



# **ExtremeWeather** **TASK FORCE**

*Staying Ahead of the Weather*

Extreme Weather Task  
Force: A Community Based  
Solution for Protecting  
Vulnerable Older Adults

# Objectives:

- ▶ 1. Learn how hot temperatures are prevalent across our country
- ▶ 2. Learn how extreme heat affects the vulnerable
- ▶ 3. What is the Extreme Weather Task Force
- ▶ 4. What the Extreme Weather Task Force Focuses on
- ▶ 5. Collaboration and education is vital to saving lives

# Extreme Heat in our Communities

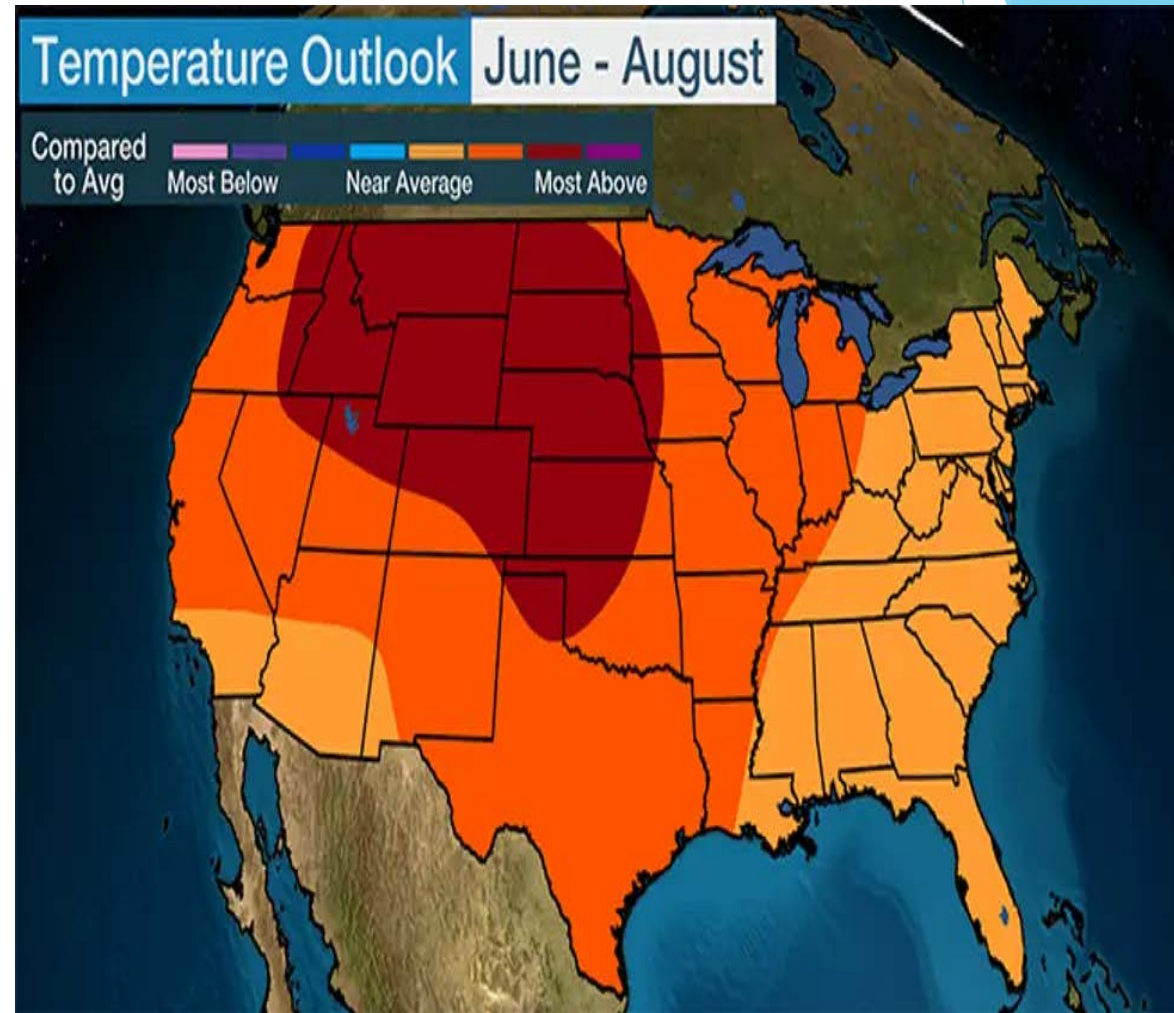


## Headlines:

Summer 2021  
Will Be Hotter Than  
Average for Much of  
the U.S.

# Extreme Heat in our Communities

- ▶ Summer 2021 is expected to be hot across much of the nation, particularly in the western and central United States, according to the latest three-month outlook from The Weather Company.
- ▶ A hotter than average June through August is expected from the West Coast to the Mississippi Valley and western Great Lakes. The northern and central Rockies into the northern and central Plains.



## Affects of the Extreme Heat

There are three groups of individuals that are most affected by the extreme heat.

- ▶ 1. The elderly
- ▶ 2. Persons with disabilities
- ▶ 3. Small infant children

# High-Risk Individuals

Although anyone at anytime can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others.

**Infants and young children** are sensitive to the effects of high temperatures and rely on others to regulate their environments and provide adequate liquids.

**People 65 years of age or older** may not compensate for heat stress efficiently and are less likely to sense and respond to change in temperature.

**People who are overweight** may be prone to heat sickness because of their tendency to retain more body heat.

**People who overexert during work or exercise** may become dehydrated and susceptible to heat sickness.

**People who are physically ill**, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation, may be affected by extreme heat.

# Heat-related health dangers for vulnerable adults soar during the summer months



- ▶ As we age, our ability to adequately respond to summer heat can become a serious problem.
- ▶ Older individuals are at significant increased risk of heat-related illnesses, known collectively as hyperthermia, during the summer months. Hyperthermia can include heat stroke, heat edema (swelling in your ankles and feet when you get hot), heat syncope (sudden dizziness after exercising in the heat), heat cramps, and heat exhaustion.

# Karla's Story:



It is a typical hot summer day.....

Karla's bus was late. Even though it was noon on a very hot summer day, she decided to walk from the grocery store to her home. At 72—healthy and active—Karla thought the heat would be no match for her! Yet, after walking just one block, she felt dizzy and weak.



# Karla's Story: (Continued)



What should Karla do?

- ▶ 1. Karla should find a cool place to cool down. She should also drink water or beverage with electrolytes.
- ▶ 2. Karla needs to wait for another bus ride or find another means of transportation home.
- ▶ 3. If she does not feel better, seek medical attention.

A photograph of an older man with short, graying hair and glasses, wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a balcony or a view of a city. The image is partially obscured by a white and blue geometric overlay on the right side of the slide.

# Heat Related Illnesses

Too much heat is not safe for anyone. It is even riskier if you are older or have health problems. It is important to get relief from the heat quickly. If not, you might begin to feel confused or faint. Your heart could become stressed and stop beating.

# Heat Related Illnesses

Being hot for too long can be a problem. It can cause several illnesses, all grouped under the name *hyperthermia* (hy-per-THER-mee-uh):

- **Heat syncope** is a sudden dizziness that can happen when you are active in hot weather. If you take a heart medication called a beta blocker or are not used to hot weather, you are even more likely to feel faint. Rest in a cool place, put your legs up, and [drink water](#) to make the dizzy feeling go away.
- **Heat cramps** are the painful tightening of muscles in your stomach, arms, or legs. Cramps can result from hard work or exercise. Though your body temperature and pulse usually stay normal during heat cramps, your skin may feel moist and cool. Find a way to cool your body down. Rest in the shade or in a cool building. Drink plenty of fluids, but not those with [alcohol](#) or caffeine.

# Heat Related Illnesses (Continued)

- **Heat edema** is a swelling in your ankles and feet when you get hot. Put your legs up to help reduce swelling. If that doesn't work fairly quickly, seek medical attention.
- **Heat exhaustion** is a warning that your body can no longer keep itself cool. You might feel thirsty, dizzy, weak, uncoordinated, and nauseated. You may sweat a lot. Your body temperature may stay normal, but your skin may feel cold and clammy. Some people with heat exhaustion have a rapid pulse. Rest in a cool place and get plenty of fluids. If you don't feel better soon, get medical care. Be careful—heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke.

# Heat Stroke

## **Heat Stroke—A Medical Emergency**

If you have heat stroke, you need to get medical help right away. Older people living in homes or apartments without air conditioning or fans are at most risk. People who become dehydrated or those with chronic diseases or alcoholism are also at most risk. Signs of heat stroke are:

- Fainting (possibly the first sign) or becoming unconscious
- A change in behavior—confusion, agitation, staggering, being grouchy, or acting strangely
- Body temperature over 104°F (40°C)
- Dry, flushed skin and a strong, rapid pulse or a slow, weak pulse
- Not sweating even if it is hot

# Who is at Risk?

**Each year, most people who die from hyperthermia are over 50 years old. Health problems that put you at greater risk include:**

- Heart or blood vessel problems
- Poorly working sweat glands or [changes in your skin](#) caused by normal aging
- [Heart](#), [lung](#), or [kidney disease](#), as well as any illness that makes you feel weak all over or results in a fever
- Conditions treated by drugs, such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, and some heart and [high blood pressure](#) medicines; they may make it harder for your body to cool itself
- Taking several prescription drugs; ask your doctor if any of your [medications](#) make you more likely to become overheated.
- Being very overweight or underweight
- Drinking alcoholic beverages

# How Can I Lower My Risk?

## Things you can do to lower your risk of heat-related illness:

- **Drink plenty of liquids**, such as water or fruit or vegetable juices. Stay away from drinks containing alcohol or caffeine.
- If you live in a home or apartment without fans or air conditioning, try to **keep your house as cool as possible**.
- If your house is hot, try to spend time during mid-day some place that has air conditioning—**Cooling centers or go to the shopping mall, movies, library, senior center, or a friend's house**.
- **Dress for the weather**. Some people find natural fabrics, such as cotton, to be cooler than synthetic fibers.
- **Do not exercise and limit outdoor activity** when it is hot outside.
- If you **cannot afford a fan or need help** with air conditioner start up call Area Agency on Aging, 211 or Adult Protective Services for assistance.

# Community In Crisis: Extreme Weather Task Force

## Why was it created?

- The El Paso Community was in a state of crisis. The Extreme Weather Task Force was created due to the number of heat related deaths in our community.
- It was created in 2002.
- The number of deaths in 2002 were astounding
- Community partners came together as something had to be done and formed the Extreme Weather Task Force



# Who is a part of the Extreme Weather Task Force



**ExtremeWeather**  
**TASK FORCE**  
*Staying Ahead of the Weather*

Representatives from local, state agencies along with other community partners have come together to form a group known as the Extreme Weather Task Force.

The Task Force works to inform the public about steps we can all take to be prepared for severe weather, including the creation of an emergency action plan. They also provide free fans in the summer and blankets in the winter to those in need.

# Extreme Weather Task Force

**American Red Cross  
City of El Paso Public Affairs and  
Communications Office  
El Paso City Dept of Public Health  
El Paso City-County Office of  
Emergency Management  
EL Paso County Judge's Office  
El Paso County Medical Examiner's  
Office  
El Paso County Sheriff's Department  
El Paso Fire Department  
EL Paso Mayor's Office  
EL Paso Parks and Recreation Dept  
El Paso Police Department  
El Paso Public Library  
National Weather Service, El Paso Office**

**Project Bravo  
Rio Grande Council of Governments  
Area Agency on Aging  
Texas 211  
Texas A & M Colonias Program  
Dept. of Family Protective Services-  
Adult Protective Services  
Texas Department of Public Safety,  
Division of Emergency Management  
Alliance Insurance  
El Paso Electric  
Department of Border Affairs  
X Cleaning Professionals  
RUA Insurance  
Horizon Fire Department**

# El Paso, A Community In Crisis

## Heat Related Fatalities

- 2002-10
- 2003-7
- 2004-12
- 2005-8
- 2006-2
- 2007-4
- 2008-5
- 2009-3
- 2010-2
- 2011-2
- 2012-2
- 2013-2
- 2014-2
- 2015-2
- 2016-3
- 2017-4
- 2018-0
- 2019-5
- 2020-3

# Heat Related Deaths 2019 and 2020

## Heat Related Fatality Stats for 2019- July

- ▶ 5 deaths:
  - 78 year old male; found under a bridges - homeless
  - 58 year old male; found under a bridge - homeless
  - 28 year old female; homeless found out in desert
  - 17 year old male; Illegally entering US
  - 34 year old male; found inside vehicle

## Heat Related Fatality Stats for 2020

- ▶ 3 deaths:
  - May- 89 year old- found outside
  - June -64 year old- found outside
  - July-55 year old-found outside

# Interesting Facts

- ▶ 1. The Extreme Weather Task Force has no funding. Everything we do is donated.
- ▶ 2. The Extreme Weather Task Force has a goal to have zero deaths in the summer months.
- ▶ 3. There is a trend in the number of fatalities. In the past, fatalities were all vulnerable adults. Recently the trend is changing to young individuals.
- ▶ 4. We rely on the community to help us make an impact in our community.
- ▶ 5. Since Extreme Weather Task Force formed 8550 fans have been distributed and 7600 blankets have been distributed.

# What the Extreme Weather Task Force Focuses On

The Extreme Weather Task Force focuses on several things:

- ▶ 1. Educating the community on how to stay safe and healthy during the extreme hot and extreme cold temperatures
- ▶ 2. Educate the community on the signs of hyperthermia and hypothermia. How to avoid getting ill during the extreme hot and extreme cold temperatures
- ▶ 3. How to register for a free fan or free blanket
- ▶ 4. How to donate a fans and blankets to the Extreme Weather Task Force
- ▶ 5. Providing resources to the community to assist with air conditioner or heater start ups. Resources that assist with paying for high utility bills.
- ▶ 6. Getting the community involved by educating everyone on the "BUDDY SYSTEM".

# Extreme Weather Health Advisory

## Summer

The Extreme Weather Task Force meets and selects a date on or around May 1, to coordinate a press conference to initiate hot weather health advisories. Press releases should include the Buddy System and fan drive information.

## Winter

The Extreme Weather Task Force meets and selects a date on or around October 1, to coordinate a press conference to initiate cold weather health advisories. Press releases should include the Buddy System and blanket drive information.



## Winter and Summer Press Conference



# Collaboration and Education is Vital to Saving Lives

The Extreme Weather Tasks Force collaborates with many partners who make up our team. Here are a few:

- ▶ 211 assists with taking calls and registers those who need a fan or blankets in their homes due to inadequate cooling or heating
- ▶ El Paso Fire and Horizon Fire Stations assist with being donations centers for fans and blankets
- ▶ EL Paso Department of Health assists with educating the community on how to stay safe and healthy
- ▶ El Paso Parks and Recreation assists with Cooling Centers
- ▶ X Cleaning Professionals assists with being a Distribution Center
- ▶ Adult Protectives Services, Area Agency on Aging, Project Bravo assist with service for seniors

# Collaboration and Education is Vital to Saving Lives (Continued)

The Extreme Weather Task Force educates the community on the Buddy System:

## ▶ WHAT'S A BUDDY?

Anyone can be a Buddy. A Buddy can be a friend, relative, neighbor, or landlord. A Buddy should be someone that an elderly person, who lives alone, can trust in his or her home.

## ▶ WHAT DOES BUDDY DO?

A Buddy makes a daily personal visit or telephone call to his or her elderly Buddy during a heat wave. A Buddy encourages the elderly person to rest, stay cool, and drink plenty of fluids. If there are any errands that must be done, the Buddy does them, or makes sure they get done.

# The Heart of the Task Force

- The Task Force members are committed to reducing the number of deaths due to the extreme weather. The Task Force works to provide fans, blankets and information to educate the public on the necessary steps we can all take to be prepared and protect ourselves from the effects of severe weather.
- Saving lives and making a difference one fan or one blanket at a time.

# Things to Think About:

- ▶ **Global warming** is not going away. It is affecting our communities, our country....the World
- ▶ **We all need to get involved** and educate our community on how to protect our vulnerable population from the extreme heat and extreme cold
- ▶ **Give back** to your community. In El Paso, you can give back by donating a new fan or blanket
- ▶ **Monetary donations** are accepted and can be sent to: APS Silver Star Board, P. O. Box 3270, El Paso, Texas 79923



*Thank you!*