

# WILDFIRES & EXTREME HEAT

WITHIN OUR REGION, IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT WE HAVE TWO RANGES OF TEMPERATURES, HOT AND HOTTER.

WHILE THE HEART OF TEXAS REGION RECEIVES ITS FAIR SHARE OF WINTER WEATHER AND RAINFALL, ONE OF THE GREATEST HAZARDS WE FACE IS EXTREME HIGH TEMPERATURES AND THE EFFECTS OF THOSE TEMPERATURES.

IN 2011, OUR REGION EXPERIENCED MORE THAN 100 CONTINUOUS DAYS WITH TEMPERATURES OVER 100°F .

THE EXTREME SUMMER HEAT OFTEN CAUSES ILLNESS AND INJURIES TO THOSE WITH PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO THE HEAT AND SUN, AS WELL AS DROUGHT AND WILDFIRE DAMAGE. WILDFIRES COMMONLY RESULT FROM A COMBINATION OF THE EXTREMELY HOT TEMPERATURES, LOW AMOUNTS OF RAINFALL, AND CARELESS BEHAVIOR.

# PREPARE FOR DRY WEATHER WITH A NEW WILDFIRE ANIMATION

CLICK HERE TO WATCH  
A FUN, NEW  
ANIMATION FROM THE  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
(FEMA) TO LEARN  
ABOUT WILDFIRE  
PREPAREDNESS.



# THE FACTS

## ABOUT HEAT, DROUGHT, AND WILDFIRES

- EACH YEAR, NEARLY 175 AMERICANS DIE FROM EXTREME HEAT. YOUNG CHILDREN, ELDERLY, AND THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR OVERWEIGHT ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME VICTIMS FROM THE HEAT.
- REMOVE DRY FUELS, SUCH AS WOOD AND DEAD GRASS, NEAR HOMES AND BUSINESSES. THESE DRY FUELS IGNITE EASILY, CREATING A MAJOR HAZARD THAT COULD COST THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN A SHORT TIME.
- NEVER LEAVE A CHILD OR PET INSIDE OF A VEHICLE, ESPECIALLY DURING THE HEAT OF SUMMER. TEMPERATURES IN VEHICLES RISE RAPIDLY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, TEMPERATURES WITHIN AN ENCLOSED VEHICLE CAN EXCEED 130 DEGREES.

# HEAT-RELATED SAFETY TIPS

- STAY OUT OF THE SUN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU MUST BE IN THE SUN, USE A SUNSCREEN RATED AT SPF 15 OR HIGHER.
- DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND AVOID ALCOHOLIC AND CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES.
- INSTALL WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS SNUGLY AGAINST WINDOW FRAMES. ADD INSULATION IF NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT YOUR COOL AIR STAYS INSIDE.
- WEATHER STRIP DOORS AND WINDOWS TO KEEP COLD AIR IN AND WARM AIR OUT.
- PREVENT DROUGHT BY WATERING YOUR LAWN ONLY WHEN NECESSARY AND IN ADHERENCE WITH LOCAL WATER RESTRICTIONS.
- PROPERLY DISPOSE OF CIGARETTES. CARELESSLY DISCARDED CIGARETTE BUTTS ARE THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF WILDFIRES WITHIN TEXAS.
- PREVENT WILDFIRES BY RESPECTING "NO-BURN" DAYS.
- DISPOSE OF HOT CHARCOAL IN A NON-FLAMMABLE CONTAINER OR WATER DOWN THE COALS BEFORE DUMPING THEM.

# HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO THE INTENSE SUN AND ITS EFFECTS, ALONG WITH ELEVATED HUMIDITY, CAN CAUSE A NUMBER OF ILLNESSES THAT CAN EASILY BECOME LIFE-THREATENING.

THE BODY NORMALLY COOLS ITSELF BY SWEATING. DURING HOT WEATHER, ESPECIALLY WITH HIGH HUMIDITY, SWEATING ISN'T ENOUGH. BODY TEMPERATURE CAN RISE TO DANGEROUS LEVELS WHICH MAY DAMAGE THE BRAIN OR OTHER VITAL ORGANS IF PRECAUTIONS ARE NOT TAKEN SUCH AS DRINKING WATER FREQUENTLY AND RESTING IN THE SHADE OR AIR CONDITIONING.

HEAT ILLNESSES RANGE FROM HEAT RASH AND HEAT CRAMPS TO HEAT EXHAUSTION AND HEAT STROKE.

# HEAT RASH

HEAT RASH DEVELOPS WHEN SOME OF YOUR SWEAT DUCTS CLOG. INSTEAD OF EVAPORATING, PERSPIRATION GETS TRAPPED BENEATH THE SKIN, CAUSING INFLAMMATION AND RASH. HEAT RASH USUALLY HEALS WITHOUT PROBLEMS BUT KEEP THE AREA DRY OR IT COULD LEAD TO BACTERIA INFECTION.

# HEAT CRAMPS

HEAT CRAMPS ARE PAINFUL MUSCLE SPASMS THAT MAY OCCUR DURING HEAVY EXERCISE. HEAT CRAMPS ARE COMMONLY CAUSED BY DEHYDRATION, OR A LACK OF WATER IN THE BODY.

## IF YOU SUSPECT HEAT CRAMPS:

- IMMEDIATELY COOL DOWN AND REST.
- DRINK CLEAR JUICE OR A SPORTS DRINK THAT CONTAINS ELECTROLYTES.
- GENTLY STRETCH AND MASSAGE THE PAINFUL AREAS.
- SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF THE CRAMPS DO NOT GO AWAY IN AN HOUR.



# HEAT EXHAUSTION

HEAT EXHAUSTION OCCURS SUDDENLY WHEN THE BODY BECOMES EXTREMELY DEHYDRATED.

THOSE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HEAT EXHAUSTION MAY HAVE A LOW BLOOD PRESSURE, COOL AND/OR MOIST SKIN, A LOW-GRADE FEVER (BELOW 102 DEGREES FARENHEIT), SWEAT HEAVILY, BE NAUSEOUS, AND HAVE A WEAK AND RAPID HEARTBEAT.

IF YOU SUSPECT HEAT EXHAUSTION:

- MOVE THE PERSON TO A SHADY AREA. LAY THEM DOWN AND ELEVATE FEET.
  - LOOSEN OR REMOVE CLOTHING.
- GIVE THEM COOL WATER OR A SPORTS DRINK. DO NOT GIVE THEM AN OVERLY COLD/ICED DRINK, AS IT CAN INDUCE SHOCK.
- FAN THE PERSON AND SPRAY OR SPONGE THEM WITH COOL, NOT COLD, WATER.
- IF THE PERSON'S BODY TEMPERATURE RISES ABOVE 102 DEGREES, OR IF CONFUSION OR SEIZURES OCCUR, DIAL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

# HEAT STROKE

- HEAT EXHAUSTION CAN QUICKLY BECOME HEATSTROKE.

HEATSTROKE OCCURS AS THE BODY'S ABILITY TO COPE WITH HEAT STRESS IS OVERWHELMED AND STOPS FUNCTIONING COMPLETELY.

IF NOT PROPERLY TREATED, HEATSTROKE CAN RESULT IN DEATH.

THOSE EXPERIENCING HEATSTROKE MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- BODY TEMPERATURE HIGHER THAN 104 DEGREES.
  - SKIN MAY BE HOT AND DRY.
- CHANGES IN MENTAL STATUS, INCLUDING ANXIETY, CONFUSION, OR COMA.
  - RAPID HEARTBEAT.
  - RAPID, SHALLOW BREATHING.
- EXTREMELY HIGH OR LOW BLOOD PRESSURE.
  - FAINTING

IF YOU SUSPECT HEATSTROKE:

- MOVE THE PERSON INTO THE SHADE OR AN AIR-CONDITIONED AREA.
  - CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.
- WRAP THE PERSON IN COOL, DAMP SHEETS OR SPRAY THEM WITH COOL WATER.