

News Release

For immediate release

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For: Local News, Health and
Weather sections



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Officials cancel second day of Air Alert

Air quality improves; public participation lauded

Improving weather conditions and action taken by Valley residents to reduce air pollution have resulted in better Valley air quality, spurring officials to conclude the season's first Air Alert today instead of Tuesday as originally planned.

Reports of an upswing in air-friendly practices such as bike riding, lower temperatures and better atmospheric dispersion have all resulted in improving air quality, officials said.

"The Air District is very appreciative of all the efforts the public has made in minimizing emissions, and consequently, this Air Alert episode will end today," said Jaime Holt, the District's chief communications officer. "The outstanding public response we've received to Air Alert has significantly contributed to immediate improvement in air quality."

Air Alerts are called when the Valley experiences conditions such as increased emissions, high temperatures and stagnant air flow that lead to ozone formation. These periods have been correlated with back-to-school traffic. High ozone levels put the Valley at risk for exceeding the 1-hour health-based ozone standard that, in turn, triggers an annual \$29 million federal penalty. This penalty is paid by Valley businesses failing to use the best available emissions control technology and Valley drivers via a \$12 addition to their DMV registration.

During an Air Alert episode, there are steps residents and businesses can take to prevent escalating ozone levels and assist in reaching attainment and removing the penalty fee, however. Reducing vehicle use is an important way to reduce these emissions, as is refraining from idling when dropping off or picking up students, carpooling or using alternate transportation, and refraining from using drive-through services. Businesses and municipalities can reduce emissions by shifting operations to early morning or late evening (such as in lawn care), offering flexible work schedules, promoting carpools and vanpools for employees and becoming a Healthy Air Living partner.

To be notified of an Air Alert, residents can call 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463); visit www.valleyair.org; or subscribe to an automated email list (<http://valleyair.org/list.list.htm>). Businesses can visit www.healthyairliving.com to enroll in the free Healthy Air Living Partners program.

For more information about Air Alerts, visit www.valleyair.org, www.healthyairliving.com or call a District office: in Fresno (559-230-6000) in Modesto (209-557-6400) or in Bakersfield (661-392-5500).