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Gusty winds prompt health caution

Blowing dust poses potential health concern Valley-wide

Blowing dust as a result of strong northwesterly winds has prompted local air pollution officials to issue a health caution tonight, Saturday, May 1, through Monday, May 3 for the San Joaquin Valley, with a special emphasis on the northern counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced. The District recommends that residents in affected areas use caution and avoid exposure to blowing dust caused by windy conditions.

Gusty winds often cause localized blowing dust in areas where soils are exceptionally dry—creating unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10). 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).