

News Release

09-12-06

For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

Local News, Health and Weather
sections

North District Media Contact – Modesto
Anthony Presto
(209) 557-6400

Central District Media Contact - Fresno
Janelle Schneider
(559) 230-6000

South District Media Contact - Bakersfield
Brenda Turner
(661) 326-6900

Northern wildfire prompts local health warning

Air pollution levels may climb through Wednesday in Stanislaus, San Joaquin

A wildfire burning in Placer County is expected to bring smoke to San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties starting tonight and continuing through tomorrow.

“The forecast shows that winds likely are going to carry some of the smoke into the northern counties of the San Joaquin Valley,” said meteorologist Shawn Ferreira.

The Ralston Fire, which started on Sept. 5, had grown to about 6,780 acres as of Tuesday morning. The smoke likely won't be a problem after Wednesday, but increasing winds may bring another problem starting Thursday: windblown dust.

Exposure to smoke and other particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposure to particle pollution has been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Residents in affected areas are advised to use caution Tuesday night and all day Wednesday, and possibly longer if windblown dust becomes an issue starting Thursday.

People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality when smoke is present. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

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

###