



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



September 1998

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Crops	Character of Storm
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

CAZ021

	01	1400PST							
	03	1800PST			0	2			Excessive Heat

The first three days of September 1998 had much above normal temperatures for California Zones 20 and 21, the Central and Southern San Joaquin Valley. The Southern San Joaquin Valley was especially warm with humidities averaging near 30 percent in the afternoons with temperatures at or above 105 degrees F. Bakersfield had a high of 105 degrees each of the first three days with minimum temperatures only lowering to 74, 78, and 73, respectively. Warmest spots in the South Valley climbed up to 109 degrees during this same period. Two reports of heat exhaustion were received for September 2 in Bakersfield indicative of the high temperatures and high humidity combination. Central Valley temperatures were only slightly lower with readings in the 103 to 107 degree range. However overnight high minimum temperature records were established for Fresno for the first 4 days in September due to the combination of high humidities and/or cloud cover. Air quality was considered "unhealthy" in combination with the high temperatures in these two California zones.

Kern County

2 WNW Arvin to
5 SW Bakersfield

	02	1409PST							
		1445PST			0	0	50K		Thunderstorm Wind

Kern County

10 ENE Bakersfield

	02	1409PST							
		1800PST			0	0			Lightning

A thunderstorm from the northeast moved over the far southeastern portion of the San Joaquin Valley during the mid-afternoon hours. Lightning strikes accounted for 4 grass fires during the event. The largest fire consumed 1,500 acres of grass east of Bakersfield along Breckenridge Road. A microburst brought low visibilities in blowing dust around Bakersfield including Interstate-58 east of the city that lead to several traffic accidents and downed power lines leaving 11,000 customers without power. Visibility dropped to 30 feet on Highway 58 on the east side of Bakersfield. Estimated wind speeds were as high as 45 Knots. Of interest are indications that two microbursts may have occurred based on wind direction shifts received from the Lamont ALERT (automated) weather station. (One at 1412 PST and another at 1427 PST).

CAZ021

	04	0000PST							
		2300PST			0	0	5M		Unseasonal Rain

Sub-tropical moisture had provided high humidities in combination with much above normal temperatures for the San Joaquin Valley for the first three (3) days in September. The remnants of East Pacific Hurricane Isis sheared northeastward from the Gulf of California by September 3rd but due to the southeast flow aloft around a weak low circulation off the Southern California Coast, the moisture was brought back to the northwest over the NWS San Joaquin Valley CWFA. With the moist sub-tropical airmass, steady rain with some embedded thunderstorms brought rainfall to the seasonally dry San Joaquin Valley. Agriculture, especially vintners and raisin growers, took monetary loss either directly due to rain or indirectly due to the additional steps to treat the increase in fungus activity on produce. While not "heavy" but "infrequent", this rain led Bakersfield to a one-day rainfall record on September 4th with 0.27" in 24-hours (old mark of 0.17" set in 1963). In the neighboring Kern Mountains, Tehachapi received 0.94 inches during the day. Rain was a little less steady northward through the CWFA counties but was showery. Other valley reports: Fresno...trace, Madera...trace, Merced...trace, Lemoore...0.05", Porterville...0.01", Kettleman...0.04", Taft...0.29". Edwards AFB...0.64", Mojave...0.50", Yosemite...0.03", LodgePole...0.48", Wishon...0.27", Frazier Park...1.53".

CAZ020

	09	0100PST							
		0830PST			0	0			Early Rain

Coldfrontal passage through the northern portion of Central California on Sept 9th did not provide any especially inclement weather.



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CALIFORNIA, South Central

However, it is worth mentioning because of the previous elongated rainy season supported by an El Nino in the mid-Pacific. The late arrival of summer (early July) in combination with some "cool" season shower activity from the 9th's weak coldfrontal passage began to cause problems. The growing season was offset later in the year and the "normal" arrival of fall was not a good combination for besieged local agriculture.