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Gusty winds prompt health caution

Potential elevated PM10 poses health concern valley-wide this weekend

Gusty winds will cause localized blowing dust, which can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10) over the weekend. Local air pollution officials are issuing a health cautionary statement effective the afternoon of Friday, Sept. 30 through Monday, Oct. 3, 2016 throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Gusty northwesterly winds will develop across the entire San Joaquin Valley Friday afternoon through early Saturday morning with the passage of a strong, dry, cold front. Winds will strengthen again Sunday and Monday as the main low pressure system move in and out of the region and high pressure begins to build behind it. Blowing dust will be possible in dry soil areas, in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and the Valley Air Basin portion of Kern Counties particularly as the front passes through on Friday night. Blowing dust is also likely again on Sunday and Monday as the weather system exits the region. Winds will be especially strong in the western portions of the Valley including Interstate 5, Pacheco Pass, Sunflower Valley, Twisselman, and Taft.

Exposure to particulate pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion, depending on their local conditions.

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).