



Press Release

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Heat, Humidity Can Be Deadly Combination

Emergency management officials offer heat safety tips

SPRINGFIELD – On average, heat kills more people each year than other weather-related hazards, such as tornadoes, floods and lightning. To increase awareness about the dangers of extreme heat, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies are offering heat safety tips throughout July to help people stay safe when temperatures rise.

According to the National Weather Service, heat accounted for an average of 113 fatalities each year from 2006–2015. During that same period, tornadoes caused an average of 110 deaths each year, while floods resulted in an annual average of 84 fatalities.

“People often don’t realize how dangerous hot weather can be,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “We want everyone to be aware of the dangers of extreme heat and what they can do to stay safe and healthy.”

Joseph said heat-related fatalities can be prevented by taking precautions when temperatures rise. One of the most important heat safety tips is to never leave children, elderly people, adults with disabilities, or pets in parked cars even for a short time. Temperatures in vehicles rise much faster than many people realize.

Even with the windows slightly open, temperatures inside a vehicle will rise 30 to 40 degrees in less than 30 minutes. The effects of hot cars can be more severe on children because their bodies warm at a faster rate than adults.

Several tragic deaths also have occurred when children got into vehicles without their parents’ knowledge and then couldn’t get out. It’s important to always lock car doors and trunks, even at home, and keep keys out of children’s reach.

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Other hot weather tips include:

- Stay hydrated by drinking at least 1½ to 2 quarts of fluids daily, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages and drinks containing caffeine.
- Avoid overexertion and strenuous outdoor activities if possible.
- Take advantage of cooling centers, public pools and air-conditioned stores and malls during periods of extreme heat. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can help prevent heat-related illnesses.
- Don't forget your pets. Offer pets extra water and place the water bowl in a shaded area if outdoors. Make sure pets have a shady refuge where they can escape direct sun exposure.
- If you or someone around you begins experiencing dizziness, nausea, headache, confusion and a rapid pulse, seek medical attention immediately, as these could be the symptoms of heatstroke.

Additional tips on how to protect yourself and others from heat-related illnesses are available on the state's Ready Illinois website (www.Ready.Illinois.gov).