

News Release

For immediate release

8-17-12

For: Local News, Health and
Weather sections



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Season's first Air Alert begins Monday *Ozone episode continues through Tuesday*

The Valley air basin's first seasonal Air Alert will begin **Monday, Aug. 20** and continue through **Tuesday, Aug. 21**, with the possibility of being extended. This includes the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley air basin portion of Kern.

Air Alerts are called when the Valley experiences conditions such as increased emissions, high temperatures and stagnant air flow that lead to ozone formation. High ozone levels put the Valley at risk for exceeding the 1-hour health-based ozone standard that, in turn, triggers an annual \$29 million federal penalty. This penalty is paid by Valley businesses failing to use the best available emissions control technology and Valley drivers via a \$12 addition to their DMV registration.

These episodes have been correlated with back-to-school traffic.

There are steps residents and businesses can take to prevent escalating ozone levels and assist in reaching attainment and removing the penalty fee, however. Reducing vehicle use is an important way to reduce these emissions.

Other steps residents can take include:

- Refraining from idling when dropping off/picking up students
- Carpooling, vanpooling or using alternate transportation
- Refraining from using drive-through services

Businesses and municipalities can reduce emissions by:

- Shifting operations to early morning or late evening (such as in lawn care)
- Offering flexible work schedules
- Promoting carpools and vanpools for employees
- Becoming a Healthy Air Living partner

There are several ways to receive notification of an Air Alert: through the District's 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463) number; at www.valleyair.org; and by free subscription to an automated email list (<http://valleyair.org/list.list.htm>).

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First Air Alert begins Monday

Page 2 of 2

8-17-12

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