



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Dallas Fire-Rescue Encourages the Public to Prepare for the Heat**

Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR) knows that few summers are less forgiving than those in Texas; and despite the amount of rain we received this spring, the summer, and its elevated temperatures, have finally arrived. Anyone can be affected by the intense heat of the sun; and with the inevitability of triple-digit temperatures, DFR is encouraging the public to take the necessary precautions to avoid becoming victims of the heat.

Heat related illnesses can come in one of three varieties: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke. Respectively, one can eventually lead to the next if not treated immediately; with heat stroke often resulting in permanent damage to vital organs, and in some cases death. The most at risk for heat-related illnesses are people over the age of 65, children and people with medical conditions, or who take certain medications, which make them more susceptible to being overcome by the elements.

Heat cramps, the least serious of the three, are characterized by painful muscle spasms that occur during work or exercise in a hot environment. They usually involve the muscles fatigued by heavy work such as calves, thighs, shoulders and abdominal muscles; and they can either have an acute onset or be delayed up to several hours. Heat exhaustion is a more severe form heat illness and is generally characterized by elevated body temperatures, headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea and cool moist skin resulting from profuse sweating. People overcome by either of the two seldom need to be taken to a hospital and can typically be treated by being moved to a cool place, allowed to lie down and given water, Gatorade or a fluid high in electrolytes.

Heat Stoke, also referred to as Sun Stroke, is usually not difficult to identify. The victim is either found in a very hot, humid environment or develops symptoms after consistent exposure to temperatures greater than 100 degrees. They may have complained of nausea, headaches or weakness; and their level of consciousness may range from slightly altered to non-existent. Vital signs usually present as a weak and rapidly bounding pulse, deep and fast breathing and the skin is typically flushed, dry and very hot to the touch. Those who present like this should immediately be moved to a cool area (if available) and removed of all possible clothing – as to maintain some sense of modesty. After calling 911, the victim should be cooled using ice, cold water or fanning, with particular focus on the head, neck and groin areas. If permanent damage to the victim's brain, heart, liver and kidneys is to be avoided, their body temperature must be reduced to near normal (98.6 degrees) as soon as possible.

If you're going to expose yourself to the elements for an extended period of time, hydrate before and during that time (no caffeinated or alcoholic beverages), wear light-weight, light-colored and loose fitted clothing and have a buddy system for accountability.

You can find heat-related fire safety tips by visiting the [Summer Safety](#) section of our website.