

## **What the National Weather Service says is trapping fire smoke in the Central Valley**

By Rosalio Ahumada

Modesto Bee, Tuesday, Nov 13, 2018

The National Weather Service says Modesto-area residents should expect to see smoke in the atmosphere for the rest of the week as firefighters continue to battle the Camp Fire in Butte County.

An inversion layer, which is warm air that acts like a lid, continues to trap smoke throughout the Northern San Joaquin Valley, according to the weather service. The lid creates poor air quality and poor visibility.

"We're going to continue to deal with the smoke for the next few days," said Cory Mueller, a forecaster with the weather service in Sacramento.

He said the smoke in the Modesto-area could clear by the weekend if the wind shifts direction, but that's just a possibility.

As of Monday, the Camp Fire has killed at least 29 people in the Paradise area of Butte County with more than 200 people missing. The wildfire had burned 113,000 acres and more than 6,400 homes, Cal Fire reported Monday morning.

On Saturday, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued an air quality alert that will remain in effect until the surrounding wildfires are extinguished. The alert was issued for Stanislaus, Merced, San Joaquin, Madera, Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties, along with the valley portion of Kern County.

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

Residents with heart or lung disease should follow their doctor's advice, and older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure to the smoky air and strenuous activity.

While the region has experienced smoky conditions, overnight low temperatures in the Modesto area has hovered around record levels this week. Mueller said the cold weather has little to do with the trapped smoke.

"Once the sun sets, the temperatures seem to fall quite a bit," Mueller said during a phone interview Monday. "We just really had dry air... When we have light winds and dry air, we see cooler temperatures."

The low temperature early Sunday dipped to 31 degrees, beating the record low of 32 degrees set on Nov. 11, 1946, according to weather service. Monday's low temperature reached 32 degrees missing the record low of 28 degrees set on Nov. 12, 1938.

He said the average low in Modesto for this time of year is 46 degrees. It won't be quite as cold the rest of the week, Mueller said, but the overnight temperature will be closer to the average lows for the area.

For more information on air quality, visit the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's web site [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call the nearest district office: in Modesto at (209) 557-6400; in Fresno at (559) 230-6000; in Bakersfield at (661) 392-5500.

## **Wildfires scorch California, air quality threatens public health**

By Sheyanne N Romero

Visalia Times Delta, Monday, Nov 12, 2018

The thousands of acres destroyed by wildfires burning at both ends of the state have choked the San Joaquin Valley with smoke.

Smoke from the Camp Fire will affect Valley air through at least the rest of the week, WeatherAg Chief Meteorologist Scott Borgioli said. A high-pressure system over the eastern Pacific Ocean is causing a generally stagnant air mass over California.

"This dry pattern still looks like it will continue for the next seven to nine days," Borgioli said.

In addition, a Red Flag air warning has been issued for areas affected by the fires and portions of the Central Valley.

Red Flag warnings are issued for weather events that could result in "extreme fire behavior," Cal Fire officials said.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued an Air Quality Alert for San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Valley portion of Kern counties.

The air quality in the Central Valley is currently listed as "unhealthy." In Tulare County, air quality is "moderate."

The health caution will remain in place and smoke impacts are likely until the fires are under control, San Joaquin Valley officials stated.

The Camp Fire, burning in Butte County, was reported on Wednesday and has since become the deadliest wildfire in California history, burning 113,000 acres — including much of the town of Paradise — and leaving 29 dead. The fire is 25 percent contained with 228 people still unaccounted for in the blaze's path.

In Southern California, the Woolsey and Hill fires have destroyed roughly 90,000 acres, but are nearing containment, according to Cal Fire. Two deaths have been associated with the SoCal fires.

Air quality officials are warning the public of the health risks of breathing in smoke-filled air. Those closer to the fire have been asked to wear face masks.

"Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections," San Joaquin Valley Air District officials warned. "Residents are advised to use caution as conditions warrant."

Older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion, officials added.

To receive up to date information on air quality alerts visit <https://www.valleyair.org/Home.htm>

## **Smoke from wildfires prompt health caution for residents in San Joaquin Valley**

Bakersfield Californian, Monday, Nov 12, 2018

Wildfires around the state have prompted local air officials to issue a health caution for smoke impacts throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

So far, Kern County is feeling the least of it while our neighbors north are getting hit hard. However, a No Burning Unless Registered restriction was in effect.

"The heaviest impacts are the northern part of our valley — Merced, Madera — not so much down in Bakersfield," said meteorologist Andy Bollenbacher, with the U.S. National Weather Service in Hanford.

There are currently no burning restrictions for Kern County but restrictions are in effect for most other counties in the San Joaquin Valley.

While air quality was not veering into dangerous levels Monday, the air pollution control district warns that if you smell smoke, you're breathing in dirty air and to take precaution.

Anyone who is exposed to wildfire smoke or poor air quality should move inside to a heated or air-conditioned environment, they said.

"Smoke coverage may persist for a longer period of time if containment of the wildfires does not increase," the U.S. National Weather Service in Hanford said on its Facebook page. "There is no chance of precipitation today through at least Friday."

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network to track air quality by visiting [myraan.com](http://myraan.com).

For wildfires, residents can check [www.valleyair.org/wildfires](http://www.valleyair.org/wildfires).

The health caution will remain in place until the fires are put out.

## **Camp Fire smoke triggers unhealthy air warning for Lodi area**

By Kyla Cathey

Lodi News-Sentinel, Sunday, Nov 11, 2018

As three massive wildfires rage in Butte and Ventura counties and smaller fires burn throughout the state, much of Central California — including the Lodi area — is engulfed in smoke.

In the Bay Area, some North Bay schools were closed, and a number of high school football playoff games were canceled. Sacramento canceled its Veterans Day parade, along with youth soccer and Cal State football games.

On Sunday, San Joaquin County's air quality was rated "unhealthy" by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"The Camp Fire burning in Butte County and several fires in Tulare County have prompted local air officials to issue a health caution for smoke impacts throughout the San Joaquin Valley," the agency said in a press release.

The health caution was likely to remain in place until the fires are under control or the wind changes.

Unfortunately, both could take a while.

"I do think over the next 24 to 36 hours ... we continue to see largely similar wind directions," meteorologist Alyson Hoegg with the private forecasting firm Accuweather said.

Winds up near the Camp Fire are blowing the smoke south into the Sacramento Valley, including the Lodi area.

The worst of the smoke is expected over the next couple of days, while the winds continue. They're expected to calm Tuesday evening or Wednesday, Hoegg said.

But that doesn't necessarily mean the smoke will clear, at least not right away.

"I'm worried that some of the smoke (may get) trapped in the Central Valley there," Hoegg said.

The smoke is expected to thin but could linger through most of the week, she said.

While conditions in Lodi are better than they are closer to the fire, Hoegg said, people are still encouraged to take precautions to protect their health.

"Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter which can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke," the San Joaquin Valley air district said. "Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure."

Those who can should stay indoors with their windows closed.

Masks will be helpful to anyone from sensitive groups or who is spending time outdoors, Hoegg said, even simple medical masks like those people wear during flu season.

Local residents can check the air quality through the district's Real-time Air Advisory Network at [myraan.com](http://myraan.com), but the district warns that in areas where smoke or ash fall is visible, air quality should be assumed to be "unhealthy" even if RAAN offers a lower forecast.

## **Valley smoky skies are back — and will likely get worse**

By Cresencio Rodriguez-Delgado

Fresno Bee and Merced Sun-Star, Sunday, Nov 11, 2018

Breathe what's left of that good air this weekend — while you still can.

The National Weather Service in Hanford predicts air quality for the Fresno region will worsen Sunday, as northern winds will cause smoke to blanket the central San Joaquin Valley.

Meteorologist Andy Bollenbacher on Saturday said 40 mph winds from the north will push smoke from the Camp Fire near Chico south into the Valley, decreasing humidity and air quality.

The low humidity will increase fire hazards in the mountain areas of Tulare and Kern counties, which are already under red-flag warnings. The conditions are expected to last into Monday.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a health caution Friday as smoke was sure to impact the health of the most sensitive individuals — which includes the elderly, children, and people with asthma.

The air district said the caution would remain in place at least until the raging fires are extinguished. The district included a “No Burning Unless Registered” advisory along with their health caution to cut down on smoke in several Valley counties.

“Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter which can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke,” the air district said in a Friday news release. Anyone with health issues should speak with a doctor and stay indoors when possible.

The air district’s Real-time Air Advisory Network held the ozone quality at Level 1 and OK for all groups Saturday. The microscopic particles from the smoke were listed Level 3, which means sensitive individuals are recommended to conduct activities indoors.

Bollenbacher said the blanketing smoke will also cause temperatures in the Valley to shift. Nighttime temperatures will be “a little warmer,” he said. In the daytime, the smoky conditions will block the sun and cause high temperatures to drop slightly.

The stretch of dry weather will continue at least for the next eight days, with little chance for rain to repair low humidity levels that increase fire hazards in mountain areas.

Normally, November would see frequent showers according to Bollenbacher. No fire advisories are currently in place for the mountain areas of Fresno County.

Hundreds have fled the deadly fires in Northern and Southern California, and the potential for the fires to grow increases with the continuous dry weather and increased winds.