

News Release

For immediate release

7-24-13

Attn: Local news, lifestyle and assignment editors



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



Northern region - Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6472

Central region – Fresno

Heather Heinks (559) 230-5898

Southern region – Bakersfield

Jaime Holt (661) 381-1809

Spanish-language contact

Ana Reyes (559) 230-5851

Air officials issue smoke health caution

Mountain wildfires emissions impact east side of air basin

Lightning strikes have started many wildfires in the Sierra National Forest, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and Sequoia National Forest that are sending smoke emissions to the air basin, prompting local air officials to issue a health cautionary statement.

Currently, the Aspen Wildfire is burning in Fresno County and smoke from this and other fires may impact the eastern parts of **Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kern counties**, including the foothill and mountain areas. In addition, eastern portions of the Valley floor may be affected during overnight hours.

The health caution is in place until the fire is extinguished. The Air District will continue to monitor the impact these wildfires are having on air quality and update the media as warranted.

“If you can see or smell smoke in your area, you are most likely being affected,” said Samir Sheikh, the Air District’s director over air quality analysis. “If possible, stay inside to avoid breathing in the smoke.”

Smoke from fires produces fine-particulate matter (PM2.5), which can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. 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.

Residents can check the nearest air monitor to their location to determine localized conditions. Visit the Real-time Air Advisory Network page on the District’s website to subscribe for free: http://www.valleyair.org/Programs/RAAN/raan_landing.htm.

For more information about the Air District, call a regional office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).