

San Joaquin Valley air turns unhealthy

By Mark Grossi

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It's a hazy view Wednesday in Fresno looking at the rail yards south of Jensen Avenue. The air is getting unhealthy due to stagnant weather conditions.

JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE [Buy Photo](#)

Soot, chemicals and other tiny particles turned air quality unhealthy Wednesday across the San Joaquin Valley, local air authorities said.

They warned area school officials to keep an eye on the hourly pollution updates posted on the [web page of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District](#). If monitors show pollution is at Level 5 — the highest level — district officials urge schools to keep children indoors.

“This is the time of year we get these kinds of pollution buildups,” said district spokeswoman Jaime Holt. “It’s perfect for trapping particles.”

The pollution problems are occurring in Clovis, Bakersfield, Madera and Visalia.

The district [has banned wood burning](#) throughout the Valley on Thursday, except for those who have registered the latest fireplace inserts and heaters with the district.

The tiny specks of pollution, known as PM-2.5, are considered dangerous by health researchers. They trigger asthma, heart problems and early mortality.

PM-2.5 is a problem mostly in the cooler months, especially in dry weather. Stormy, breezy conditions scour out the tiny specks.

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