

For immediate release 08-24-18

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Smoke from the Ranch Fire in Mendocino County prompts health caution

Smoke from the Ranch fire and other northern California and Oregon fires has been affecting air quality across the Valley, prompting local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement Valley-wide. Smoke impacts are expected to continue throughout the weekend and the health caution will remain in effect until the fires are extinguished.

Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter which can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move inside to an air-conditioned environment.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley address by visiting myraan.com. The RAAN monitors are designed to detect the microscopic PM2.5 particles that exist in smoke. Ash pieces, however, are much larger in size and will not be detected. If an area is covered in ash, air quality should be considered "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if the monitor reflects a lower reading.

The public can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. In addition, anyone can follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app, available in the Apple store or Google Play.

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).