

News Release

For immediate release
10-13-09

For: Local News, Health and
Weather sections



South District Media Contact - Bakersfield
Brenda Turner (661) 392-5500

Spanish language Media Contact
Claudia Encinas (559) 230-5851

Blowing dust prompts health warning

Gusty winds over the southern San Joaquin Valley have prompted local air-pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement through Tuesday evening.

Winds in the southern San Joaquin Valley may produce areas of localized blowing dust, especially in Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties. Blowing dust can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller, or PM10.

"Gusty to strong southeasterly winds are continuing over the entire San Joaquin Valley this afternoon causing blowing dust and elevated PM10 levels in the Valley portion of Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties," said Scott Nester, Planning Director for the Air District.

Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. For people with heart disease, short-term exposure to particle pollution has been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmia, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Residents in Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties **where dust is blowing** are advised to **stay indoors and** use caution through Tuesday evening. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

For more information about the Valley Air District, call a regional office: in Fresno, 559-230-6000; in Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; and in Modesto, 209-557-6400.