

## June 14 is Heat Awareness Day in Iowa

DES MOINES – The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) and the National Weather Service (NWS) have designated June 14 as Heat Awareness Day in Iowa.

Heat is one of the most deadly weather phenomena. According to the NWS, in a normal year, more people die on average due to excessive heat than floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. In Iowa, summer means two things: heat and humidity. Both combine to create conditions which tax the human body beyond its natural cooling abilities. Heat is a silent killer, and knowing the dangers of summer heat and how to prepare for it can save lives.

### During hot weather:

- Eat well-balanced, light meals.
- Drink plenty of water regularly. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restrictive diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages. Although beer and alcoholic beverages appear to satisfy thirst, they actually cause further body dehydration.
- Stay indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine.
- Avoid too much sunshine. Sunburn slows the skin's ability to cool itself. Use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (sun protection factor) rating.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes. A cool shower immediately after coming in from hot temperatures can result in hypothermia, particularly for elderly and very young people.
- Slow down. Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activities. High-risk individuals should stay in cool places. Get plenty of rest to allow your natural "cooling system" to work.
- Dress in loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Lightweight, light-colored clothing that reflects heat and sunlight and helps maintain normal body temperature.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.

### Children and automobiles: a lethal combination

Every year in the United States, several children die from hyperthermia. Even on a mild, 72-degree day, a child can die from heat stroke. According to the Department of Geosciences at San Francisco State University, 33 children in the U.S. died of hyperthermia in 2011, as a result of being left in automobiles; 530 children have died of hyperthermia as a result of being left in cars in the U.S. since 1998 (<http://www.ggweather.com/heat/>). **Never** leave your children unattended in an automobile. *Beat the heat – check the backseat!*

***Continued: June 14 is Heat Awareness Day in Iowa – June 12, 2012***

Your pets are also at risk for heat stroke. Dogs overheat even faster than children. Leaving your pet in your car in the summer, even with the windows cracked, can be a fatal mistake.

For more heat safety tips, visit [www.beready.iowa.gov](http://www.beready.iowa.gov) or [www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx).

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