

News Release

06-04-2004

For Immediate Release

TO:

Local News, Health and Weather
sections



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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Hay-bale fire prompts cautionary health statement

(Fresno) – Residents of metro Fresno and surrounding areas should exercise caution the next few days to avoid adverse health impacts from a large hay fire located several miles southwest of Fresno.

The fire, on a cattle farm near Marks and Manning avenues, began Friday morning and is expected to burn and smolder for several days, according to the Fresno County Fire Protection District, which is monitoring the fire. The Valley Air District also has responded and is investigating the fire. The fire is consuming about 1,050 tons of hay and 50 tons of animal bedding material.

Today's northwesterly winds carried smoke from the fire southeast toward rural areas and Alvina Elementary School, where school administrators limited student activities to reduce health risks.

In the next few days, changing wind patterns could carry the smoke to metro Fresno, Clovis, Sanger, Fowler, Selma, Kingsburg and surrounding communities. 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 activities accordingly," said Dave Jones, the Air District's planning director. "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 microscopic particles contained in smoke are a mixture of pollutants, including hydrocarbons and microscopic pieces of soot, ash, salts and nitrates. Breathing smoke 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.

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).

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.

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