

## Los Angeles Police Department Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS *BULLETIN*

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Prepared by Emergency Services Division

## Extreme Heat Safety

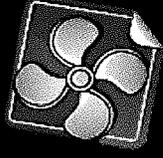
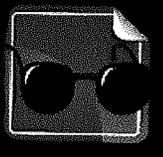
Hot weather is not just uncomfortable; it can be downright dangerous. Exposure to extreme heat causes hundreds of deaths in the United States every year and many become seriously ill. A series of unusually hot days that can potentially harm your health is referred to as an *extreme heat* event. Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat strokes are heat related illnesses caused by overexposure to heat. Although anyone can become a victim to extreme heat, the elderly, children, individuals experiencing homelessness, outdoor workers, and those with certain health conditions are the most vulnerable.

Interior areas of Los Angeles, such as the San Fernando Valley, have been known to reach over 100 degrees regardless of the season. Los Angeles police officers and community members should be aware of the risk factors and symptoms of people who might be experiencing a heat related illness. We should also be particularly aware of precautionary measures for community members who are at high risk and ensure these individuals are properly monitored and cared for. The following information will assist in this endeavor.

### WHAT TO DO DURING AN EXTREME HEAT EVENT

- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid diuretics like caffeine or alcohol.
- Do not leave anyone in a parked car, including pets. Even on an 88-degree day, the inside of the car can spike to well over 100 degrees in a relatively short period.
- Eat small meals more often.
- Minimize direct exposure to the sun.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day.
- If you must work outdoors, take frequent breaks.
- Check on the elderly, sick, and the disabled, including neighbors, family members, or friends.
- Monitor individuals experiencing homelessness, who can be at great risk during extreme heat events, especially if they are elderly or disabled, or suffer from medical conditions.
- Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

## TIPS - avoiding heat illness

 <p><b>Air conditioning</b> Use air conditioning or cool showers to keep your body cool. If you don't have air conditioning, call your public health department to find out if there's a heat-relief shelter in your area.</p>	 <p><b>Fluids</b> Drink plenty of fluids. When you're well-hydrated your urine should be very light or clear. This is especially important when you're active.</p>	 <p><b>Planning</b> Schedule outdoor activities during the coolest parts of the day, usually mornings and evenings.</p>
 <p><b>Clothing</b> Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.</p>	 <p><b>Caffeine or alcohol</b> Avoid caffeine and alcohol. They can both dehydrate you.</p>	 <p><b>Summer extras</b> When outside, wear a hat or visor, sunglasses, and sunscreen.</p>

## HEAT RELATED ILLNESSES

Extreme heat can lead to severe health problems. The most common health effects (or symptoms) caused by extreme heat include the following:

### Heat Cramps

- Symptoms include muscular pains and spasms, usually in the stomach, arms, or legs.
- Heat cramps usually result from heavy exertion, such as exercise, during extreme heat.
- Although heat cramps are the least severe of all heat-related problems, they are usually the first signal that the body is having trouble coping with hot temperatures. Heat cramps should be treated immediately by resting, drinking water, and getting out of the heat.
- Seek medical attention if pain is severe or nausea occurs.

### Heat Exhaustion

- Symptoms include heavy sweating, pale and clammy moist skin, extreme weakness or fatigue, muscle cramps, headache, dizziness or confusion, nausea or vomiting, fast and shallow breathing, or fainting.
- First Aid: Heat exhaustion should be treated immediately with rest in a cool area, sipping water or a sports drink, applying cool and wet cloths and elevating the feet 12 inches.
- If left untreated, victims may go into heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention if the person does not respond to the above, basic treatment.

### Heat Stroke

- Symptoms include flushed, hot, moist skin or a lack of sweat, high body temperature (above 103°F), confusion/dizziness, possible unconsciousness, throbbing headache, rapid/strong pulse.
- Heat stroke is the most severe heat-related illness and occurs when a person's temperature control system, which produces sweat, stops working.
- Heat stroke may lead to brain damage and death.
- First Aid: **Call for emergency medical services immediately.** Move victim to a cool shaded area. Fan the body, and spray body with water.

## COOLING CENTERS

The City of Los Angeles offers cooling centers for the public to cool off. Cooling centers are open and available during regular hours of operation unless otherwise noted. The Department on Disability works to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility and effective communications for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs at cooling centers. Community members can call 3-1-1 from within Los Angeles or use <https://emergency.lacity.org/heat> to find out more about cooling center locations and hours of operation.

## CONCLUSION

This bulletin is intended to assist the Department, in partnership with the community, understand and recognize incidents of overexposure to heat. However, if there is any doubt regarding a person's health or wellbeing, immediate medical attention should be sought.

The information contained in this bulletin was obtained from the Los Angeles Fire Department, the American Red Cross, the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, the Los Angeles County of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Any questions regarding the content of this bulletin should be directed to the Emergency Preparedness Unit, Emergency Services Division, at (213) 486-5730.

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: About Extreme Heat  
[https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html)
- City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department: Beat the Heat  
<https://emergency.lacity.org/heat>
- American Red Cross: Heat Wave Safety  
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/heat-wave-safety.html>
- City of Los Angeles Personnel Department: Safety Bulletin – Heat Illness Prevention for Employees, Managers and Supervisors  
<http://per.ci.la.ca.us/Safety/HeatIllnessPreventionBulletin.pdf>
- County of Los Angeles Public Health:  
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/climatechange/ExtremeHeat.htm>