

# HEAT

Our Heat FAQ will help community members and partners stay up to date and learn how to keep themselves and others safe during extreme heat season.

## WHAT IS EXTREME HEAT?

Extreme heat is when temperatures are much higher than average. Many factors impact temperature, like humidity, and can make some places feel hotter than others. Average temperatures are different for different locations. For instance, in Downtown Los Angeles, extreme heat is anytime the temperature reaches or exceeds 90°F, but areas like the Antelope Valley routinely exceed 90°F.

## HOW CAN I STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST INFORMATION ON EXTREME HEAT?

Sign up for our [heat advisories](#), and follow us on all social media platforms where we share tips and advisories on heat. Our social media handle is @lapublichealth on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

You can find information about staying healthy in the heat on the [Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health webpage](#).

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)

## WHO DO I CONTACT FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS?

Los Angeles County residents and business owners, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, can call 2-1-1 for emergency preparedness information and other referral services. The toll-free 2-1-1 number is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 211 LA County services can also be accessed by visiting [211la.org](http://211la.org).

## WHO SHOULD TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID A HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS?

Everyone should take precautions because heat-related illness is preventable. Some groups are more vulnerable to heat, including older adults, young children, pregnant people, unhoused individuals, outdoor workers, athletes, and people with a chronic medical condition. It is especially important for these groups to take care to stay cool.



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## WHAT DOES PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMEND PEOPLE DO DURING HIGH TEMPERATURES?

- Drink plenty of water and keep hydrated throughout the day.
- If you must go out, plan your day to avoid going out during the hottest hours, and wear sunscreen (SPF 15).
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothes, and wear a hat or use an umbrella.
- Cars get very hot inside, even if the windows are ‘cracked’ or open. **Never leave children or pets in cars.** Call 911 if you see a child or pet in a car alone.
- Visit your power company’s website or contact them by phone to determine if you are scheduled for a rolling power outage.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEAT STROKE AND HEAT EXHAUSTION?

- Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are both considered heat-related illnesses.
- **Heat stroke is a medical emergency.** Symptoms of heat stroke include high body temperature (103°F or higher), dizziness, nausea, passing out, headache, fast & strong pulse, confusion, and hot, red, dry, or damp skin. Call 911 right away if you see these symptom associated with heat.
- Heat exhaustion symptoms include heavy sweating, cold, pale, and clammy skin, fast & weak pulse, headache, nausea, muscle cramps, tiredness or weakness.
- It’s important to be aware of and know what to do for heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- Check on those at risk for heat-related illness, such as older adults, young children, pregnant people, unhoused individuals, outdoor workers, athletes, and people with a chronic medical condition.



## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMEONE IS EXPERIENCING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS?

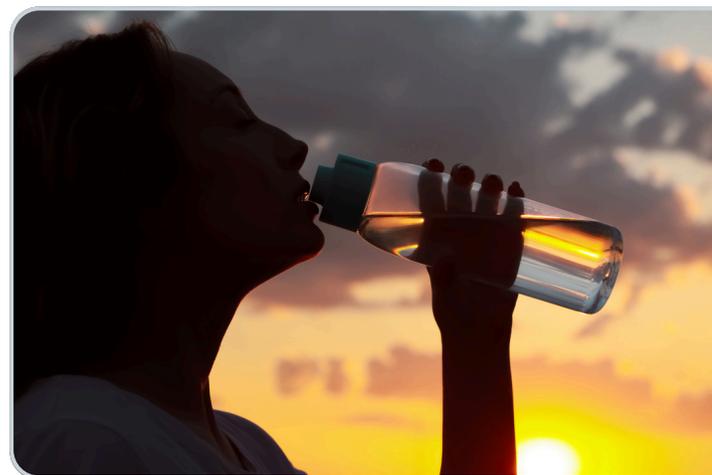
### Heat exhaustion:

Move to a cooler place, loosen clothes, apply cool compresses, and give them water to sip.

### Heat stroke:

Call 9-1-1 right away – **HEAT STROKE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.** Move to a cooler place, apply cool compresses, and do not give the person anything to drink.

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)



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## HOW DOES PUBLIC HEALTH RECEIVE THEIR HEAT AND EXTREME HEAT ADVISORY ALERTS?

Public Health receives Excessive Heat Warnings and Heat Advisories from the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management. They provide the affected locations in Los Angeles County and the relevant dates from start to end.



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HEAT ADVISORY AND EXCESSIVE HEAT WARNING?

**Heat Advisory:** Issued when weather conditions that are either occurring or are imminent pose a moderate to high HeatRisk\* to portions of the population that are susceptible to heat illness.

**Excessive Heat Warning:** Issued when weather conditions that are either occurring or are imminent pose a high to very high HeatRisk\* to a majority of the population.

The NWS does not issue a Heat Advisory or an Excessive Heat Warning based on a specific temperature range. Rather, they use a variety of other factors to forecast risk of heat-related impacts to occur over a 24-hour period:

- How unusual the heat is for the time of year
- The duration of the heat including both daytime and nighttime temperatures
- If those temperatures pose an elevated risk of heat-related impacts based on data from the CDC

\* HeatRisk is a comprehensive calculation used by NWS that combines current weather forecast data, historical climate data that is specific to each geographic area, and social vulnerability data (i.e., CDC Social Vulnerability Index) to inform level of heat risk specific in each geographic area in a much more detailed and accurate way than a single temperature reading.

To check the risk of heat-related impacts for your specific city, visit the [\(NWS\) HeatRisk website](#) and click on Location Search and enter your city or use the zoom (+) button in the top left corner to see nearby cities more clearly. For actions to take based on your city's HeatRisk category, read the [NWS' Understand HeatRisk guide](#).

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## WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH DOING?

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is working with multiple agencies, stakeholders, and communities to protect people in Los Angeles County, especially low-income populations and communities of color, from extreme heat and other negative impacts of climate change. For more information, visit: [ph.lacounty.gov/eh/about/environmental-justice-climate-health.htm](https://ph.lacounty.gov/eh/about/environmental-justice-climate-health.htm)

## HOW CAN I HELP VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS?

Check on those at risk for heat-related illness, like older adults, young children, pregnant people, unhoused individuals, outdoor workers, athletes, and people with a chronic medical condition. Offer to assist them in finding relief from the heat.

## WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE IF I MUST WORK OUTDOORS OR INSIDE WITHOUT AIR CONDITIONING IN EXTREME HEAT?

Workers in hot environments are most at risk to heat-related illness, especially when working quickly or doing strenuous tasks.

Effective July 2024, [Cal/OSHA's Indoor Heat Illness Prevention Regulation](#) requires that employers at most indoor workplaces where temperatures reach 82°F follow regulations below to protect workers:

- Train workers and supervisors to recognize signs of heat illness and understand reporting/response instructions
- Create a plan to prevent heat illness and translate into languages spoken at the worksite
- Provide cool and clean drinking water at no charge
- Allow multiple rest breaks in cool-down areas to avoid overheating
- Check temperature or heat index regularly

Certain areas of Los Angeles County have many outside workers like Vernon, parts of San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, and South Los Angeles. Title 8, section 3395 requires that employers follow below instructions for outdoor workers during extreme heat:

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## WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE IF I MUST WORK OUTDOORS OR INSIDE WITHOUT AIR CONDITIONING IN EXTREME HEAT? (CONTINUED)

- Implement high-heat procedures when temperatures equals or exceeds 95°F
- Train workers and supervisors to recognize and respond to signs of heat illness and follow reporting instructions
- Provide cool and clean drinking water at no charge
- Shade must be present when temperatures are greater than 80°F
- Allow multiple rest breaks in cool-down areas away from direct sunlight and large enough to accommodate number of workers on rest breaks so they can sit comfortably.

All workers—regardless of immigration status—have a right to protections against heat-related illness, without retaliation, and can file a Cal/OSHA complaint to report any violations, such as not having access to a cool-down area.

**For more information, visit:** <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/heatillnessinfo.html>

**To file a confidential complaint:** 833-579-0927 (English/Spanish) or visit [dir.ca.gov/dosh/complaint.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/complaint.htm)

## IS IT SAFE TO EXERCISE OUTDOORS OR PLAY SPORTS IN EXTREME HEAT?

People who exercise in extreme heat are more likely to become dehydrated and get heat-related illness.

If you plan to exercise while it's hot outside:

- Limit outdoor activity, especially during the middle of the day when the sun is hottest.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen.
- Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler.
- Pace activity. Start activities slow and pick up the pace gradually.
- Drink more water than usual, and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more. Muscle cramping may be an early sign of heat-related illness.
- Monitor a teammate's condition and have someone do the same for you.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.



For more information on how to stay up to date for heat warnings in your area and to properly plan for outdoor activities, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatapp.html>

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## HOW CAN I STAY COOL IF I DON'T HAVE AIR CONDITIONING?

- Stay hydrated and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water.
- Take cool showers or baths. Leave your hair wet so the evaporation can cool you off.
- Open windows when the air outside is cooler than the air inside. Use fans to help move cooler air inside.
- Use fans in combination with cool, wet cloths to cool yourself.
- Use shades or blackout curtains to keep sunlight out at hot times of day.
- Close off warmer rooms so you can keep others cooler.
- Avoid doing laundry, vacuuming, cooking or using electrical devices as these generate heat.
- Visit a library, community center, shopping mall, or other air-conditioned space. If you need help finding a cool space, call 2-1-1.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY PET(S) DURING EXTREME HEAT?

### Never leave your pet(s) alone in a car

Pets can suffer from heat-related illness or even die. Cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. Leaving a window open is not enough to prevent harm to your pet- temperatures inside the car can rise almost 20°F within the first 10 minutes, even with a window cracked open.

Provide plenty of fresh water for your pet(s) and/or leave the water in a shady area.

Also, avoid walking your pet(s) outside during the warmest time of the day, typically 2 – 4 PM, as the pavement can become extremely hot and uncomfortable. To test if the pavement is too hot for your pet(s), place the back of your hand on the pavement for 5-7 seconds. If it's too painful for your hand, it's too hot for your pet's paws.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON EXTREME HEAT AND HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS:

Los Angeles Regional Collaborative (LARC) Heat Resources -  
<https://www.laregionalcollaborative.com/heat-resources>

Climate Emergency Mobilization Office – Heat Relief Resources  
<https://www.climate4la.org/heat-relief-4-la/#heat-relief-resources>

Ready LA County – Cooling Center Sites - <https://ready.lacounty.gov/heat/>

Heat Ready CA – Heat Preparedness Resources - <https://heatreadyca.com/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Signs and Symptoms of Heat Related Illness -  
<https://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat/signs-symptoms/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Heat and Health Tracker -  
<https://www.cdc.gov/climate-health/php/resources/protect-yourself-from-the-dangers-of-extreme-heat.html>