



American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Mental Health
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2013

Contact: Tessie Pollock, Ohio Dept. of Health, (614) 644-8562
Fred McMullen, National Weather Service (412) 262-1882
Tamara McBride, Ohio EMA (614) 799-3695

**Summer Weather's Right Around the Corner; Are You Ready?
*Heat Awareness Day is May 24***

COLUMBUS, OH – With summer officially a month away, most of us can't wait for the return of hot and sunny days. But with summer months come heat and humidity. May 24 is Heat Awareness Day, promoted by the National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA).

Heat Awareness Day is a national public awareness campaign for Americans to understand the dangers of extreme heat, to know the signs of heat emergencies, and to know how to stay safe during extreme heat conditions.

Last June and July, Ohio was introduced to a new severe weather incident: the derecho, a widespread, long-lived wind storm that caused massive power outages. While the power was out, Ohio was hit by a heat wave forcing temperatures above 100 degrees.

Knowing what to do before severe weather strikes can save lives:

- Contact your local emergency management office to learn about emergency plans and what to include in yours.
- Make a family disaster plan than includes out-of-town contacts and locations to reunite if your family becomes separated.
- Assemble a three-day disaster supplies kit with food, water, medical supplies, a battery-powered radio and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, batteries, flashlights, and other items. If you have the space, consider storing enough food, water and supplies to last for a month, in case situations warrant extended evacuation or sheltering.
- If you need special care, make plans now. Consider how you will get to a shelter if your mobility is impaired; where will you get your medication; does your medication need to be refrigerated?
- Get additional information on extreme heat from the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness: www.weathersafety.ohio.gov/SpringSummerExcessiveHeat.aspx; the National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov/os/heat/index.shtml; and the Ohio Department of Health: www.odh.ohio.gov/features/odhfeatures/heatsafety.aspx

-more-

Before Extreme Heat

- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades or awnings (outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80 percent). Install temporary window reflectors between windows and drapes, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in. Keep storm windows up all year.

During Extreme Heat

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. Contact your local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, and take frequent breaks.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Limit intake of caffeinated or alcoholic beverages. They can add to dehydration.
- Drink two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who may not have air conditioning or who spend time alone.
- Never leave children or pets alone in vehicles.

Know the Warning Signs

- **Heat Cramps** – Muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Heat cramps are often the first signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- **Heat Exhaustion** – Typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim's condition will worsen. Body temperature will keep rising and the victim may suffer heat stroke.
- **Heat Stroke (Sun Stroke)** – A life-threatening condition. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Medical attention is necessary.

The best way to guard against heat-related issues is preparedness and prevention. Stay up-to-date on weather conditions by listening to your local radio or TV stations. Try to stay cool. If possible, limit outdoor activities to early mornings or evenings. Take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water. During prolonged periods of excessive heat, check on your neighbors to ensure their safety. If you have pets, remember to keep them cool and give them plenty of water, too.

Like OCSWA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OHWeatherAwareness> and receive additional information on heat awareness and safety.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 14 agencies and organizations that are dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan for severe weather incidents and home emergencies before they happen.