

## **Current air quality in Sacramento: Winds from the Pacific will push smoky air east**

By Mila Jasper

The Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, October 05, 2021

While the Sacramento region saw some haze caused by wildfire smoke yesterday, a low pressure trough will send winds from the Pacific that push particles east, according to the National Weather Service.

Parts of the region already woke up to better air quality than yesterday's numbers, which in some areas reached unhealthy for sensitive group levels. Meteorologist Eric Kurth told The Bee winds should disperse smoke by early afternoon.

"We'll be seeing that over the next several days as well," Kurth said, though the foothills may see some lingering smoke.

Here's a look at air quality index readings across the region Tuesday morning.

Sacramento County is largely seeing good to moderate readings. In the City of Sacramento, AirNow shows good readings. Arden Arcade is seeing the same. PurpleAir monitors in and around Elk Grove are showing a mix of good and moderate readings, while Folsom and Citrus Heights are largely experiencing moderate air quality.

### **El Dorado**

Air quality in El Dorado County is a bit worse than in Sacramento; Placerville monitors are showing moderate levels while PurpleAir monitors in Pollock Pines are posting levels in the unhealthy for sensitive groups range, according to AirNow. Air quality in Tahoe is elevated in the unhealthy for sensitive groups range as well, according to AirNow, and some monitors near South Lake Tahoe are showing unhealthy readings. When air is unhealthy, everyone should limit outdoor exertion to avoid the potential for negative health effects.

### **Placer**

In Placer County, Roseville and Lincoln are experiencing moderate air quality, according to AirNow. Auburn looks similar, though some monitors are showing readings in the good range as well.

### **Yolo**

Air quality in West Sacramento, Davis, Woodland and Winters is good, according to AirNow.

## **Should outside events be canceled by wildfire smoke? Here's what health officials say**

By Monica Vaughan

Fresno Bee, Monday, Oct. 4, 2021

Wildfire smoke caused "hazardous" levels of air pollution in parts of the San Joaquin Valley Monday morning, and poor air quality conditions are expected to continue at least through Thursday.

Does that mean you should cancel the family barbecue? How about swim team practice, a long distance run? Should outdoor games be postponed? What about outdoor concerts? Should outdoor workplaces close?

According to California public health officials, when the air quality reaches "hazardous" levels, the answer is yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and yes.

When the smoke is that bad, it's unsafe for anyone to be outside. It's especially dangerous for children, pregnant women, adults over 65 and anyone with existing respiratory or cardiovascular problems like asthma or COPD. Air quality this poor can cause permanent damage to hearts and lungs, and is associated with increased emergency visits and higher rates of death.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District on Monday afternoon said it "strongly encourages Valley residents, school officials, and event planners to closely follow the current air quality conditions and recommendations when making decisions about outdoor activities."

While there are no mandated closures for air quality at a national or state level, public health officials have guidance for when school districts and community members should take certain protective measures from smoke.

Valley Air has a longtime outreach and education program that alerts people when air quality is dangerous and provides guidance on what activities are safe. You can find out the current air quality index by punching in an address here, the Real-time Air Advisory at [valleyair.org/myraan](http://valleyair.org/myraan).

#### **GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS, SPORTS DURING WILDFIRE SMOKE**

Local school districts have the authority to determine when to move recess indoors, or cancel outdoor physical education, athletic practice and scheduled sports events for student health.

Some schools between Stockton and Bakersfield canceled outdoor activities on Monday by moving recess indoors, for example, and independent youth sports operators have recently made the tough decision to cancel games, according to Jaime Holt, with Valley Air.

Some 1,300 Valley schools are enrolled in a Healthy Air Living Schools program, meaning staff follow Valley Air's real time air quality reporting that offers guidance on health-protective measures during wildfire smoke, and poor air days caused by other pollutants.

There are no state laws or rules about when activities have to be canceled or moved indoors, because "circumstances can vary greatly from one school district to another," according to Amy MacPherson, spokesperson for the California Air Resources Board.

Instead, staff with her organization worked with the California Department of Education to create guidance to help local school districts develop their own policies.

Air quality level 2 (yellow, unhealthy for sensitive groups): make sure children with asthma or other heart or lung problems are managing their condition during recess and P.E.

Air quality level 3 (red, unhealthy): People with heart or lung problems should avoid outdoor activities, sports practice should be reduced to 30 minutes per hour and athletes should get increased rest breaks and substitutions during practice and games.

Air quality level 4 (purple, very unhealthy): P.E. and recess should be limited to 15 minutes of outdoor activity, people with existing conditions should remain indoors, sports practice and games should follow level 3 recommendations. Consider closing some schools.

Air quality level 5 (dark red, hazardous): No outdoor activities should be allowed and all activities should be moved indoors, including recess, P.E., sports practice and training should be moved indoors and scheduled outdoor sports events must be rescheduled or relocated.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS AND RESIDENTS ON BAD AIR DAYS**

Residents and community leaders are under no obligation to alter their behavior or change plans when the air is hazardous, but there are clear recommendations for how to protect public health from high-risk activities.

Valley Air staff will reach out to organizers of larger outdoor events when the air quality is bad, for example, to "share our real time outdoor activity guidelines with them and encourage them to follow those guidelines," according to public information officer Jaime Holt.

The district partners with the National Weather Service to issue air quality alerts through smartphone apps and other tools, and outreach materials in multiple languages are distributed across an "extensive network" of social media and public health officials, Holt said.

Staff attempted to reach organizers of the California Classic Weekend event that brought hundreds to downtown Fresno last weekend, but were unable to reach anyone, according to Holt.

Faced with an increase in devastating wildfires in recent years, California officials created a guidance document for public health officials about when and how to communicate to the public the risks of wildfire smoke.

Here's what the California Air Resources Board and California Department of Public Health recommend:

**Air quality level 2 (yellow, unhealthy for sensitive groups):** People with heart or lung disease who experience symptoms, such as repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, unusual fatigue or lightheadedness, should contact a healthcare provider. Sensitive groups should avoid physical exertion and limit time outdoors.

**Air quality level 3 (red, unhealthy):** In addition to above, everyone should keep doors and windows closed, avoid using exhaust fans, turn air conditioning on to recirculate mode, avoid indoor pollutants, including tobacco smoke, burning in a wood stove, frying or broiling foods, candles or incense and vacuuming.

Consider canceling outdoor events like competitive sports.

**Air quality level 4 (purple, very unhealthy):** In addition to above, everyone should avoid outdoor activity, stay in a "clean room" at home where there are no indoor smoke or particle sources and use an air filter.

Cancel outdoor events that involve activity. Consider canceling outdoor events that do not involve activity, such as concerts.

**Air quality level 5 (dark red, hazardous):** In addition to above, everyone should stay indoors and anyone experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention. Consider evacuating to a cleaner air shelter or leave the area if your home is not safe from particle pollution.

Consider closing schools. Cancel all outdoor events. Consider air quality in indoor workplaces and take measures to protect workers. Consider stopping outdoor work activities unless workers have respirators and clean air breaks.

## **Smoke and Ash Could Cover Valley Through Thursday, Air District Says**

By Bill McEwen

GV Wire, Monday, Oct. 4, 2021

Containment of the KNP Complex dropped nearly in half Monday as the wildfire continued to consume timber and brush parched by the drought in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park.

In addition, the Tulare County Sheriff's Office issued an evacuation order in the Mineral King area — Gateway to the park entrance, including Sycamore Drive.

There will be a road closure at Highway 198 and Mineral King Road, the sheriff's office said Monday morning.

Stay Inside, Air District Advises

Meanwhile, the Valley Air District said Monday afternoon that because smoke and ash from the KNP Complex and Windy fires have combined with a high-pressure system, the current Air Quality Alert is expected to continue through Thursday.

"The district warns residents being impacted by smoke to remain indoors to reduce their exposure to particulate matter emissions," officials said in a news release.

"Those with existing respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children, and the elderly, are especially susceptible to the health effects from this form of pollution. Residents experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed."

Late Sunday night, winds caused a spot fire across Mineral King Road, prompting an evacuation order for Crest, Sierra King, Hammond, and Oak Grove.

Parts of Fresno County are under evacuation warnings. They are Sequoia Lake, Cedarbrook, Etheda Springs, and Pinehurst.

To see if you are under an evacuation order or warning, click on this link and type in your address.

Containment Falls to 11%, Fire Grows to 67,708 Acres

Authorities said that the fire's growth to nearly 68,000 acres cut the containment from 20% to 11% as of 11 a.m. Monday.

There are 1,531 firefighters on the scene: 26 crews, 61 engines, 40 water tenders, 21 dozers, and 12 helicopters.

Officials are hoping that the high-pressure ridge that has held smoke over the fire over the past few days will begin to break down today. If that occurs, smoke will exit the area and aid firefighters.

#### Firefighters Achieve 68% Containment of Windy Fire

Containment improved from 52% Saturday night to 68% on Monday morning. The fire is now about 95,000 acres.

Officials said that containment lines are holding in the Camp Nelson area. On the east side of the fire, crews have suppressed the fire directly from Johnsondale southward.

Helicopters are proving invaluable in the effort to squelch the blaze, officials said. They are dropping water on the fire's edge to halt or slow its progression eastward toward the Kern River. On the southeastern corner west of Baker Point, all of the spot fires are contained.

### **Sequoia wildfires grow, forcing evacuations and air quality alerts. Here's the latest**

By Tim Sheehan

Merced Sun-Star, Monday, Oct. 4, 2021

The KNP Complex Fire burning for almost four weeks in the Sierra Nevada range of eastern Tulare County grew by about 5,000 acres overnight, expanding to nearly 68,000 acres by Monday morning.

The U.S. Forest Service's InciWeb incident information system reported that the fire encompassed 67,708 acres within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Forest, with containment estimated at about 11%.

That's a change from Sunday's situation report of 62,761 acres and 20% containment.

New evacuation orders were issued late Sunday for residents in the Mineral King area, Gateway, to the Park Entrance, including Sycamore Drive.

As the fire which was sparked by lightning on Sept. 10 continues to burn, the KNP Complex – along with the Windy Fire burning farther south in Tulare County – are pumping smoke into the air over the San Joaquin Valley. The volume of smoke, fine soot and ash drifting westward from the fire turned the skies over Fresno and the region a muddy orange-gray and prompted a continuing air quality warning for Valley residents.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District forecast that air quality would be "unhealthy" in the Valley from Merced County southward to Kern County.

Incident commander Dave Bales, who heads the Southwest Area Type 1 incident team battling the fire, said winds on Sunday night caused a spot fire south of Mineral King Road, prompting the latest evacuation orders from Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux.

As of Monday, at least 1,500 firefighters were engaged against the fire, including 61 fire engines, 40 water tenders, 21 dozers and 12 helicopters. The fire behavior has included extreme uphill runs and short-range spot fires. Weather is also a concern for firefighters, as high pressure continued to hold smoke in place over the area. Very low humidity also means that fuels feeding the fire – timber, chaparral and short grass in the forest – is continuing to dry out, contributing to the active spread of the blaze.

Over the next 24 hours, fire crews expect to see active to extreme fire behavior because of the low humidity. The fire is expected to continue to move north up the Redwood drainage and into the Pierce Creek drainage. On the east side, the fire is likely to continue spreading eastward, south of the Kaweah River's Middle Fork, and backing toward Mineral King Road.

#### **Windy Fire still growing**

Farther south, in the Sequoia National Forest, the Windy Fire is now estimated at almost 95,000 acres, with containment lines now encircling 68% of the fire's perimeter. The Windy Fire ignited on Sept. 9, and was caused by lightning like the KNP Complex to the north.

The wildfire's growth was reported at about 2,300 acres over the previous 24 hours.

The fire also is burning in the Tule River Reservation as well as the Sequoia National Forest, including the Giant Sequoia National Monument. To date, it has burned 14 homes, 14 outbuildings and two commercial buildings. Four people have been injured by the fire.

About 2,000 other homes and 100 commercial buildings remain threatened by the Windy Fire.

Evacuation orders were being downgraded Monday afternoon to warnings in California Hot Springs and Pine Flat, but orders remain in place at the White River Summer Home tract, Sugarloaf Saw Mill and Sugarloaf Mountain Park.

Almost 2,300 firefighters are working the Windy Fire, including 57 hand crews, 112 engines, 17 helicopters, 14 bulldozers and 13 water tender trucks.

The National Interagency Coordination Center reports that together, the KNP Complex and Windy fires have cost more than \$86 million to fight.