

Officials schedule practice air alert

Fresno Bee, Merced Sun-Star and other papers, Sunday, Aug. 17, 2014

Local air officials are asking Valley residents to participate in a practice air alert by making and implementing plans to reduce their driving this week.

The goal of the annual Air Alert program is to minimize ozone levels when conditions that are conducive to ozone formation are present. These include high temperatures, sunny skies, stagnant air flow and increased emissions.

In the past, air officials have had to issue air alerts this time of year because back-to-school traffic and increased vehicle idling trigger higher emission levels that come close to violating federal air quality standards.

Officials explained the practice air alert is only a dry run. Air quality is expected to remain good to moderate this week. However, to keep air quality at this level, the public's participation is needed, officials said.

"For some parents, especially during this back-to-school window, driving less will take some planning and effort. Putting together a carpool or modifying schedules so parents can walk kids to school doesn't just happen," said Jaime Holt, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's chief communications officer, in a press release. "(This week's) practice air alert gives parents an opportunity to put some thought into what they can feasibly do so that they can be ready when we really need their action to help avoid ozone exceedances."

During an air alert, residents are asked to reduce their vehicle emissions by: not idling when dropping off or picking up students, carpooling and using alternative transportation, and refraining from using drive-through services.

High ozone levels are harmful to health. Poor air quality can cause long-term health effects such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and other respiratory problems.

"Practice Air Alert" scheduled next week in Fresno County

By Nadia Pearl

The Fresno Bee, Friday, Aug. 15, 2014

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is asking residents to conduct a "Practice Air Alert" next week by making plans to reduce their driving.

Running from Monday through Friday, the annual program aims to minimize ozone levels when weather conditions materialize that lead to ozone formation. Correlated with increased back-to-school traffic, the organization asks parents to organize carpooling or use alternative transportation for their kids and decrease idling time when dropping off or picking up students.

Businesses are also encouraged to reduce emissions by shifting operations to early morning or late evening, when ozone levels are lower.

For more information or to subscribe to the automated Air Alert email server visit www.valleyair.org.

Schools starts; air pollution could rise

Central Valley Business Times, Friday, Aug. 15, 2014

Officials of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District are asking Valley residents to reduce their driving next Monday through Friday, Aug. 22, as schools start their new terms.

Typically, episodes of late-summer high ozone are correlated to back-to-school traffic and increased vehicle idling. High ozone levels are harmful to health.

This year, a trend of lower ozone “exceedance” continues, with a record number of consecutive days with no “exceedances” of the more stringent eight-hour standard anywhere in the Valley despite a long stretch of triple-digit temperatures.

During an Air Alert, residents are asked to reduce their vehicle emissions through a variety of measures, including not idling when dropping off or picking up students; carpooling, vanpooling and using alternative transportation; and refraining from using drive-through services.