

News Release

08-13-2004

For Immediate Release

TO:

Local News, Health and Weather
sections



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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

Central District Media Contact - Fresno
Kelly Hogan Malay
(559) 230-6000

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

Media Contact for the USDA National
Forest Service office in Springville
Denise Alonzo
(559) 539-2606 x 212

Wild fire prompts health cautionary statement

Smoke from fire near Springville causing poor air quality

(Fresno, CA) – Residents of Springville, Porterville, Camp Nelson and surrounding areas should exercise caution today and the next few days to avoid adverse health impacts from a large wild fire east of Springville.

The 1,200-acre fire, which started around 5:30 p.m. Thursday, is expected to burn at least several days, according to the USDA National Forest Service. The forest service, which is monitoring the blaze, indicates the fire likely will grow larger before it is contained.

The fire is causing high levels of particulates in Springville, Porterville, Camp Nelson and surrounding areas. Exposure to high concentrations of particulates can reduce lung function, especially in children; increase the risk of heart attacks; aggravate lung conditions such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema; irritate throats and sinuses; and trigger headaches and allergies.

While the fire burns, air-quality conditions likely will be worst during evenings and mornings, when poor air dispersion allows for higher concentrations of pollutants.

“We urge all residents in these areas to be aware of local conditions, and if you notice smoke, adjust your activities accordingly,” said Gary Arcemont, an air quality specialist for the Air District. “In general, if you can smell smoke, then you’re probably in an area with poor air quality and unhealthy conditions.”

Residents in areas affected by smoke are encouraged to:

- Avoid and/or limit outdoor strenuous activities that may increase breathing rates;
- Try to remain indoors until the smoke clears; and
- Keep doors and windows closed and re-circulate indoor air.

The Air District will continue to monitor meteorological conditions and emissions from the fire, and adjust the air-quality forecast accordingly. The daily air-quality report, updated at 4 p.m. every day, is available online at www.valleyair.org and by phone at 1-800-Smog-Info (1-800-766-4463).

For more information about the fire, residents can call the USDA National Forest Service at (559) 539-2607 ext. 0.

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.

#