

Personal fireworks can have negative health effects: Elevate PM levels, threaten public health

The Porterville Recorder, Thursday, July 2, 2020

This Independence Day, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District officials remind Valley residents that personal fireworks emit high levels of particulate matter (PM), including soot, ash and metals, which can cause serious health effects. Individuals most at-risk are small children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions (including COVID-19).

While a nation-wide pandemic has forced many communities to cancel 4th of July celebrations and fireworks displays, the District asks Valley residents to resist the urge to light personal fireworks and seek other methods of celebrating and showing their patriotism for our country's Independence.

"We ask that residents are considerate to the health and well-being of the Valley's most vulnerable individuals, especially during this unprecedented health crisis," said Samir Sheikh, the Valley Air District's Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer. "Fireworks release large amounts of PM at ground-level, where individuals can breathe in the harmful pollutant," he added.

Each 4th of July, air monitors across the Valley reflect spikes in PM concentrations from fireworks, often four to five times higher than the health-based federal standard, and typically during evening hours, when personal fireworks are most in use. This unnecessary source of air pollution threatens the Valley's progress in meeting air-quality standards that protect public health. Fine particulate matter can invade the bloodstream, get deep into the lungs, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

The District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) provides access to localized air quality data from an extensive air-monitoring network. Visit myRAAN.com and input any address in the San Joaquin Valley.

For more information about the Air District, call a regional office in Fresno (559) 230-6000, Modesto (209) 557-6400 or Bakersfield (661) 392-5500.

Valley air district asks residents to refrain from using personal fireworks

The Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, July 1, 2020

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is asking residents to resist using personal fireworks during Fourth of July celebrations.

In a news release, the air district said fireworks emit high levels of particulate matter including soot, ash and metals, which can cause negative health effects. At-risk individuals include small children, elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions, the air district said.

It's particularly important this year, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many communities to cancel July Fourth celebrations, the air district added.

"We ask that residents are considerate to the health and well-being of the Valley's most vulnerable individuals, especially during this unprecedented health crisis," said Samir Sheikh, the air district's executive director. "Fireworks release large amounts of PM at ground-level, where individuals can breathe in the harmful pollutant."

Each Fourth of July, air monitors across the valley spike in particulate matter concentrations — often four to five times higher than the health-based federal standard — and typically during evening hours when personal fireworks are in use, the air district said. It can also threaten the Central Valley's progress in meeting air-quality standards that protect public health.

For more information, call the air district's Bakersfield office at 392-5500.