

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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sections**

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Fires prompt health warning

Air District cautions that air pollution levels climbing

Two large wildfires are affecting air quality in the San Joaquin Valley, prompting local air-pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement.

The fires – the Zaca fire in Santa Barbara County and the Tar Canyon fire in Fresno County -- are expected to affect Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties, with the potential to affect Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties, depending on wind patterns, District forecasters said.

Because of the uncertainty of when these fires could be extinguished, the cautionary statement is in effect indefinitely.

“These fires are producing large amounts of smoke, which is resulting in elevated particulate readings,” said Shawn Ferreria, a meteorologist for the District. “If you smell smoke, you are likely breathing it.”

The District’s air-monitoring stations in Bakersfield have recorded elevated PM10 measurements this morning and reports have been received of ash falling in Kern County.

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

Residents of the eight-county air basin are advised to use caution as conditions warrant. 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.

The air-quality forecast for today is in the good to moderate range for most of the Valley, except Tulare County, which is forecast to be unhealthy for sensitive groups. But localized air quality could fluctuate depending on smoke impacts, forecasters said.

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

<http://www.valleyair.org/> or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.