



For Immediate Release
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Prepare for the Summer months - June 1 is Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin

MADISON, Wis. – While summer months mean fun in the sun, there could be danger if you stay outside too long on extra hot and humid days. ReadyWisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) urge everyone to take steps to protect themselves and those around you from heat dangers. Gov. Tony Evers has declared June 1 as Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin.

“As summer warms up, there are ways to beat the heat and not end up in an emergency room,” said Wisconsin Emergency Management Acting Administrator Greg Engle. “Extreme heat can be extremely dangerous, and it’s important to take an active role in staying safe.”

Preliminary data from DHS shows nine people died in Wisconsin from May 1 to Sept. 30, 2021 due to heat-related causes, while another 803 people were treated in emergency departments.

Climate change is bringing more frequent extreme elevated heat events to the state. The past two decades were the warmest on record for Wisconsin, and as a result has negatively impacted more Wisconsinites than other weather disaster combined, according to the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy. Extreme heat events cause elevated levels of heat stress, heat stroke and heat exhaustion, so it’s even more important for all Wisconsinites to keep track of the forecast, ensuring it is safe to engage in outdoor activities or get to a cooler location if residents do not have air conditioning in their home.

Older adults, young children, sick, and overweight individuals are more susceptible to illness during extreme heat events. Outdoor workers and active people of all ages are also at risk of heat-related illnesses when temperatures climb and combine with high humidity.

“In extreme heat, your body is working extra hard to maintain a normal temperature, which could lead to severe illness or even death,” said Dr. Jon Meiman, chief medical officer for the

DHS Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health. “Heat-related deaths and hospitalizations are preventable, and it’s important to know what to do if you or a loved one show signs of heat-related illness.”

Heat stroke is a serious, life-threatening type of heat illness. Some signs to look out for include:

- Extremely high body temperature (greater than 103 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Red, hot, and dry skin with (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Dizziness, confusion, or unconsciousness.

If you suspect heat stroke, call 911 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives. Do not give the person anything to drink.

The heat can also be dangerous for pets. Help keep them safe by limiting their time outdoors and making sure they have access to fresh drinking water.

The inside of a car can be especially dangerous. On an 80-degree Fahrenheit day, temperatures in a vehicle parked in direct sunlight can climb almost 20 degrees in just 10 minutes. Never leave a child or pet inside a parked car.

Tips for staying safe during extreme heat:

- Stay cool – Remain inside air-conditioned buildings as much as possible during the hottest parts of the day and avoid direct sunlight.
- Stay aware – Watch for early signs of heat-related illnesses such as dizziness, headache, fatigue, and muscle cramps. If symptoms do not improve, seek medical attention.
- Stay hydrated – Drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids. Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink! Do not take salt tablets unless directed to by a medical professional.
- Stay informed – Pay attention to local weather forecasts and extreme heat alerts.

During periods of extreme heat, the National Weather Service may issue advisories, watches or warnings to the public. When those conditions are present, people are encouraged to adjust their plans and take precautions to help reduce their risk of exposure to potentially dangerous conditions.

Gov. Evers’ Heat Awareness Day proclamation is available at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov/be-informed/extreme-heat/>

For more tips on emergency preparedness, head to <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/readywisconsin).

Find more tips to prevent heat-related illnesses at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate/weather/heatillness.htm> and follow DHSWI on Facebook (

<https://www.facebook.com/DHSWI>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/DHSWI>) and dhs.wi on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/dhs.wi/>)

Learn more about climate change in Wisconsin at <https://climatechange.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx> and strategies the state is pursuing the address climate change impacts through Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan: <https://osce.wi.gov/pages/cleanenergyplan.aspx>

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