

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

Local News, Health and Weather
sections

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High winds prompt health warning

Air District cautions that air pollution levels may climb in coming days

Expected high winds in the central and southern portions of the San Joaquin Valley have prompted local air-pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement for Friday morning through Saturday evening.

The high winds – forecast to be 20 miles per hour with possible gusts to 30 -35 mph in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties – can kick up dust from dry land and create unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter ten microns and smaller, or PM10. High pollution levels could be spotty, depending on localized winds, the condition of the soil and other factors.

“Although we don’t necessarily expect a violation of the federal 24-hour standard for particulates, there still could be some shorter-term spikes that could impact human health,” said Scott Nester, planning director for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposure to particle pollution has been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Residents affected by blowing dust are advised to use caution. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors’ advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should *reduce* prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

The air-quality forecast for Friday is as follows: Fresno County, 47 (good); Kern, 76 (moderate); Kings, 67 (moderate); Madera, 36 (good); Merced, 43 (good); San Joaquin, 38 (good); Stanislaus, 40 (good); and Tulare, 69 (moderate).

To help reduce potential air-quality problems, agricultural burning will be prohibited on Friday throughout the Valley. Agricultural burn permit holders should contact the Air District’s Smoke Management System starting Friday evening to determine when burning may resume.

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.