

## Living in the Desert

People who have lived in Maricopa County for a long time often become like teenagers who feel indestructible.

“I’ve lived here through 40 summers and I don’t need to carry extra water or wear a hat. I’m used to this heat.”

An attitude like that is why every year, more people are getting sick and even dying from heat in Arizona. Old, young, healthy, sick, homeless and affluent – if you are not prepared, our heat can sneak up on you.

The best way to fight the problems of heat is relatively easy — use common sense and prepare before we experience a heat emergency.

Key things to do to stay safe from heat in the Valley of the Sun include:

- Staying out of the sun during the day
- Wearing a hat and loose clothing
- Drinking lots of water
- Being prepared for a power interruption

## Fans are not enough

Fans do help to circulate the air and keep you cool on some hot days, **but fans alone are not enough to prevent heat exhaustion or heat stroke.** In fact, fans can actually dehydrate you if you are not drinking plenty of non-caffeinated beverages (like water) while using a fan.

Remember, some windows or doors must be left open to circulate fresh air if you do not have air conditioning!

## Air Pollution

Unfortunately, in the Phoenix area, extreme heat often brings another problem with it – high levels of ozone.

This pollutant can cause a variety of respiratory problems such as coughing, shortness of breath, throat irritation and an aggravation of asthma.

Children and people with respiratory diseases should try to stay inside during the afternoon and early evening hours when ozone levels are high. For more information please call ADEQ Air Quality Forecast Hotline: (602) 771-2367 or log on to <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/> and click on Air Quality Forecast.

For more information on surviving the Arizona heat, please visit  
[www.maricopa.gov/heat](http://www.maricopa.gov/heat)

or call  
Maricopa County Public Health  
Heat Hotline:  
(602) 747-7500



Department of Emergency Management  
Department of Public Health  
Department of Human Services



THE POWER TO MAKE IT HAPPEN®



# Heat Emergency



## Dealing with Extreme Heat



Maricopa County

# Too Much Heat Can Cause . . .

## Heat Exhaustion

### Symptoms:

Mild form of shock marked by heavy sweating, weakness, headache, weak pulse, dizziness, exhaustion, fainting, nausea or vomiting, and cold, clammy skin. But the body temperature will seem normal.

### Treatment:

- **Call 911 for medical attention.** If heat exhaustion is not treated, it can worsen and lead to heat stroke.
- Move the victim to a cool place.
- Loosen clothing and apply cool, wet cloths to the neck, face and arms.
- If the victim is conscious, have him or her drink water slowly, unless nausea occurs. Give the victim half a glass of water every 15 minutes.
- Under no circumstances should an unconscious person be given anything to drink.
- Watch carefully for changes in the victim's condition.

## Heat Stroke (Sunstroke)

### Symptoms:

The hallmark of heat stroke is mental status change – headache, dizziness, confusion or unconsciousness. Body temperature can be so high that brain damage or death may occur rapidly if the victim does not receive immediate medical attention.

### Treatment:

- **Call 911 immediately for medical help.**
- Bring the victim to a cool place.
- Remove the victim's clothes and cool his or her body by wrapping it in wet sheets and fanning it.
- Watch for signs of breathing problems.
- Keep the victim lying down and as cool as possible.
- **Do NOT give the victim any fluids.**

## What is a "Heat Emergency"?

What is it that makes a very hot day a "heat emergency?" It is more than just high temperatures, and these warnings can be as important as those that tell us about impending thunder storms, blizzards and tornadoes. The National Weather Service has studied weather conditions in many areas of the country and has developed a formula that will tell when a potentially life threatening heat emergency will take place.

For information on current weather conditions in the Valley of the Sun, please log on to the National Weather Service at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/psr/>.

Here are the definitions you should know:

<b>HEAT ADVISORY:</b>	When the temperature is forecast to be unusually hot but not life-threatening.
<b>HEAT WATCH:</b>	When a life-threatening heat emergency may occur in the next 24-48 hours.
<b>HEAT WARNING:</b>	When a life-threatening emergency exists or is imminent.

## Extreme Heat Tips

- ✓ **Keep an eye on those at risk** – Check on elderly neighbors, homeless, or mentally ill who may need your help when the weather is dangerously warm.
- ✓ **Cars and heat don't mix** – **NEVER** leave children, pets or people needing special care in parked cars when the temperature is high.
- ✓ **Remember your pets** – Pets also need water, shade, and a cool place to rest.
- ✓ **Drink plenty of water** – Your body needs water to keep cool. Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- ✓ **Cover your head** – When you have to be outside in the sun, make sure you and your small children have your heads protected.
- ✓ **Keep fresh air circulating** – If you are not in a building with air conditioning, keep some windows or doors open slightly so fresh air can come in.
- ✓ **Baths and showers are good** – Cool down with frequent cool baths or showers, but do not take a shower immediately after becoming overheated. You may cool down too quickly and become ill or dizzy.
- ✓ **When working outside** – If you must work outside – take precautions - wear proper clothing, take frequent breaks, try and work during the very early morning hours, cover your head, drink plenty of water and slap on sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher.
- ✓ **Stay cool indoors** – Stay inside and, if at all possible, in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library - even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.