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**Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors**

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## **Air quality alert remains in place through the week** *Valley Air District urges public to take protective action*

Smoke from the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County (and potentially other wildfires in the state) and blowing dust from forecasted gusty winds this week will continue to affect air quality throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Local air pollution officials want to remind Valley residents that a health caution remains in place and they should take action to limit their exposure to smoke and dust.

Smoke from the Kincade Fire is expected to impact the northern region of the Valley later today, and could impact the central and southern regions soon after. Smoke impacts are expected to continue until the fire is extinguished, while blowing dust should subside by Thursday. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move indoors to an air-conditioned/filtered environment with their windows closed. Wildfire smoke and wind-blown dust can create unhealthy concentrations of PM2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller) and PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns and smaller). Both pollutants can trigger asthma attacks, and exacerbate other respiratory diseases, while PM2.5 can also increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

People with heart or lung disease in impacted areas should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate matter exposure. In addition, sensitive individuals, such as those with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality in the Valley by visiting [myRAAN.com](http://myRAAN.com). The RAAN monitors are designed to detect the microscopic PM2.5 particles that exist in smoke. However, larger particles, such as ash and dust, may not be detected. **If an area is covered in ash or dust, air quality should be considered "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if the monitor reflects a lower reading.**

Guidelines	
<b>LEVEL 1</b>	Outdoor activity OK for all
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	Sensitive individuals should consider reducing prolonged and/or vigorous outdoor activities.
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous activities.
<b>LEVEL 4</b>	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors. Everyone should avoid prolonged or vigorous outdoor activities.
<b>LEVEL 5</b>	Everyone should avoid outdoor activity.

The public can check the District's wildfire page at [www.valleyair.org/wildfires](http://www.valleyair.org/wildfires) for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. Residents can also follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app, available in the Apple store or Google Play.

For more information, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).