

## **Fireworks smoke adds to Valley pollution**

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A spike in airborne particulates following Fourth of July fireworks in the central San Joaquin Valley is helping degrade air quality, and the effects are likely to linger through the week, officials say.

Jaime Holt of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said air quality typically suffers in summer months as hot weather trapped in the region produces more ozone and pollutants.

But as many in the Valley set off fireworks Sunday evening, district officials noticed that the air quality began to worsen.

"Now, [the particulates] are part of the mix," she said. "They are trapped in the Valley."

Holt pointed to a dramatic comparison to Valley air a week ago, when air quality was moderate in Fresno County. Just a week later, it is deemed unhealthy for sensitive groups.

The effects of the fireworks pollutants likely will be gone by next week, but that doesn't mean the air will get better. At least two months of hot weather are ahead for Valley residents, and that is a prime producer of ozone. Ozone is harmful to respiratory systems and can burn sensitive plants.