

# Emergency Management and Public Safety Section

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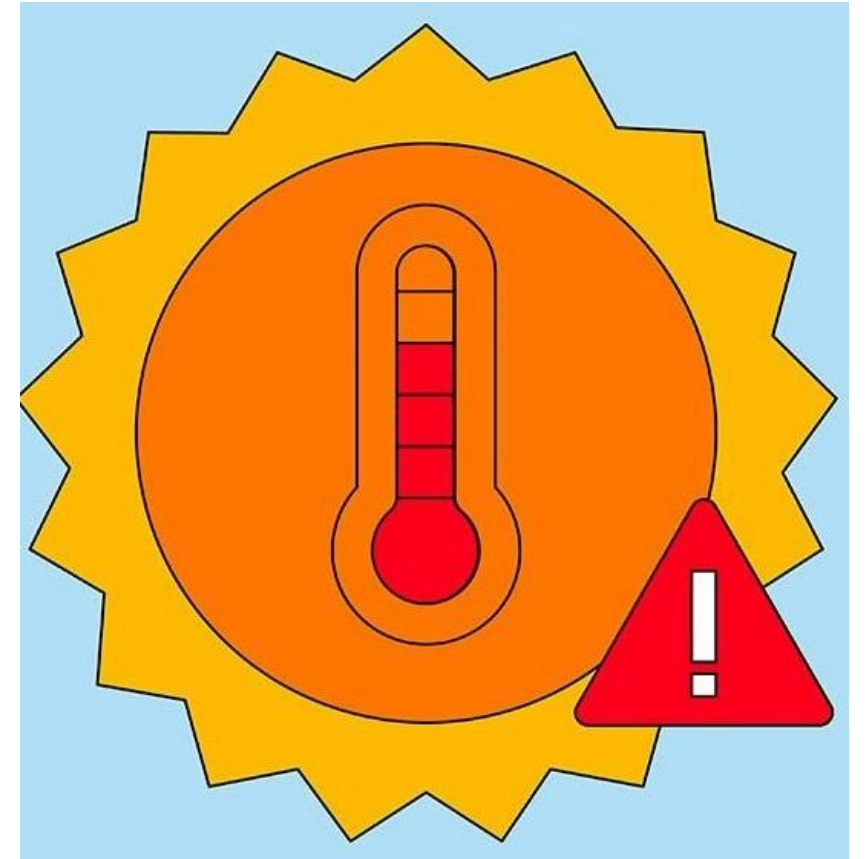
Heat Awareness & Safety Update

Parks Advisory Board Meeting - August 8,  
2025

# Extreme Heat & Our Parks: A Growing Concern

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As temperatures continue to rise across South Florida, extreme heat is no longer a seasonal inconvenience—it's a serious public safety issue. In 2024 alone, Broward County faced 58 Heat Advisories and one Excessive Heat Warning, with many of these coinciding with peak outdoor activity times in our parks. As stewards of public spaces, the Parks and Recreation Division has a responsibility to protect not only our staff but also the thousands of residents and visitors who rely on our facilities year-round. This presentation will highlight the risks of extreme heat, identify early warning signs of heat-related illness, and outline actionable safety measures we can all take to stay safe, alert, and prepared in the face of rising temperatures.






## National Weather Service Alerts Update


Last year, the National Weather Service updated its heat safety protocols for South Florida, lowering the thresholds for advisories based on recent health data. Humidity can increase the perceived temperature by 10–15°F.


- Updated Heat Advisory: Issued when the heat index reaches 105°F (previously 108°F) for at least 2 hours.
- Updated Extreme (Excessive) Heat Warning: Issued when the heat index reaches 110°F (previously 113°F) for at least 2 hours.


# Risks of Extreme Heat


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 **Heat Stroke:** Confusion, unconsciousness, body temp >103°F. Can be fatal without immediate treatment.


 **Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, rapid pulse. Often a warning sign before heat stroke.


 **Dehydration:** Fatigue, dizziness, dark urine. Reduces alertness and physical ability.

 **Worsening Conditions:** Heat can intensify symptoms of heart disease, asthma, and other chronic illnesses.

 **Heat Cramps:** Painful muscle spasms from activity in high heat.

 **Burn Risk:** Hot playgrounds, benches, and pavement can cause skin and paw burns.

 **Fatigue:** Reduced focus and decision-making. Can be dangerous during physical tasks.

 **Pet Safety:** Pets overheat easily and can suffer in hot cars or on hot ground.

# Symptoms of Heat Illness and How to Respond

During periods of extreme heat, people are especially vulnerable to three main heat-related illnesses: **heat cramps**, **heat exhaustion**, and **heat stroke**. Each of these conditions can develop quickly and become dangerous if not recognized and treated early. It's important to understand how to spot the warning signs and know how to respond. A quick reaction can prevent a medical emergency—and potentially save a life.


**Heat Cramps** - Heat Cramps are muscle spasms caused by a large loss of salt and water in the body.

## What to look for:

Heavy sweating with muscle pain or spasms



## What to do:

- Move to a cool place.
- Drink water or a sports drink 
- Get medical help right away if:
  - Cramps last longer than 1 hour
  - Person affected has heart problem



# Symptoms of Heat Illness and How to Respond – cont.

**Heat Exhaustion** - Heat Exhaustion is severe and may require emergency medical treatment.

## What to look for:

Heavy sweating

- Cold, pale and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness-Headache-Passing out



## What to do:

- Move to a cool place
- Loosen tight clothing
- Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning, or a cool bath
- Sip water slowly
- Get medical help right away if:
  - Vomiting occurs
  - Symptoms last longer than 1 hour or get worse
  - Confusion develops



# Symptoms of Heat Illness and How to Respond – cont.

**Heat Stroke** - Heat Stroke is deadly and requires emergency medical treatment.



## What to look for:

- High body temperature (104°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache-Dizziness
- Nausea-Confusion-Passing out



## What to do:

- **Call 911 right away, then:**
- Move to a cool place
- Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning, or a cool bath
- Do **NOT** give the person anything to drink



# Heat Awareness for Pets


## They feel it too.


Extreme heat is just as dangerous for our four-legged friends—sometimes more so. Unlike humans, pets can't sweat to cool down and are more vulnerable to overheating.


## Key Tips to Protect Pets:

 **Never leave pets in a parked car**—even with windows cracked. Temps can rise 20°+ in 10 minutes.

 **Limit walks during peak heat.** Early morning or late evening is best.

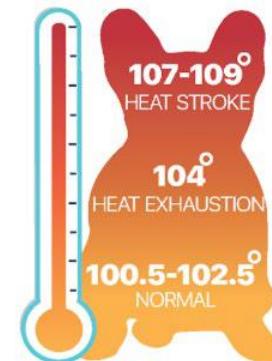
 **Test the pavement.** If it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for their paws.

 **Always provide shade and fresh water.** Portable bowls and cooling mats help too.







 **Watch for signs of heat stress:** Excessive panting, drooling, disorientation, vomiting, or collapse. Seek vet care immediately if these appear.

## EXTREME HEAT KEEP YOUR PET COOL, WHEN IT'S HOT.

### DOG TEMPERATURE



### SIGNS OF HEAT STROKE

-  Heavy panting, difficulty breathing, excessive thirst
  -  Bright red tongue and mucus membranes, which turn grey as shock sets in
  -  Thick saliva, drooling, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
  -  Unsteadiness and staggering
  -  Lethargy
-  **By the time signs of heat stroke are visible, it's often too late.**

### DANGERS OF HEAT STROKE



### DOGS WHO ARE MORE AT RISK



## **Stay Safe, Stay Aware**

**Heat is no longer just a summer inconvenience—it's a real and growing safety concern.**

By staying alert, knowing the signs, and taking simple precautions, we can keep ourselves, our coworkers, our park guests, and our pets safe during the hottest months.

Let's lead by example—**stay hydrated, stay informed, and never ignore the warning signs of heat-related illness.**

Together, we can create a safer, more resilient community for everyone who enjoys Broward County's beautiful outdoor spaces.