

Hotter in NE Ohio: Beat the H.E.A.T.

Extreme Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States. In recognition of National Heat Awareness Day, May 24th, 2013, the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management encourages awareness of the dangers associated with extreme heat.

On average, extreme heat claims more lives each year than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. Humans and animals exposed to extreme heat can suffer from heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and heat cramps. Knowing the differences between these conditions is critical when determining the need for medical care.

Heat Cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are non-life threatening, they are often the precursor to more serious heat-related health concerns.

Heat Exhaustion typically occurs when people overexert themselves in hot, humid weather conditions. Heat exhaustion causes an increase in blood flow to the skin, resulting in less blood flow to vital organs. If untreated, heat exhaustion may cause a victim to suffer heat stroke.

Heat Stroke. Heat stroke, also referred to as “Sun Stroke”, damages the body’s temperature control system, which regulates perspiration. A victim experiencing heat stroke can suffer brain damage or death if they do not receive proper medical care.

Here are several measures that individuals can take to stay safe and beat the **H.E.A.T.** this summer.

Hydrate. Whether you feel thirsty or not, drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated, especially when working or exercising outside.

Educate yourself. Know your local weather, temperature, and heat index forecasts. Take actions to stay cool and safe when the temperatures hits eighty-five degrees or the heat index is ninety degrees. Know the warning signs of heat illness and how you can stay cool.

Act quickly when a heat illness is suspected. Seek medical attention immediately for any of these warning signs: cramping, rapid pulse, heavy sweating, hot red skin, dizziness, confusion, nausea, vomiting.

Take it easy. Anyone working or exercising outdoors should avoid overexertion, especially between the hours of 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Take hourly breaks in the shade or in air conditioning.

Stay cool and Beat the H.E.A.T.

For more information on heat emergencies or other natural and man-made hazards, contact the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management at 216-443-5700, ema@cuyahogacounty.us, or visit our website at: www.ja.cuyahogacounty.us

