



Extreme Heat

WHAT IS EXTREME HEAT?

Temperatures that reach 10 degrees or more above the average high for the region and last for several weeks are defined as extreme heat.

EXTREME HEAT FACTS

- In a normal year, approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat. Young children, the elderly, and those who are sick or overweight are more likely to become victims.
- Excessively dry and hot conditions can provoke dust storms and low visibility.
- Droughts occur when a long period passes without substantial rainfall. A heat wave combined with a drought is a very dangerous situation.
- People living in urban areas may be at a greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than people living in rural regions. An increase in health problems can occur when stagnant atmospheric conditions trap pollutants in urban areas, thus adding contaminated air to excessively hot temperatures.

DANGER ZONES

All areas in the U.S. are at risk of drought at any time of the year.

KNOW THE TERMS

- **Heat Wave:** Prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity.
- **Heat Index:** A number in degrees Fahrenheit that tells how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to air temperature. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15 degrees.

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO EXTREME HEAT

- Install window air conditioners snugly; if necessary, insulate around the air conditioner to block outside air flow.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings or louvers. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80%.
- Keep storm windows installed all year.

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING EXTREME HEAT

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun. Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine, if air-conditioning is not available.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings, such as libraries, movie theaters, shopping malls, or other community facilities.
- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water. Consult a doctor before increasing intake if you have epilepsy; have heart, liver or kidney disease; are on a fluid-restricted diet; or have a problem with fluid retention. Limit intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air-conditioning and who spend much of their time alone.
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat and take frequent breaks.

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER AFTER EXTREME HEAT

- Notify friends or family of your condition. Monitor local radio and television stations for the latest information. Help a neighbor who may require special assistance, (i.e., large families, children, elderly and individuals with disabilities).

FIRST AID FOR HEAT-INDUCED ILLNESSES

- Extreme heat brings with it the possibility of heat-induced illnesses. The following table lists these illnesses, their symptoms, and the first aid treatment.

Condition	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores. Blocked pores prevent the body from cooling naturally.• Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles; heavy sweating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the victim to a cooler location.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms. • Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. (Do not give liquids with caffeine or alcohol.) • Discontinue liquids, if victim is nauseated
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale, or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal body temperature is possible, but temperature will likely rise. Fainting or dizziness, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, and headaches are possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get victim to lie down in a cool place. • Loosen or remove clothing. • Apply cool, wet clothes. • Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. • Give sips of water if victim is conscious. Be sure water is consumed slowly, giving a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Discontinue water if victim is nauseated. • Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs
Heat Stroke (a severe medical emergency)	High body temperature (105+); hot, red, dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid shallow breathing. Victim will probably not sweat unless victim was sweating from recent strenuous activity. Victim may be unconsciousness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services, or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Any delay can be fatal. • Move victim to a cooler environment. • Removing clothing. • Try a cool bath, sponging, or wet sheet to reduce body temperature. • Watch for breathing problems. • Use extreme caution. • Use fans and air conditioners.

For more preparedness information visit Ready.gov and locally the Montgomery County Emergency Preparedness page.