



HEAT WAVE

A heat wave is a period of abnormally hot weather lasting for at least two to three consecutive days. It's characterized by temperatures significantly higher than average for a given region and time of year and often accompanied by high humidity. This combination makes it feel even hotter and hinders the body's natural cooling process.



Heat waves aren't defined by a specific Temperature; rather, they are determined relative to the typical climate of an area. They can pose significant risks to human health, leading to heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and exacerbation of existing medical conditions, and can also strain infrastructure and contribute to environmental problems like drought.

Heat terminology:

- **Heat wave**—An extended period of extreme heat, usually combined with humidity.
- **Heat index**—Combines air temperature and relative humidity to express the apparent temperature, or “how hot it actually feels.”

Heat Wave Preparedness & Response

Preparation:

- **Air Circulation:** Ensure access to a fan or air circulation method.

During a Heat Wave:

- **Reduce Activity:** Slow down & avoid strenuous exertion.
- **Stay Indoors:** Limit outdoor exposure.
- **Cooling Centers:** Utilize air-conditioned public buildings if home A/C is unavailable.
- **Air Circulation (Home):** Use fans to circulate air if without A/C.
- **Hydrate:** Drink plenty of water, even without thirst.
- **Avoid:** Alcohol, caffeine, and salt.
- **Clothing:** Wear loose, light-colored clothing.
- **Be Aware:** Anticipate potential power outages or drought.

Heat Emergencies – Seek Medical Attention if Observed:

- **Heat Cramps:** Muscle spasms/aches from exertion. (First sign of complications).
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Mild shock from fluid loss.
 - Symptoms:
 - Pale, cool/moist skin.
 - Profuse sweating.
 - Muscle cramps.
 - Fainting/dizziness.
 - Headache/weakness/nausea.
 - Elevated temp (>100°F) & pulse.

- **Heat Stroke/Sun Stroke:** Body's temperature regulation fails.
 - Symptoms:
 - Unconsciousness/altered mental state (confusion, hallucinations, coma).
 - Flushed, hot/dry skin (may be moist initially).
 - Hyperventilating.
 - Core temp $\geq 105^{\circ}\text{F}$.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): <https://www.ready.gov/heat>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/about>
- Ready Army: <https://www.army.mil/ready>

It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen. These fact sheets are intended to supplement predetermined plans and policies. Follow state, local, installation and command guidance related to threats and hazards.

