

**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT
MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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**Fire smoke may linger at ground level;
Valley Air District urges Fresno residents to remain cautious through end of weekend**

Fresno, CA –As the woodpile fire in southwest Fresno is extinguished and cools, there is concern that unhealthy particles will remain closer to the ground. This, coupled with worsening meteorological conditions forecast for this weekend, has led the Valley Air District to urge residents in the Fresno/Clovis area to be cautious.

“There may be reduced overall particulate matter (PM) emissions as the fire is extinguished,” said Air District Meteorologist Evan Shipp. “However, as the fire cools we are seeing the smoke plume settling closer to the ground at the site. Particulates are not being dispersed into the upper atmosphere as effectively as earlier this week.”

A strengthening high-pressure ridge also is being forecast for the weekend. This will further deteriorate dispersion conditions.

The District expects air quality to be in the unhealthy range for the Valley's central region through Sunday, with some areas being more adversely impacted by fire emissions. “We are seeing somewhat elevated PM levels at monitoring sites. Some of these readings are normal given the type of weather we are having. But, some spikes recorded for short periods appear to be influenced by the fire,” Shipp said. “People need to continue to be aware of conditions in their location.”

The Air District is providing the following advice:

- Parents are strongly urged to be vigilant of smoke when allowing children to play outdoors.

(more)

- If you can smell or see smoke, you most likely are in an area where air quality is poor.
- People with respiratory or heart conditions, the elderly and children should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion. Additionally, all others should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
- If possible, try to remain indoors, especially if you smell or see smoke.
- Recirculate indoor air.
- If you or a family member experiences difficulty breathing or prolonged headaches or dizziness, seek medical attention.
- Do not smoke, and avoid places where others are smoking.

To avoid adding more pollutants to the air, the Valley Air District is also strongly urging residents in the central region of the Valley to avoid the use of wood burning fireplaces, stoves and inserts from 4 p.m. today through 4 p.m. Monday. This "Please Don't Light Tonight" request does not affect residents whose sole source of heat is wood-burning devices.

PM is a mixture of pollutants, including microscopic pieces of soot, ash, salts, nitrates and smoke particles. Breathing the particles can reduce lung function, especially in children; aggravate heart and lung conditions such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis; increase the risk of heart attacks; irritate throats and sinuses; and trigger headaches and allergies.

Please notify your audience of the prevailing air quality conditions and possible health effects. For the daily air quality forecast, residents may call 1-800-SMOG-INFO (766-4463). The information is updated daily at 4 p.m. for that evening and the following day.