

## Valley Fever Awareness

Is Valley Fever a concern in California? Yes! Valley Fever (also called coccidioidomycosis) is a disease caused by a fungus that grows in the soil in endemic areas throughout California. When soil containing the fungus is disturbed by digging, vehicles, or by the wind, the fungal spores disperse into the air. When people breathe in the dust that contains these spores, they may get Valley Fever.

### How do you know if the fungus is present in the soil?

Valley Fever spores live in the top 2 to 12 inches of soil in many parts of the state. The spores are too small to be seen by the naked eye and there is no reliable way to test the soil for spores before working in a particular location. If you are traveling or working in a well-known endemic area, there are a few things you should be aware of prior to beginning work.

### What work activities increase the risk of Valley Fever?

When fungal spores are present, any work activity that disturbs the soil, such as digging, grading or other earth moving operations, or even vehicle operation on dirt roads, can cause the spores to become airborne. This increases the risk of Valley Fever. All workers on sites where the fungus is present, and who are exposed to dusty conditions are at an increased risk of becoming infected. Even if you not working, but traveling or visiting a nearby area where soil is being disturbed, you are at an increased risk of being infected.

### How can Valley Fever be Prevented?

While there is no vaccine to prevent Valley Fever, the following steps are important to take in order to limit the risk:

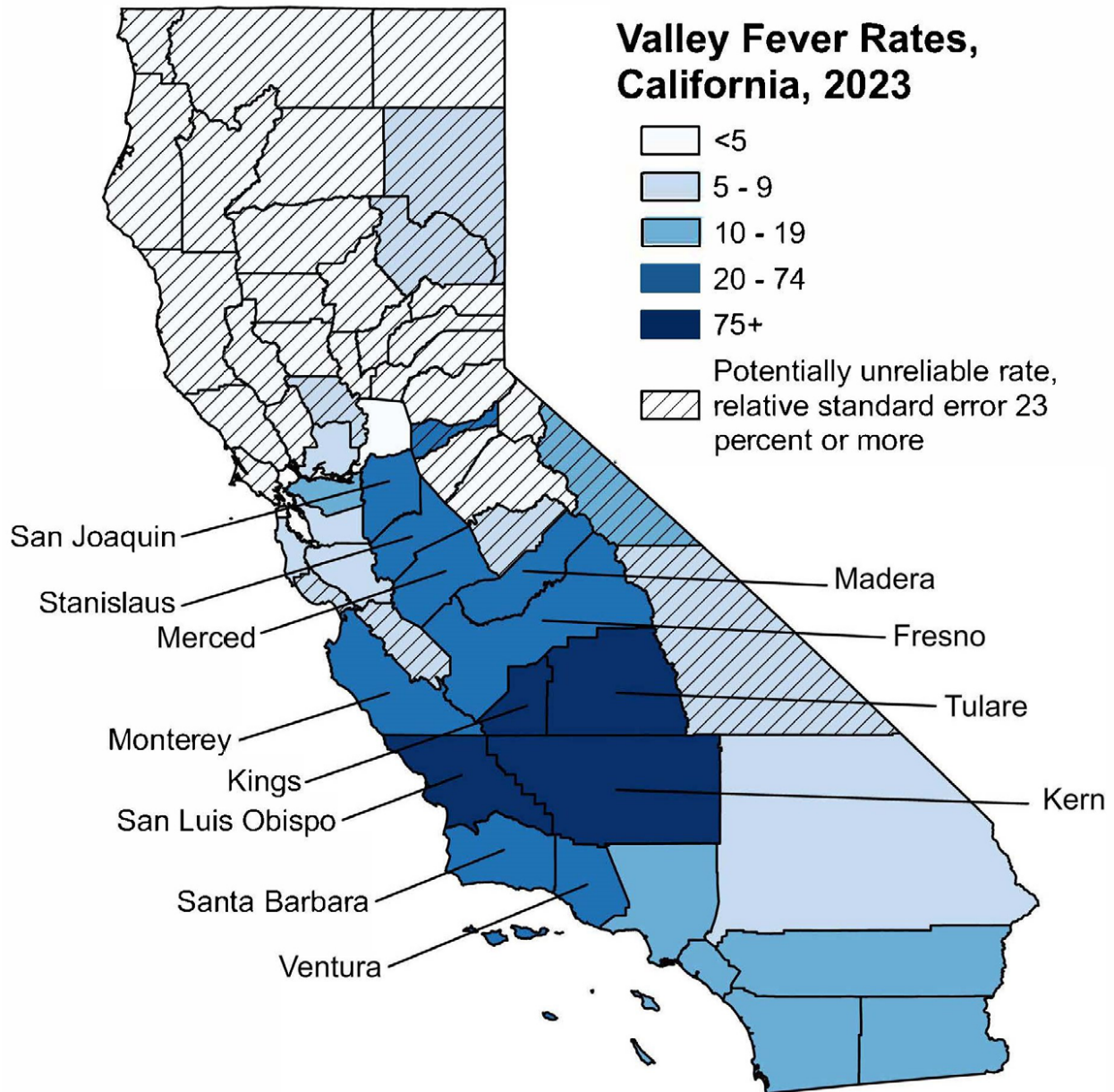
- Determine if your worksite is in an endemic area.
- Adopt site plans and work practices that reduce exposure, which may include:
  - Minimize the area of soil disturbed
  - Use water to reduce airborne dust
  - Suspend work during heavy winds
- Provide and wear the proper PPE
- Use equipment with enclosed cabs and HEPA filtration
- Take measures to reduce transporting spores offsite by cleaning tools and equipment
- Train workers and supervisors about the risk of Valley Fever

## Valley Fever Tailgates

[Valley fever: Tailgate training guide for California construction workers](#)

[Fiebre del Valle Guía de Capacitación para Trabajadores de la Construcción de California](#)

## Where does Valley Fever Occur



*Rates of Valley fever cases reported per 100,000 population. Darkest colored counties had the highest rates of Valley fever. **This map shows where people who had Valley fever lived, not where they worked.***

For more information about Valley Fever, or any safety topic contact the UCON safety consultant, Mike Donlon, at (916) 834-1896 or [mdonlon@mdsafety-service.com](mailto:mdonlon@mdsafety-service.com).