Understanding Heat Advisories

Heat claims many lives every year across the United States. According to the National Weather Service, more deaths are caused by extreme heat than by floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. Though Oregon is known for its rain, the state has seen extreme heat events in the past. In the summer of 2009, temperatures at Portland International Airport reached 106 degrees for two days. In Ontario, summer temperatures regularly hit 90 degrees or more.

What is a heat wave?
We all know it when we feel it, but no there is no single definition. A heat wave is a period of abnormally high temperatures and normal temperatures vary from place to place. The National Weather Service suggests that excessive heat events are:

- At least two days of temperatures above 100 degrees, or
- At least two days when heat and humidity feel like 105 degrees or more.

The National Weather Service issues alerts to help communities and individuals prepare for excessive heat. These alerts are based mainly on Heat Index Values. The heat index tells you how hot it feels, based on both temperature and humidity. You can sign up to receive heat and other weather alerts at www.weather.gov. (Follow the link “Sign up for e-mail alerts” in the left menu.)

Here are the types of heat alerts the National Weather Service issues and what they mean.

Excessive Heat Outlook

Issued when an excessive heat event might happen in the next week.

An outlook tells public utilities, emergency management and public health departments to start planning for a possible heat wave.

Excessive Heat Watch

Issued when an excessive heat event is likely in the next 12 to 48 hours.

A watch means very hot weather is likely within the next day or two, but forecasters are still not certain whether it will occur or exactly when it will begin. A heat watch is issued to give agencies and persons who need to prepare time enough to do so.

Having a health emergency?
Call 911 and contact your doctor.
Understanding Heat Advisories

Excessive Heat Advisory

Issued when an excessive heat event is imminent.

A heat advisory is less serious than a heat warning. An advisory means it will be hot enough to be very uncomfortable, and unless you are cautious it could be dangerous to your health and threaten life or property.

Excessive Heat Warning

This is the most serious heat alert, issued when conditions pose a threat to life or property. It means that within 12 hours the heat index will be at least 105 F.

The greater the heat index, the more danger there is of you becoming dehydrated or suffering a heat-related illness. The heat index chart below shows how hot it feels and the danger to your health based on the combination of temperature and humidity.

**NOAA’s National Weather Service**

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<th>Temperature (°F)</th>
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Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

- Caution
- Extreme Caution
- Danger
- Extreme Danger

This document can be furnished in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities. Available formats are large print, Braille, audio tape, electronic, oral presentation and computer disk (in ASCII format).

Call 971-673-1244

Healthy Oregon