Extreme Heat Preparedness

Extreme heat is a period of time marked by heat and humidity, with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. Heat can be a killer. The combination of hot weather and high humidity can cause heat-related illnesses to set in. In extreme heat, the body works extra hard to cool itself and maintain a normal temperature. In order to cool your body, we sweat. However, when the body is heating too rapidly, we lose fluid and salt due to dehydration and sweating, which can lead to death. Extreme heat is responsible for the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards.

One way to keep cool during periods of extreme heat is to gather outdoors at places such as pools, beaches, and recreation centers. For those that do not have air conditioning or cannot afford it due to electricity bills, relying on public places for cooling is important. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on public gatherings, it may be difficult to stay cool while also social distancing.

Prepare NOW
- Keep your home cool:
  - Cover windows with drapes or shades.
  - Add insulation to keep the heat out.
  - Install window air conditioners.
- Learn to recognize the signs of heat-related illness, such as cramps, exhaustion, and heat stroke. Common symptoms are dizziness, nausea, elevated heart rate, and general weakness.

Be Safe DURING
- NEVER leave a child, adult, or animal alone inside a vehicle on a warm day.
- If you do not have air conditioning, find places that do, such as libraries and community centers.
  - Note: If you are at places outside the home, it is important to maintain social distancing and avoid gathering in large groups when trying to stay cool.
- Find shade if you are outside. Wear a hat to protect your face.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid strenuous activities.

For more information on extreme heat safety and preparedness, visit ready.gov/heat.