

News Release

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For Immediate Release



TO:

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Blowing dust prompts health warning Air District cautions that air pollution levels climbing

Gusty winds in the San Joaquin Valley have prompted local air-pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement from Thursday afternoon through Friday evening.

Winds in the San Joaquin Valley may produce areas of blowing dust in the San Joaquin Valley through Friday evening. Blowing dust can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller, or PM10.

"Strong to gusty northwesterly winds across the San Joaquin Valley air basin are causing localized areas of blowing dust and elevated PM 10 levels," said Shawn Ferreria, Senior Air Quality Specialist with the Air District. "Take precautions to protect your health if you are in an area experiencing blowing dust."

Exposure to 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 throughout the San Joaquin Valley are advised to use caution through Friday evening. 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. 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 San Joaquin Valley air basin 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.