



# Extreme Heat

June 2008



## Extreme Heat Terms

<b>Heat Wave</b>	Prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity.
<b>Heat Index</b>	A number in degrees Fahrenheit (F) that tells how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to the air temperature.
<b>Heat Cramps</b>	Muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. A signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	When people exercise or work in a hot, humid place body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to vital organs to decrease. This is a mild form of shock and must be treated. It could lead to heat stroke.
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	A life-threatening condition. Also called sun stroke.

***Do not take extreme heat lightly.*** In the summer of 1995, a series of heat waves resulted in 154 fatalities in Wisconsin. Most of them were in southeastern Wisconsin.



## Before Extreme Heat

To prepare for extreme heat, you should:

- Install window air conditioner snugly.
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors (between windows and drapes) such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard. This reflects heat back outside.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings or louvers. (Outdoor awnings and louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80%.)
- Keep storm windows up all year.

## During a Heat Emergency

What you should do if the weather is extremely hot:

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to sun.
- Stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine, especially if air conditioning is not available.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings—libraries, schools, movie theaters and shopping malls. Circulating air cools the body by increasing the perspiration rate of evaporation.
- Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water. Limit alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothes that cover as much of your skin as possible.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who spend much of their time alone.
- Do not leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Take frequent breaks. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat.
- Consult your doctor if you have medical conditions that might cause you to be affected by heat or increased liquid intake.



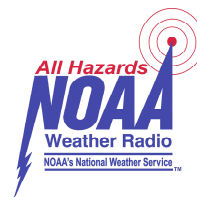
**Racine County Office of Emergency Management**  
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## First Aid for Heat-Induced Illness

Illness	Symptom	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain. Possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches.	Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally. Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles. Heavy sweating.	Get the victim to a cooler location. Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms. Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. No alcohol or caffeine. Discontinue liquids if victim is nauseated.
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal, but more likely elevated temperature. Fainting or dizziness, nausea and vomiting, exhaustion. Headache possible.	Loosen or remove clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to an air-conditioned place. Give sips of water if victim is conscious. Be sure water is consumed slowly. Discontinue liquids if victim is nauseated. Seek medical attention if vomiting occurs.
Heat Stroke	High body temperature (105°+). Hot, red, dry skin. Rapid Pulse. Rapid shallow breathing. Victim may not sweat. Possible unconsciousness.	Call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services, or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Move victim to a cooler place. Use fans/air conditioners. Remove clothing. Try a cool bath, sponging or wet sheet to reduce body temperature. Watch for breathing problems.

## Is your family ready?

It's a good idea to always have a basic disaster kit ready for any kind of emergency situation. Go to [www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/supplykit.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/supplykit.shtm) for information about what you should pack in your kit.



NOAA weather radios cost only \$20 - \$30 and provide immediate broadcasts of severe weather warnings and civil emergency messages. Stay posted and stay safe.

## Partners



The **Volunteer Center of Racine County** brings volunteers together with community organizations. The Volunteer Center mobilizes people of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer. Investing their time and talents makes a difference in their own lives as well as in the community. The center helps people respond to community needs by creating, developing, implementing and supporting volunteer opportunities. To find out more, call us at (262) 886-9612 or visit our website [www.volunteercentrofracine.org](http://www.volunteercentrofracine.org).



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