

News Release



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Air district calls first Spare the Air Day of season

June 30 – In its first Spare the Air declaration of the summer, the Valley Air District is alerting the public in six counties that air quality is expected to deteriorate on Friday, July 1. The designation is in effect for Friday only.

Spare the Air days are called when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy for the general public, which corresponds to an Air Quality Index measurement of 151 or higher. Friday, Spare the Air Days are being called in Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties.

In a typical summer, there are between 20-40 Spare the Air days called throughout the San Joaquin Valley air basin, depending on location. Generally, more Spare the Air days are called in the central and southern regions of the Valley than the northern region.

“Valley residents have been very cooperative during past Spare the Air days in curtailing their activities that contribute to air pollution,” said Jaime Holt, the District’s Public Information Administrator. “We’re confident they’ll continue to do that this Spare the Air season.”

Spare the Air season runs from June through September each year, which is the height of the ozone season. Ozone, the primary ingredient in smog, can exacerbate respiratory conditions and trigger asthma attacks. Children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions are especially vulnerable, but when ozone reaches an unhealthy level, everybody is at risk.

On declared Spare the Air days, residents in the affected counties should limit outdoor exertion, especially between 3 and 7 p.m., when ozone levels usually are highest. Residents are also asked to voluntarily postpone emission-causing activities that contribute to deteriorating air quality. Some of the suggested Spare the Air alternatives are:

- Sharing a ride, taking public transportation, walking or biking instead of driving;
- Linking your trips (doing all your errands at one time);
- Postponing the use of gas-powered lawn equipment;
- Using an electric briquette igniter instead of lighter fluid;
- Using water-based paints and solvents instead of oil-based products.

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Daily Spare the Air forecasts and tips on how to Spare the Air are available at the District's website, www.valleyair.org; through the District's toll-free number, 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463); in most daily newspapers; and on TV and radio weather reports.

Although significant progress has been made in improving air quality in the San Joaquin Valley the past 13 years, the Valley air basin harbors some of the nation's worst air quality and is under federal mandate to reduce emissions of ozone-forming gases. The Valley air basin ranks as the worst offender for day-long smog violations in the country.