



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRESSING HEAT SAFETY

(Greenville SC) With the dangerously high temperatures that Greenville is experiencing, Greenville City Fire Department (GCFD) paramedics are urging residents to practice heat safety wherever they are. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), heat is typically the leading cause of weather-related fatalities each year. During extremely hot and humid weather, the body's ability to cool itself is challenged. When the body heats too rapidly to cool itself properly, or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating, body temperature rises and you or someone you care about may experience a heat-related illness. Heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable, so GCFD is sharing important safety messages to help citizens stay safe during the heat wave.

According to GCFD firefighter/paramedic Mark Weber, the best thing to do is to avoid being outside for prolonged periods of time during extreme heat, but if that isn't possible, there are simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones. "Drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after exposure to elevated temperatures; taking frequent breaks to avoid overexertion; wearing "breathable" clothing and just listening to your body can help prevent a heat-related emergency," said Weber. "Thirst is an easy way to spot the early onset of dehydration, so if you drink fluids the moment you feel thirsty, you can help avoid a major heat issue such as severe dehydration, heat cramps or heat stroke."

Weber suggests using the tips below to practice heat safety wherever you are:

Job Sites - Summer weather poses unique hazards for outdoor workers, who are at a higher risk for heat-related emergencies. When working outside under hot conditions, stay hydrated and take breaks in the shade as often as possible. Knowing symptoms, prevention and emergency response methods can help prevent heat-related illnesses and death.

Vehicles - Never leave children, disabled adults or pets in parked vehicles. Studies have shown that the temperature inside a parked vehicle can rapidly rise to a dangerous level for children, pets and even adults. Leaving the windows slightly open does not significantly decrease the heating rate. Always LOOK before you LOCK.

Outdoors - Limit strenuous activities, find shade and stay hydrated. Apply sunscreen liberally and wear lightweight, loose fitting, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight. Hats are also a good idea to protect your face and scalp from harmful UV rays if you will be spending time directly in the sunshine.

Indoors - Check on neighbors who are elderly or sick, or who don't have air conditioning.

According to Weber, in a normal year, about 175 Americans die from extreme heat, so it's very important to be aware of the danger that heat poses to your health, and not just assume that it's something that happens to other people. "As a new dad, I'm especially passionate about protecting children, who are at an increased risk since their bodies haven't developed the ability to efficiently regulate their internal temperature," said Weber. "To avoid becoming a victim of a heat-related illness or death, the best advice I can give is to take the proper precautions, listen to your body, and most importantly, use common sense."

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