

News Release

09-06-07

For Immediate Release



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TO:
**Local News, Health and
Weather sections**

Wildfires prompt air-quality emergency warning ***Air District cautions that air pollution is rising and may impact health***

A large wildfire in northern California is sending a smoke plume through the Valley, prompting local air-pollution officials to issue an Air-Quality Emergency Warning

The Moonlight Fire in Plumas County, northeast of Sacramento, is affecting air quality in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera and Fresno counties, and may affect counties farther south including Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern as the day progresses.

As of nine hours ago, the Plumas County fire covered approximately 18,500 acres. North to northeasterly winds are carrying smoke from this fire into the San Joaquin Valley air basin. Smoke impacts are being reported throughout the northern and central parts of the San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento Valley. Furthermore, the Lick Wildfire in Santa Clara county, which covers approximately 11,000 acres, is producing emissions which are currently flowing toward Monterey.

Current air-quality values from the monitors in the SJV Air basin (from Kings / Fresno counties northward) are showing air-quality readings which are at the "unhealthy" or "unhealthy for sensitive groups" levels due to particulate matter (PM2.5). Elevated PM2.5 levels will continue through early tomorrow afternoon. A weak trough may redirect emissions from the Moonlight wildfire away from the SJV air basin tomorrow. However, the Lick Wildfire may then impact the air basin as the winds aloft shift.

"The fire is sending a large plume of smoke down through the Valley and elevating particulate readings in some areas," said Gary Arcemont, a meteorologist with the Valley Air District. Particulate matter - tiny pieces of material in the air including soot, ash and droplets of liquid - can aggravate respiratory conditions and cause asthma attacks. "If you smell smoke, you are probably breathing it."

The District will update the media and the public on this air-quality crisis at two Valley locations today.

What: Media and public update of the air quality impact from the Moonlight Fire in Plumas County and the Lick Fire in Santa Clara County.

When: 11 a.m. Thursday, September 6, 2007

Where: The update will occur simultaneously in both Modesto and Fresno

Air District's Fresno office at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave. Fresno, CA 93726
Air District's Modesto office at 4800 Enterprise Way, Modesto, CA 95356

Who: District staff will be available for interviews at both locations

A satellite photo of the fires can be viewed at the following location:

http://rapidfire.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/subsets/?AERONET_Fresno/2007248/AERONET_Fresno.2007248.aqua.250m.jpg

Localized air quality could fluctuate depending on smoke impacts. Residents of the eight-county air basin are advised to use caution. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion, as conditions dictate. Residents in all areas impacted by the smoke should remain indoors to limit exposure to the particulate matter generated from the smoke. Recent health studies have tied particulate matter to cardiovascular disease, respiratory ailments and aggravated asthma.

An updated air quality forecast will be available by noon today. For air-quality forecasts by county, visit <http://www.valleyair.org/> or call 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463). Forecasts are updated daily at 4:30 p.m.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.