

Heat Wave Safety Tips



KNOW THE FACTS

Heat waves usually consist of high temperatures and high relative humidity. This combination makes it difficult for the human body to dissipate heat through the skin and sweat glands. Sweating will not cool the human body unless the water is removed by evaporation. High relative humidity, consequently, retards evaporation. Certain medications can also make it difficult for a person to sweat.

Heat Index...

- The National Weather Service (NWS) uses the "HEAT INDEX" as a measure of the combined effects of high temperatures and high relative humidity.
- Research findings strongly suggest that HEAT INDEX (HI) values of 90 to 105 degrees make sunstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
- Research findings strongly suggest that HI values of 105 to 130 degrees make sunstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion likely with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

Advisories and warnings...

- The NWS issues Heat Advisories when it expects daytime HI's to equal or exceed 105 degrees for 3 hours or more while nighttime HI's equal or exceed 80 degrees, for any 24-hour period.
- The NWS issues Excessive Heat Warnings when it expects daytime HI's to equal or exceed 115 degrees for 3 hours or more while nighttime HI's equal or exceed 80 degrees, for any 24-hour period. The NWS may issue an "Excessive Heat Watch" 24 to 8 hours in advance of heat wave conditions.

DURING THE HEAT

Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio...

- Stay informed about the latest watches, warnings, and advisories.
- Follow all emergency instructions.
- Be prepared to evacuate.



Use Caution...

- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach more than 140°F (60° C) within minutes. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill in minutes.
- Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activities. Get plenty of rest to allow your natural "cooling system" to work. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the early morning.
- Avoid too much sunshine. Sunburn slows the skin's ability to cool itself. The sun will also heat the inner core of your body, resulting in dehydration.
- Dress appropriately. Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing that will cover as much skin as possible. Cover as much skin as possible to avoid sunburn and the over-warming effects of sunlight on your body. Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Drink regularly and often. Your body needs water to keep cool. Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Injury and death can occur from dehydration, which can happen quickly and be unnoticed until too late.
- Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering stress from the heat. Make sure they are indoors or in the shade. Provide plenty of water for drinking as well as for cooling the animals.

