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Smoke from the Ferguson Fire in Mariposa County prompts health caution

Smoke from the Ferguson Fire in Mariposa County is affecting air quality in locations throughout the northern and central San Joaquin Valley, prompting local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement for Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, and Tulare Counties. Smoke impacts will continue until the fire is extinguished.

Smoke from the fire can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move inside to an air-conditioned environment.

Please be advised that the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) monitors are designed to detect the fine particulates (called PM2.5 which are microscopic in size and not visible to the human eye) that exist in smoke. Ash particles are much larger in size and will not be detected by our monitors. Therefore, an area may be experiencing ash impacts from potential fires while the PM monitor reflects a moderate reading. If you can smell smoke or see ash that is an indication that you should be treating air quality conditions as "Unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) and remain indoors.

Residents can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. The District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) provides localized air quality data from an extensive air-monitoring network which allows Valley residents to track PM at any Valley address by visiting myraan.com. Residents can also follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app, available in the Apple store or Google Play.