

# AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HIGH WINDS CREATE THREAT TO AIR QUALITY

Increasing wind speeds, dry conditions elevate particulate matter concentrations

Windblown dust is nothing new to long-time desert dwellers, but the amount created by consecutive high-wind days can cause a significant decline in air quality that can adversely affect the health of our residents – especially those with pre-existing cardiac or respiratory issues.

Coarse particulate matter measuring between 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter (PM 10) is one of the main pollutants the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) monitors 24/7. For context, the average human hair is between 50 and 70 microns in diameter. High winds can cause significant particulate pollution.

A Santa Ana wind event that began late Wednesday evening was raising particulate pollution throughout the Mojave Desert Air Basin on Thursday to what could potentially become unhealthy levels. People with heart or lung diseases, older adults and children are most likely to be affected by particle pollution exposure. However, even healthy individuals may feel temporary symptoms from exposure to high levels of particle pollution.

“We’re lucky to live in a place that has some of the best year-round air quality in the state, but that doesn’t mean that we’re not susceptible to the elements stirring up pollutants on occasion,” said Brad Poiriez, MDAQMD’s Executive Director. “When there are high sustained winds in the Mojave Desert Air Basin, it’s safe to assume particulate pollution elevates higher than normal and it’s best to avoid long or strenuous activities outdoors if the individual is susceptible to adverse respiratory functions.”

Chances of being affected by particulate pollution increase the more strenuous individuals’ activity and the longer they’re active outdoors. If activities involve prolonged or heavy exertion, reduce the activity time or substitute another that involves less exertion. Go for a walk instead of a jog, for example. Plan outdoor activities for days when particulate levels are lower. And don't exercise near busy roads; particulate levels generally are higher in these areas.

MDAQMD posts air quality alerts when the local Air Quality Index reaches or is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Follow the District on social media @MDAQMD for the latest updates. Check the AQI at [www.MDAQMD.ca.gov](http://www.MDAQMD.ca.gov) or [www.AirNow.gov](http://www.AirNow.gov) before heading outdoors.

*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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