

Pat Quinn, Governor
Joe Klinger, Interim Director

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Heat Safety Focus of IEMA's 12-Month Preparedness Campaign during July

Extreme heat causes more deaths than all other weather combined

SPRINGFIELD – Temperatures in June were hot, but it's likely the hottest part of the summer is yet to come. In fact, most extreme high temperature records in Illinois have been set during July, including the state's hottest month ever recorded in July 1936. And extreme temperatures aren't just uncomfortable – they are also responsible for more weather-related deaths than all other weather phenomena combined.

That's why the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) will focus on heat safety throughout the month of July as part of its 12-Month Preparedness Campaign.

"It's no secret that summers in Illinois are hot, but sometimes people fail to recognize how dangerous extreme heat can be," said IEMA Interim Director Joe Klinger. "When temperatures creep up into the 90s and 100s, conditions can become hazardous, particularly for children, seniors, those with special needs and pets," said IEMA Interim Director Joe Klinger. "During July, we'll be working to remind people of the steps they can take to stay safe."

According to the National Weather Service (NWS) in Lincoln, more than 970 heat-related deaths have occurred in Illinois since 1995. That number is more than five times the combined number of deaths from tornadoes (25), lightning (15), floods (23), snow and ice storms (20) and extreme cold temperatures (95).

"When the effects of warm temperatures are combined with high levels of humidity, heat-related illnesses can develop even quicker," said Chris Miller, Warning Coordinator Meteorologist with the NWS in Lincoln. "Keep in mind that temperatures are measured in the shade, so if you are in direct sunlight it can feel 15 degrees hotter."

Heat-related illnesses range from heat cramps to the potentially life-threatening heat stroke. It's important for people to recognize the symptoms of these maladies and know what actions to take

if they or someone near them becomes ill. Symptoms and recommended treatment actions include:

- **Heat Cramps:** Twitching or painful spasms, usually in muscles of legs or abdomen during or after heavy physical activity, as well as heavy sweating and thirst. Treatment includes stopping activity and resting in a cool place. Lightly stretch or gently massage muscles to relieve spasms, and give sips of cool water or electrolyte drink to sufferer.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, with cool, pale and clammy skin. Pulse is fast and weak and breathing is fast and shallow. Victim will have normal temperature or a low-grade fever. Fainting, vomiting, dizziness, nausea and headache are common. Treatment includes having the victim lie down in a cool place. Apply cool, wet cloths and give sips of cool water or electrolyte drink. Contact doctor if symptoms worsen or do not improve within 30 minutes.
- **Heat Stroke:** High body temperature of 103 -106 degrees F. Victim will have hot, red, dry skin, and sweating may be heavy or have stopped. Breathing is fast and shallow, and other symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness and confusion, with possible unconsciousness or seizure. Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical situation requiring emergency medical treatment.

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). Some of those tips include:

- Avoid overexertion and strenuous outdoor activities during extreme heat.
- Consume plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Exposure to air conditioning for even a few hours a day will reduce the risk for heat-related illness.
- Keep lights in your home low or off, keep shades drawn and avoid using the oven.
- Closely monitor children, the elderly and those who require special care during periods of intense summer heat.
- Do not leave children or pets in a closed vehicle, even for a few minutes. On a hot day, temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach 140 degrees F.

For other tips on staying cool and reducing cooling costs during the summer, visit the state of Illinois' Keep Cool Illinois website at www.keepcool.illinois.gov.