



Getting Ready for the Summer Heat

The recent surge in temperatures has reminded all us that summer is just a few weeks away. An extended period of extreme heat accompanied by high humidity is the definition of a summer heat wave. These conditions can be dangerous and even life threatening for people who do not take precautions.

1. Preparing for a Heat Wave

- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.
- Be aware of both the temperature and the heat index.
- Discuss heat safety precautions with members of your household. Have a plan for wherever you spend time— home, work and school—and prepare for the possibility of power outages.
- Check the contents of your emergency preparedness kit in case a power outage occurs.
- Know those in your neighborhood who are elderly, young, or sick. They are more likely to become victims of excessive heat and may need help.
- If you do not have air conditioning, choose places you could go to for relief from the heat during the warmest part of the day (libraries, community centers, theaters, malls, etc...).
- Get trained in First Aid to learn how to treat heat-related emergencies.
- Ensure that your animals' needs for water and shade are met.

2. Before Extreme Heat

To prepare for extreme heat, you should:

- To begin preparing, you should [build an emergency kit](#) and make a [family communications plan](#).
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.
- 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 percent.)
- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.

3. Responding Appropriately During a Heat Wave

- Listen to a NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Weather Radio for critical updates from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Never leave children or pets alone in enclosed vehicles.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.

- Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- 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, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities. Circulating air can cool the body by increasing the perspiration rate of evaporation.
- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water; even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restricted diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, and take frequent breaks.
- Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.
- Let your family know you are safe