

For immediate release 10/12/16

Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Northern region – Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557- 6472

Central/Southern regions – Fresno

Cassandra Melching (559) 230-5901

Heather Heinks (559) 994-7591

Spanish-language contact

Maricela Velasquez (559) 230-5849

Wildfire in Fresno County prompts health caution

The public may experience poor air quality and should take action to protect their health

Smoke from the Sacata Fire near Pine Flat Reservoir is affecting air quality in Fresno County and has the potential to impact adjacent counties. Currently, smoke impacts are concentrated in the mountainous and foothill areas of the air basin, but impacts on the Valley floor are possible until the fire is extinguished.

Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), which can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to health effects from these pollutants. Air District officials urge residents to follow their doctors' orders when exposed to wildfire emissions and stay indoors if at all possible.

Please be advised that the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) monitors are designed to detect the fine particulates (called PM_{2.5} which are microscopic in size and not visible to the human eye) that exist in wildfire smoke. Ash particles are much larger in size and will not be detected by our monitors. Therefore an area may be experiencing impacts from these wildfires while the PM monitor reflects a moderate reading. If you can see or smell smoke or ash, that is an indication that you should be treating air quality conditions as "Unhealthy" and remain indoors.

Residents can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. Residents can also check the nearest air monitor to their location to determine localized air-quality conditions. Visit the Real-time Air Advisory Network to subscribe for free: www.valleyair.org/RAAN.

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