoon.

The utility began intentionally shutting off power in the fall of 2019 to prevent wildfires, after an investigation determined the Camp Fire that wiped out most of the town of Paradise was sparked by its equipment. The company filed for bankruptcy and pleaded guilty to 84 counts of involuntary manslaughter related to the 2018 fire.

PG&E also faces numerous criminal charges for fires caused by its fraying equipment, including involuntary manslaughter charges filed last month in connection to a wildfire near the city of Redding last year that killed four people.