

News Release

For immediate release

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editors<<



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Air officials urge fireworks restraint *Ailing air quality will further deteriorate with fireworks use*

Because of the continuing threat of unhealthy air quality related to several California wildfires, Valley Air District officials are strongly encouraging residents to refrain from using fireworks July 4.

"On a typical year, fireworks account for localized air pollution on July 4. But this year, we have serious air-quality issues because of statewide wildfires, which fireworks will only worsen," said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District's executive director and air pollution control officer. "We are asking Valley residents to please consider your health and that of your neighbors, and to not opt to light fireworks this year."

Fireworks produce dangerous particulate matter (PM), tiny particles of soot, ash, droplets of liquid and other material. PM10 – particles 10 microns and smaller – can be harmful to people with respiratory conditions, and older adults and children are also more susceptible to consequences of high particle levels. And smaller particles – 2.5 microns and smaller – can invade the bloodstream and have serious consequences for people with heart or lung conditions. Some fireworks also attribute their bright colors to toxic materials that may not be easily diffused.

Last week, ongoing wildfires throughout the state resulted in unhealthy and very unhealthy levels of PM and ozone for days on end, Valley-wide. Changing weather patterns could bring smoke back into the Valley, which combined with firework emissions, would cause serious health issues.

"While we never encourage the use of fireworks because of their negative effect on air quality, this year, it is even more important to refrain from fireworks activity. Our collective health depends on it," said Sadredin.

For current air-quality forecasts by county, visit www.valleyair.org or call 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463).

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and San Joaquin Valley air basin portions of Kern. For assistance, contact the nearest District office in Modesto at (209) 557-6440, Fresno (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.