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Air quality worsens as fires continue to burn

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Wildfires burning throughout the region and state continue to challenge firefighters, threaten homes and worsen air quality.

Sacramentans woke to weather forecasts of high temperatures and smoky skies Monday.

Fires are burning in several neighboring counties -- virtually surrounding the Sacramento area -- and driving smoke into the valley.

The intensity of the fires and faint breeze are contributing to the smoky haze.

"We have light winds about 10 mph, so the smoke isn't moving very much," said Felix Garcia, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

High temperatures Monday are forecast around 90 degrees, he said.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District recommends that people stay indoors if they smell smoke. Particulate matter from smoke is unhealthy to breathe, the district's Spare the Air Web site states.

Hundreds of fires were sparked by a series of lightning strikes over the weekend throughout Northern California.

The Wild fire burning northeast of Napa, northwest of Fairfield, has burned 3,750 acres and is 40 percent contained, according to California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection officials.

The fire has destroyed one home and an outbuilding, is threatening 300 structures and has forced evacuations in Napa and Solano counties, Cal Fire's Web site states.

The American Red Cross has set up an evacuation center at the Fairfield Community Center, located at 1000 Kentucky St.

Sixteen fires were reported in Amador and El Dorado counties. The Soldier fire, located three miles northeast of Pollock Pines and north of Highway 50, has burned 40 acres and was 35 percent contained late Sunday evening.

Seven fires were reported in Nevada, Yuba and Placer counties. The Mosquito fire, which had burned 75 acres by late Sunday, is located near Mosquito Ridge Road south of Michigan Bluff

near Foresthill, the Web site states.

Farther north, 24 fires were reported in the Butte County area, 36 fires in Tehama and Glenn counties and 50 fires in Lassen and Modoc counties.

A fire in Butte County also prompted a highway closure early Monday morning. Highway 70 at Highway 149 in Oroville is closed, according to an online traffic alert issued by the California Highway Patrol at 6:50 a.m.

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