

News Release

For immediate release

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San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



**Attn: Local news, health, weather
and assignment editors**

Northern media contact – Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6472

Central/Southern media contact – Fresno

Heather Heinks (559) 230-5898

Spanish-language media contact

Ana Stone (559) 230-5851

24-hour media cell phone

(559) 284-6317

Poor air quality persists

Poor air quality Valley-wide continues to persist as the air basin lingers under a high-pressure system that has kept emissions from escaping.

The eight counties of the air basin have been under wood-burning prohibitions for several days and local air officials encourage residents from using their wood-burning devices unless they are exempt from curtailments.

“This is an unusual, persistent atmospheric condition that has kept levels of particulates in the Unhealthy and Very Unhealthy ranges for several days, and created difficult health conditions for many residents,” said Jaime Holt, the District’s chief communications officer.

Although emissions have decreased throughout the Valley in recent years, atmospheric stagnation coupled with lack of rain are causing emissions to accumulate.

Particulate pollution is particularly harmful and has been correlated with asthma episodes, bronchial infections, heart attacks and even stroke. When particulates are high, resulting in air quality that is Unhealthy and Very Unhealthy, air officials urge residents to refrain from outdoor exertion, especially at school sites and outdoor sporting events, where children are active. People who are especially susceptible to harm from high particulate levels include children, elderly people and people with respiratory and cardiac conditions.

The Air District offers a free tool with which residents can check their localized, real-time air quality. It’s called the Real-Time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) and subscription is easy:

http://www.valleyair.org/Programs/RAAN/raan_monitoring_system.html.

During periods such as this, an active weather system (rain and wind) is required to disperse accumulated pollutants. Although a system is expected to pass through the Valley on Thursday, officials are not confident it will be strong enough to clean the air.

Daily wood-burning and air-quality forecasts are issued each day at 4:30 p.m. for the following day beginning at midnight. Forecasts can be found at www.valleyair.org, at 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463), with a free iPhone app, Valley Air, and through most local media.

For more information, contact a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).