

Extreme Heat & Drought Toolkit

Introduction

As a counterpart to our Summer Ready toolkit last month, we want to share more about the health risks associated with extreme heat, especially for vulnerable groups. Record breaking temperatures lead to water insecurity, drought, and increasingly severe wildfires, making it more important than ever to plan as individuals and communities. This toolkit is designed to provide you and your organization with easy-to-use tools to promote summer safety on all fronts.

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Announcements

- The first ever Cross-Regional Hurricane webinar (July 1st at 6PM EST) will be your key to valuable storm preparedness information for coastal and inland communities across the country. The collaborative nature of our presentation offers valuable insights on physically and financially weathering this season’s storms. This presentation will also provide attendees with:
 - FEMA leadership keynote speakers
 - Ways to keep you and your loved ones safe as storms expand in reach and severity.



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- Testimonial from those with lived experience battling hurricanes and a Q&A panel with subject matter experts.
- And much more! Please click the [link to register](#) in advance.
- News & Events related to extreme heat can be found at [News and Events | HEAT.gov - National Integrated Heat Health Information System](#)

Key Messages

- Learn to recognize the [signs of heat illness](#).
- Water conservation is key to helping mitigate the impact of [drought](#).
- Prevention and preparation are key to cooling your risk when it comes to [wildfires](#).

Talking Points

During Extreme Heat

Know the signs of heat-related illnesses and ways to respond. If you are sick and need medical attention, contact your healthcare provider for advice and shelter in place if you can. If you are experiencing a medical emergency call 9-1-1.

- Get more detailed information about heat-related illnesses from the CDC and National Weather Service.

Heat Stroke Signs:

- Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees F) taken orally.
- Red, hot and dry skin with no sweat
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Dizziness, confusion or unconsciousness
- If you suspect heat stroke, call 9-1-1 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.

Heat Cramp Signs:

- Muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms or legs

Heat Exhaustion Signs: Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, fast or weak pulse, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, vomiting.

- If you have signs of heat cramps or heat exhaustion, go to a cooler location and cool down by removing excess clothing and taking sips of sports drinks or water. Call your healthcare provider if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.



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Beat the Heat

- Take cool showers or baths.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Use your oven less to help reduce the temperature in your home.
- If you're outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Avoid high-energy activities or work outdoors, during midday heat, if possible.
- Check on family members, older adults and neighbors.
- Get to a cooling center if possible, [Call 211 for Essential Community Services | United Way 211](#)

Drought

Indoor Water Conservation Tips Prior to a Drought

- Get creative when it comes to reusing water, maybe for indoor plants and gardening.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.
- Check all plumbing for leaks and have any leaks repaired by a plumber.
- Choose appliances that are more energy and water efficient.

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips Prior to a Drought

- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs, and trees. Small plants require less water to become established. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
- Install irrigation devices that are the most water efficient for each use, such as micro and drip irrigation, and soaker hoses.
- Use mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulch also helps control weeds that compete with landscape plants for water and consider rainwater harvesting where practical.
- Invest in a weather-based irrigation controller—or a smart controller. These devices will automatically adjust the watering time and frequency according to your need. Check with your local water agency to see if there is a rebate available.
- Install a new water-saving pool filter and make sure to cover pools and spas to reduce evaporation of water.
- More strategies for drought preparedness can be found here: [Drought Preparedness | Water Conservation | Red Cross](#)

Wildfires



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Do your part to prevent fires:

- Only start a campfire or bonfire in an appropriate fire pit, cleared of all vegetation and ringed by stones, at least 15 feet from any structure.
- Never leave a fire unattended, such as overnight. Always make sure your fire is completely doused with water and smothered with dirt before leaving.
- Don't start a fire on a windy day. Save it for another time.
- Dispose of used matches and butts in a closed container or cup of water and keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- Don't burn yard waste or rubbish unless it's allowed by your municipality.

Before a fire

- Recognize Warnings and Alerts: Download the [FEMA app](#) and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. Sign up for community alerts in your area and be aware of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), which requires no-sign up. Pay attention to air quality alerts.
- Make an Emergency Plan: Include evacuation routes and shelters (know your zone link, red cross link), secure important documents and make copies of your up-to-date insurance policies and IDs, and provisions for those with underlying lung conditions.
- Strengthen your Home: Use fire-resistant materials during construction and create a fire-resistant zone that is free of leaves, debris, or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home. Designate a room that can be closed off from outside air then close all doors and windows and use an air cleaner for filtration.
- Gather Supplies: Have enough supplies for your household, including a first aid kit, in your go bag or car trunk. If available, store an N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation. Keep your cell phone charged and have backup charging options such as power banks.

Online Resources

- [Extreme Heat | Ready.gov](#)
- [Extreme Heat | Natural Disasters and Severe Weather | CDC](#)
- [Extreme Heat: Forecasts and Safety \(weather.gov\)](#)
- [Heat.gov](#)
- [CDC Heat Tracker](#)
- [OSHA Heat Outlook Tool](#)
- [Wildfires: Wildfire Preparedness Checklist \(redcross.org\)](#), [EPA resources](#), [USDA Forest Service resources](#), [Social Media Preparedness Toolkits](#)



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- [Drought](#): U.S. Drought Monitor [weekly update](#), [National Drought Mitigation Center](#), [U.S. Drought Outlook](#), [USDA- drought impact on crops and livestock](#). Follow #DroughtMonitor on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- [Air quality](#)
- [At risk groups Protecting Vulnerable Patient Populations from Climate Hazards: A Referral Guide for Health Professionals | HHS.gov](#)
- Extreme heat resource guide [Local Officials Guide for Extreme Temperatures \(fema.gov\)](#) building roadmaps to risk assessment and recovery
- [Signos y síntomas de advertencia de enfermedades relacionadas con el calor | Desastres naturales y tiempo severo | CDC](#)
- [Cómo proteger del calor extremo a los grupos vulnerables | Desastres naturales y tiempo severo | CDC](#)


Social Media

- Do you know the difference between a Heat Outlook, Watch, & Warning? Learn them today: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat> #BeatTheHeat
- Heat Wave: Prolonged period of excessive heat, often with excessive humidity: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat> #BeatTheHeat
- Extreme heat makes the body work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Know the facts & prepare: www.ready.gov/heat #BeatTheHeat
- Each year approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat. Get the 411 on #BeatTheHeat www.ready.gov/heat
- Recognize when someone is suffering from dehydration or heat stroke & act quickly! Learn the signs: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html> #BeatTheHeat
- Learn what to do before, during, and after a #Wildfire by visiting www.ready.gov/wildfires #WildfireSafety [Wildfires | CDC](#)




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Graphics

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<p>ACT FAST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing • Sip cool water • Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve 	<p>ACT FAST</p> <p>CALL 911</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move person to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice
<p><i>Dizziness</i></p> <p><i>Thirst</i></p> <p><i>Heavy Sweating</i></p> <p><i>Nausea</i></p> <p><i>Weakness</i></p>	<p><i>Confusion</i></p> <p><i>Dizziness</i></p> <p><i>Becomes Unconscious</i></p>
	
<p><i>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</i></p> <p><i>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</i></p>	
<p>Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!</p>	

During a Drought, Conserve Water.

-  Water your lawn less often
-  Identify and fix leaks
-  Take shorter showers
-  Turn off the water while brushing teeth
-  Run the wash less frequently
-  Heed any local water use restrictions



weather.gov 



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epa.gov/heatislands

Stay Informed Before A Wildfire

Receiving timely information about weather conditions or other emergency events can make all the difference in knowing when to take action to be safe.

- Monitor the weather reports provided by your local news radio and TV stations.
- Sign up for local emergency notifications for your community to receive either text message or email alerts.
- Always have extra batteries for a battery-operated radio and your cell phone.



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UNDERSTANDING DROUGHT

Drought is a shortage of water over an extended period of time.

Droughts are a normal part of a climate cycle.

They occur in all climate zones.

Drought can be short or span years.

CONNECTION TO WILDFIRES

Dry conditions often lead to brush fires or wildfires.

Local officials may ask that you not burn brush or trash during dry conditions.

In extreme fire conditions, officials may issue mandatory evacuation orders to protect your life.



Videos

- [What To Do During a Drought \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Protect Your Kids When Its Hot Outside \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Wildfires PSA - Charles, 1 minute - Survivor Stories \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [FEMA Improving Individual and Community Wildfire Resilience Summit Resources \(youtube.com\)](#)



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