

For immediate release 11-7-14

Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Northern region – Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6472

Central/Southern regions – Fresno

Heather Heinks (559) 230-5898

Spanish-language contact

Ana Reyes (559) 230-5851

Abnormal weather conditions create dangerously high levels of air pollution

Extreme weather conditions have led to abnormally high pollution conditions rarely seen in the Valley this time of year. “Because of abnormal weather conditions, we are experiencing unusually high pollution levels that are dangerous to public health. We are asking the public to refrain from burning and to also reduce driving,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. “These collective efforts to reduce pollution will help protect your health and the health of your loved ones.”

Despite historically low emissions Valley-wide, higher moisture levels brought by recent rain followed by high temperatures tripled the level of fine particulates (PM2.5) in the Valley mid-week. The resulting unusually strong inversion layer is keeping temperatures high and trapping fine particulates in the air basin, resulting in unhealthy air quality throughout the Valley. While abnormal weather conditions are the primary cause for the high pollution, any added pollution will make the current conditions even worse. The District urges residents to refrain from wood burning activities and reduce driving when possible.

Fine-particulate pollution is extremely harmful to health and can cause respiratory and lung disease, heart attacks and even stroke. Air quality forecasters expect the current pattern to linger into the foreseeable future.

Local air officials have issued the season’s first “No Burning” declaration for all residential wood-burning devices (this includes those devices registered with the District). The declaration affects Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties for Friday, Nov. 7. In these counties, any residential wood burning is prohibited. This declaration runs to midnight Friday.

San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties are declared “No Burning Unless Registered.”