

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Spare the Air Day of season in four counties

June 13 – In its first Spare the Air declaration of the summer, the Valley Air District is alerting the public in four counties that air quality is expected to deteriorate. Spare the Air Day is being declared for Thursday, June 14 in the following counties: Merced, Fresno, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern.

Spare the Air days are called when air quality is forecast to deteriorate to levels that are unhealthy (151 and higher on the Air Quality Index) or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150) in adjacent counties.

In a typical summer, there are between 20-40 Spare the Air Days called throughout the San Joaquin Valley air basin, depending on location. Generally, more Spare the Air Days are called in the central and southern regions of the Valley than the northern region.

“It’s crucial that Valley residents realize that there are things they can do to reduce our pollution levels during summer,” said Jaime Holt, the District’s Public Information Administrator. “Vehicles are the primary source of ozone, so reducing their use is critical.”

Spare the Air runs from June through September each year, which is the height of the ozone season. Ozone, the primary ingredient in smog, can exacerbate respiratory conditions and trigger asthma attacks. Children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions are especially vulnerable, but when ozone reaches an unhealthy level, everybody is at risk.

On Spare the Air Days, residents in affected counties should limit outdoor exertion, especially between 3 and 7 p.m., when ozone levels usually are highest. Residents are also asked to voluntarily postpone emission-causing activities that contribute to deteriorating air quality. Some of the suggested Spare the Air alternatives are:

- Sharing a ride, taking public transportation, walking or biking instead of driving;

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- Linking your trips (doing all your errands at one time);
- Postponing the use of gas-powered lawn equipment;
- Using an electric briquette igniter instead of lighter fluid;
- Using water-based paints and solvents instead of oil-based products.

Daily Spare the Air forecasts and tips on how to Spare the Air are available at the District's website, www.valleyair.org; through the District's toll-free number, 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463); in most daily newspapers; and on TV and radio weather reports.