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

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## **Mineral Fire continues to grow bringing smoke into the Valley** *District cautions Valley residents of increasing health impacts*

The Mineral Fire, located in western Fresno County near Coalinga, grew over 10,000 acres in the last 24 hours, causing significant amounts of smoke to infiltrate the central and southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Currently this smoke is hovering above the Valley floor and not yet affecting most communities. However, the Valley Air District expects smoke to drop to the Valley floor this afternoon and into the evening and impact residents throughout the region. The health caution issued by the District yesterday remains in place until the fire is extinguished, which may not happen until late next week.

The Mineral Fire began Monday afternoon west of Coalinga in the area of Hwy 198 and South Coalinga Mineral Springs Road, and has already consumed 11,000 acres. While afternoon smoke will mainly be affecting Fresno, Kings and Kern Counties, the fire has the potential to impact the entire Valley including the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced and Madera. Local fire officials on the front lines have reported extreme fire behavior that is making the fire very difficult to contain and expected containment may not come until late next week. Air pollution officials caution Valley residents to reduce exposure to the particulate matter (PM) emissions by remaining indoors in effected areas.

PM pollution can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of PM exposure. Those with existing respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children and the elderly, are especially susceptible to the health effects from this form of pollution. Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move indoors, to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. The common cloth and paper masks individuals are wearing due to COVID-19 concerns may not protect them from wildfire smoke.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley location by visiting [myRAAN.com](http://myRAAN.com). District air monitoring stations are designed to detect microscopic PM 2.5 particles that exist in smoke. However, larger particles, such as ash, may not be detected. If you smell smoke or see falling ash in your immediate vicinity, consider air quality "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if RAAN displays lower level of pollution.

The public can also check the District's wildfire page at [www.valleyair.org/wildfires](http://www.valleyair.org/wildfires) for information about any current wildfires affecting the Valley. In addition, anyone can follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on their mobile device.

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). District Outreach and Communications personnel are also available for media interviews via Zoom or by phone.