



NEWS RELEASE

Date: July 27, 2009
Release Date: Immediately
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Fire District Concerned About Heat-Related Illnesses

As temperatures soar past 100 degrees, firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue are gearing up to deal with heat-related incidents. Unlike warmer parts of the country, many Oregon homes do not have air conditioning and people aren't accustomed to dealing with extreme heat. Individuals suffer heat-related illnesses when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. With that in mind, TVF&R is concerned that at-risk individuals may become a victim of a heat related illness. Those most at-risk include infants and small children, seniors, and individuals with certain medical conditions. Warning signs of heat exhaustion include: heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, and fainting. Signs of heat stroke may include: high body temperature; red, hot, dry skin (no sweating); rapid pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; or unconsciousness. If you see these signs, seek medical attention and attempt to cool the person with a cool bath or shower, or a shady or air conditioned location.

TVF&R advises the following precautions during this time.

- Check on elderly neighbors and family members.
- Heat-related illness is cumulative. Take short breaks in an air conditioned building (library, community center, shopping mall).
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Drink sports beverages to help replace salt and minerals lost due to sweating.
- Limit outdoor activity to morning hours if possible.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals – they add heat to your body.

Hot temperatures also pose a health hazard to firefighters who must wear heavy, fire-resistant, protective clothing and equipment weighing in excess of 50 lbs. when battling a structure fire. This, combined with interior fire temperatures averaging near 1,000 degrees, can result in firefighters becoming dehydrated more quickly. Lack of hydration is the primary cause of heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke, a potentially life-threatening illness. During this time, additional alarms may be activated on a structure fire in an effort to provide firefighters with a break to re-hydrate and cool down.