Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot!

*Stay Safe in the Heat: Essential Tips for Pennsylvanians*

Heat is considered the top weather-related killer in the U.S. on average every year. Heat hazards can sneak up on us and are often overlooked. While the oldest and youngest Pennsylvanians are most at risk, extreme heat affects everyone. In June, Pennsylvania experienced record heat, and July is also seeing high temperatures. The National Weather Service (NWS) issues heat advisories and excessive heat warnings when the combination of heat and humidity is forecast to be impactful to life safety. While the NWS will alert you to prepare for potential heat-related illness, it’s your responsibility to take action to prevent illness. Here are some basic tips to help you stay cool as temperatures rise. These tips can help reduce illness and death.

- **Stay Hydrated!** Drink plenty of water daily. Avoid drinks with caffeine, sugar, and alcohol as they can dehydrate you.
- **Take a Break!** Rest in the shade or air conditioning when working outdoors in the heat.
- **10 to 3 - Not for Me!** The hottest part of the day is typically between 10 AM and 3 PM. If possible, do outdoor work before or after this period.
- **Knock & Talk!** Check on your older or sick neighbors. Ensure they are drinking water and have a cool place to stay. Offer to take them to a cool place like a mall or library if needed.
- **Look Before You Lock!** Always check the back seat of your car to ensure you don’t forget kids or pets.

If someone gets sick from the heat, act quickly. First, call 9-1-1 immediately, then move them to a cool place. Use cool, damp rags or wrapped ice packs to help them cool down. Know the signs of **heat stroke**, which is a medical emergency that requires hospital treatment.

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**Know Your Terms**

Heat and humidity can cause health issues for Pennsylvanians without proper preparation. With the recent heat waves in the books and more summer heat ahead, let’s make sure we cover the common heat questions.

**What’s Heat Wave?** A heat wave is defined as a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot and unusually humid weather. The National Weather Service (NWS) classifies a heat wave in PA as three or more days at or above 90 degrees.

**Why does it feel hotter than the actual temperature outside?** Humidity plays a big role in this. When hot air and high humidity combine, the body has trouble cooling itself through sweating, so it feels hotter than what the thermometer reads. This apparent temperature, called the heat index, is calculated by combining air temperature and humidity.
How can heat make me feel sick? There are three classifications of heat illness, each with its own signs and symptoms:

- **Heat Cramps**: Sudden cramps in skeletal muscles caused by prolonged work or exercise in high temperatures, accompanied by profuse sweating and loss of sodium chloride.
- **Heat Exhaustion**: A mild form of heat stroke characterized by faintness, dizziness, and heavy sweating.
- **Heat Stroke**: A life-threatening condition marked by cessation of sweating, extremely high body temperature, and collapse. Sunstroke is another term for heat stroke.

How will we know when it’s going to be dangerously hot? The NWS will issue several alerts to keep us informed about dangerous heat. An Excessive Heat Watch can be issued days in advance when heat levels are forecast to reach or exceed 105°F. When the heat is more imminent, the NWS issues a Heat Advisory or Excessive Heat Warning. A Heat Advisory is issued when heat levels are forecast to reach 100-104 degrees. An Excessive Heat Warning is issued when heat levels are forecast to reach or exceed 105 degrees. Stay informed, stay prepared, and stay safe this summer!
Stay Safe with Leftover Fireworks

As you enjoy the rest of your summer, it’s important to handle leftover fireworks from the 4th of July safely. Here are some essential tips from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience with fireworks:

- **Keep Fireworks Away from Children:** Never let children play with fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers can burn at temperatures as high as 2,000 degrees, which is hot enough to melt metal. They are the second leading cause of fireworks-related visits to the emergency room.
- **Be Prepared for Emergencies:** Always have a fire extinguisher, bucket of water, or hose nearby in case of a fire.
- **Don’t Relight Duds:** If a firework doesn’t fully ignite, don’t try to relight it. Instead, place it in a bucket of water for several hours before throwing it away.
- **Avoid Alcohol and Drugs:** Never use fireworks if you’ve been drinking alcohol or taking other substances that can impair your judgment and reaction time.
- **Wear Safety Glasses:** Protect your eyes by wearing safety glasses when handling fireworks.
- **Track and Clean Up:** Make sure you know where each firework lands and clean up any spent fireworks. Don’t assume a firework has extinguished itself safely.

“Fireworks are capable of causing serious injury or death and must be treated with extreme caution,” said Deputy State Fire Commissioner John “J.C.” Tedorski. “In 2022, fireworks were involved in more than 10,000 visits to the emergency room. And in 2018, fireworks started 19,500 fires and caused over $100 million in property damage. A few simple precautions can ensure that you are not contributing to these alarming statistics.”

By following these safety tips, you can enjoy your leftover fireworks responsibly and keep your celebrations safe!

For more information, visit the new fireworks safety campaign by the OSFC.

**JULY TIP SHEET: HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT STROKE**