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Mineral Fire in Fresno County prompts health caution Valley-wide

District cautions Valley residents of smoke impacts from surrounding wildfires

Smoke from the Mineral Fire in Fresno County is expected to impact air quality in the San Joaquin Valley today. Smoke from several other wildfires surrounding the Valley also have the potential to affect air quality over the next few days. As a result, the District is issuing a health caution, which will remain in place until the fires are extinguished. Local air pollution officials caution Valley residents to reduce exposure to the particulate matter (PM) emissions by remaining indoors in effected areas.

The Mineral Fire began Monday, July 13, west of Coalinga, and has already consumed 1,000 acres. While currently affecting Fresno County, the fire has the potential to impact the entire Valley including the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Kings, Tulare and Kern.

PM pollution can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of PM exposure. 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. Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move indoors, to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley location by visiting myRAAN.com. District air monitoring stations are designed to detect microscopic PM 2.5 particles that exist in smoke. However, larger particles, such as ash, may not be detected. If you smell smoke or see falling ash in your immediate vicinity, consider air quality "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if RAAN displays lower level of pollution.

The public can also check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires affecting the Valley. In addition, anyone can follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on their mobile device.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500). District Outreach and Communications personnel are also available for media interviews via Zoom or by phone.