

What is the air quality today? Is it a good day to have outdoor recess and play outside or should you have fun indoors instead?

The Air Quality Flag Program can give you the answer. It's easy — just look for the colored flag flying at schools throughout the San Joaquin Valley!

Ready, Set... Fly Your Flag!

If your school already "flies the flag"... congratulations! Your school must think you (or your children) are pretty important.

If your school has not yet signed up, ask your teacher or principal if your school can join the thousands of other schools in the Valley flying their flags.

Participating in the program is a fun and easy way to get involved in air-quality issues, as well as a point of pride when you see *your* flag flying.

**For more information or
to sign up for the program:**

Valley Air District
559-230-6000
public.education@valleyair.org
www.valleyair.org



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San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

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Good air quality is important to your health and happiness, while poor air quality can make you sick. You probably know someone who has asthma or allergies, and when the air is bad, they can feel very sick. Really dirty air can also make it difficult for young lungs to grow strong.

Each day, the Valley Air District makes an air-quality forecast that lets you know what the air will be like the next day. These scientific forecasts are also turned into an easy-to-understand color system called the Air Quality Index. By learning about the different colors, you can learn about air quality and how to protect yourself and your family on bad-air days

-  **Good**
A great day to play outside!
-  **Moderate**
Unusually sensitive? Consider limiting time outside!
-  **Unhealthy for sensitive groups**
If you have asthma or other health problems, stay inside!
-  **Unhealthy**
Everyone, play inside!

The Flag Program at Your School

The Air Quality Flag Program is a fun, *free* program sponsored by the Valley Air District, the American Lung Association and other non-profit organizations. It is available to Valley schools to let people know what the air quality is expected to be. It's a great way to get your school (or your child's school) thinking about the air.

Through the Air Quality Flag Program, participating schools are given training and a set of colorful flags *FREE!* Each of the flags represents a different level of air pollution. See the flag color examples above to find out what each color means.

Every afternoon, schools are told what the air quality will be for the next day. The air-quality forecast and flag color are decided by county. Schools can receive the air-quality flag color forecast by fax or e-mail. It is also available on the Air District's website: www.valleyair.org.

Then, the next day, a school staff or faculty member — or even a student — raises the correct colored flag. By raising a flag, everyone at that school, as well as parents who are dropping off or picking up their children, and anyone who drives past that school, are made aware of that day's air-quality status.

They can then plan to stay inside on bad-air days and play outside on good-air days.

Along with the set of flags, air-quality experts visit the school to educate staff and faculty on the program and general air quality. The Flag Program also includes additional materials such as posters and refrigerator magnets.

Air Advisory Network

There's also a complementary program called Real-Time Air Advisory Network (RAAN). RAAN is a free, useful, tool that gives Valley schools the most up-to-date air-quality information possible, and alerts them to significant changes in the current air quality. Schools that subscribe to RAAN receive updated, localized air-quality information directly via email as it becomes available. The information enables school activities that are affected by air quality to be modified when necessary.

The flexibility of the RAAN program enhances a school's ability to allow students to enjoy outdoor sports and activities as much as possible while protecting students' health when air quality is poor.

The network also gives guidelines on limiting outdoor activities when air quality is poor. You can find out complete information about RAAN and sign up to receive the notifications by visiting www.valleyair.org/Programs/RAAN/raan_landing.htm