

# Heat Wave Safety Checklist and Resources

## Know the Difference

**Excessive Heat Watch** - Conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event to meet or exceed local Excessive Heat Warning criteria in the next 24 to 72 hours.

**Excessive Heat Warning** - Heat Index values are forecast to meet or exceed locally defined warning criteria for at least 2 days (daytime highs=105-110° Fahrenheit).

**Heat Advisory** - Heat Index values are forecast to meet locally defined advisory criteria for 1 to 2 days (daytime highs=100-105° Fahrenheit)

## Local Cooling Centers

Spending a few hours in an air-conditioned environment can bring down the body's core temperature and make it easier to handle the heat. Older and/or frail adults, homeless people, parents with small children and persons with health conditions that may be made worse by the weather should consider spending time in a cooling center, particularly between 1 pm and 5 pm when temperatures are at their highest. The programs listed below provide air conditioned facilities which are open to the public during dangerously hot weather: Scherer Community Center - 909-797-1177 (Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am-4:00pm); Yucaipa Community Center - 909-790-7460 (Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-9:00pm, Sat. 8:30am-6:00pm, Sun. 1:00-6:00pm); Yucaipa Branch Library - 909-790-3146 (Mon.-Wed. 11:00am-7:00pm, Thurs. 10:00am-6:00pm, Sat. 9:00am-5:00pm).

## How Can I Prepare?



- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.
- The heat index is the temperature the body feels when the effects of heat and humidity are combined. Exposure to direct sunlight can increase the heat index by as much as 15° F.
- 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, sick or overweight. 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 (schools, libraries, theaters, malls).
- Be aware that people living in urban areas may be at greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than are people living in rural areas.
- Get trained in first aid to learn how to treat heat-related emergencies.
- Ensure that your animals' needs for water and shade are met.

## What Should I Do During a Heat Wave?



- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio for critical updates from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Never leave children or pets alone in enclosed vehicles.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Eat small meals and eat more often.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day.
- Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat.
- 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.
- Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat

## Recognize and Care for Heat-Related Emergencies...



**Heat cramps** are muscular pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or abdomen caused by exposure to high heat and humidity and loss of fluids and electrolytes. Heat cramps are often an early sign that the body is having trouble with the heat.

**Heat exhaustion** typically involves the loss of body fluids through heavy sweating during strenuous exercise or physical labor in high heat and humidity.

Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea; dizziness; weakness; and exhaustion.  Move the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths or towels to the skin. Fan the person. If the person is conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition.

If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

**Heat stroke** (also known as sunstroke) is a life-threatening condition in which a person's temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself.

Signs of heat stroke include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting; and high body temperature.

Heat stroke is life-threatening. Call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number immediately.

Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person's body by giving care as you would for heat exhaustion. If needed, continue rapid cooling by applying ice or cold packs wrapped in a cloth to the wrists, ankles, groin, neck and armpits.

## Other Resources:

Sign up for free weather alerts to your phone or e-mail from websites such as <http://www.weather.com/services/mobilesplash.html>.

Visit <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/> to find information and tips for preventing heat sickness

Source: Adapted from the American Red Cross

