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Gusty winds prompt health caution

Potential elevated PM10 poses health concern valley-wide

Building upon a week of exceptionally poor air quality due to stagnant atmospheric conditions, the San Joaquin Valley may experience gusty winds and localized blowing dust tonight through tomorrow evening, which could compound the region's current poor air quality. Blowing dust can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10), prompting local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement effective Friday evening through Saturday for the entire San Joaquin Valley. Winds will be especially strong in the northern region and west of Highway 99. Air quality conditions may improve Sunday.

Exposure to particulate pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. 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.

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