

NEWS RELEASE

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June 11, 2019

RISING TEMPS POSE THREAT TO AIR QUALITY

Increasing daytime highs, dry conditions elevate ozone concentration, risk of wildfires

Summer's official start is less than two weeks away but summertime weather is already in full-swing in the Mojave Desert Air Basin, and the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District is reminding residents to remain on high alert for potentially unhealthy air quality.

When daytime high temperatures reach near and into triple digits, they can lead to elevated concentrations of ground-level ozone, a chemical reaction that occurs when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, refineries and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight. Ozone at ground-level — the main ingredient in “smog” — is a harmful air pollutant because of its effects on humans and the environment.

Hesperia, Phelan, Victorville and immediately surrounding communities are especially susceptible to worsening air quality due to their proximity to the Cajon Pass and Interstate 15, from which the Mojave Desert gets much of its ground-level ozone. “Transport” air pollution travels up through the Cajon Pass from the heavily polluted Greater Los Angeles region before dispersing north of the Pass.

High daytime temperatures and low relative humidity also present an increased risk for wildfires and related smoke impacts. Wildfire smoke creates a significant concern to human health as the fine particulates can lodge deep in the lungs and trigger immediate physical reactions.

“We know that when the temperatures start creeping up, we all need to be on high alert for the threat of wildfires and harmful ozone,” said Brad Poiriez, MDAQMD Executive Director. “The more people we can reach here in the Mojave Desert Air Basin, the better prepared we can be for these potentially significant air quality risks.”

MDAQMD releases air quality alerts when the local Air Quality Index reaches unhealthy levels. Follow the District on social media @MDAQMD for the latest updates. MDAQMD also urges residents to check the AQI by visiting www.MDAQMD.ca.gov or www.AirNow.gov before heading outdoors, or visit www.enviroflash.info to sign up for text and email alerts with daily air quality forecasts.

MDAQMD is the air pollution control authority and permitting agency for the High Desert portion of San Bernardino County and the Palo Verde Valley in Riverside County. It's governed by a board of 13 members representing nine incorporated municipalities and two counties within its boundaries.

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MOJAVE DESERT AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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