

News Release

For immediate release

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For: Local news, health, weather
and assignment editors



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Air Alert enters critical period

Record temps, ozone build-up prompt urgent call to action

Local air officials are urging Valley residents to take urgent action to minimize expected increasing ozone levels on Tuesday, the result of emissions, record high temperatures and a stagnant atmosphere.

An Air Alert began Saturday, Sept. 29 and will continue through at least Wednesday. Air Alerts are declared Valley-wide when conditions are favorable for ozone levels to exceed the federal 1-hour ozone standard unless action is taken to prevent them from increasing.

“September passed with no one-hour ozone exceedances, and now we are in a very critical period that will determine whether we have Year One under our belts for the three-year attainment period,” said Seyed Sadredin, the District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. Federal law requires no more than three exceedances at any given monitor throughout the Valley within a three-year period in order to avoid an annual \$29 million penalty.

“We are asking people to really take to heart the measures that can keep ozone from crossing the exceedance threshold. The fact that we have not violated the standard during all of this past summer, despite high temperatures, is evidence that measures taken by Valley residents and businesses have been the determining factor,” Sadredin said.

During an Air Alert episode, residents and businesses are urged to put into place measures that reduce vehicle emissions, such as:

- Refraining from vehicle idling,
- Carpooling or vanpooling, and
- Avoiding the use of drive-through services.

Reducing vehicle miles traveled is the single most-effective change residents can make to reduce ozone-forming emissions, 80 percent of which are caused by vehicle use. Additional measures, such as shifting ozone-creating activities such as lawn maintenance to early mornings, can also help offset rising ozone levels.

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Valley faces critical ozone day Tuesday

Page 2 of 2

10-1-12

Officials urge residents to take health-protective measures during periods when ozone is building. High ozone levels can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma, and cause symptoms such as sore throat and coughing.

The Air District encourages residents to subscribe to the Real-Time Air Advisory Network (RAAN), a free data-delivery service which sends current, real-time air-quality data directly to the subscriber's computer or phone. Additionally, the RAAN program offers outdoor activity guidelines for rising ozone levels. To learn more about RAAN, visit http://www.valleyair.org/Programs/RAAN/raan_landing.htm.

"The degree to which people make small changes that reduce emissions over the next day could well be the difference between a 'clean' year, or not," Sadredin said.

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).