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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC
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From: Eli Jacks
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Subject: Excessive Heat and Sun Safety Guidance for 2011 Season

Summer is just around the corner, and NOAA's National Weather Service is seeking assistance from the media to help educate the public about the danger of extreme heat and ultraviolet radiation.

This Friday is national "Don't Fry Day," offering a great opportunity for reporters and broadcast meteorologists to alert the public on heat and ultraviolet radiation safety.

This year, NWS is partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to join the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention's "Don't Fry Day" campaign.

Heat and UV radiation are silent killers that do not have the same visual impact as weather hazards such as tornadoes and hurricanes. Just last year, more than 30 outdoor workers died as a result of heat stroke. In addition, more than two million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the United States each year. There are more new skin cancer cases each year than breast, colon, lung and prostate cancers combined.

Heat can also be a killer on a mild day, when children or pets are left in parked vehicles. Each year, children die from excessive heat as a result of being left in closed, parked vehicles. Last year, 49 children died of hyperthermia because they were left in closed vehicles. Studies have shown that the temperature inside a parked vehicle can rise rapidly to a dangerous level.

Preventive measures can be taken to help avoid the harmful effects of exposure to excessive heat and UV radiation. The first step is to be aware of existing heat and UV radiation services and safety information. Available public resources are as follows:

NWS: Heat-related Watch, Warning, and Advisory (WWA) products are sent to NWS partners and the public whenever excessive heat events are expected. These products can be accessed anytime at:

www.weather.gov

In addition, a variety of resources and information relating to excessive heat is available on NOAA's NOAAWatch website via the "Excessive Heat" tab at:

http://www.noaawatch.gov/themes/heat.php

Information provided includes details on the definitions and intended usage of NWS' heat-related WWA products, an explanation of the Heat Index and how it is used in NWS forecast operations, and safety tips for staying safe in the summer heat and sun.

Additional information on summer safety, and the associated impacts of excessive heat and sun to the human body, is provided via our partners' links cited below.

EPA: Daily updates on the UV Index and associated sun safety steps are available at the "SunWise" website at:

http://www.epa.gov/SUNWISE/

A national map depicting forecast elevated and "alert" UV levels for the mid-day period around the contiguous 48 states (CONUS) is provided as an experimental product on the NWS Climate Prediction Center's website at:

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/uv_index/uv_alert.shtml

The SunWise website also lets users access their local UV Index by ZIP code and to receive automated UV Alerts via email when UV radiation is anomalously high for a particular location, that is, when an Alert is in effect. EPA also offers the UV Index as a smartphone application at:

http://www.epa.gov/enviro/mobile/

An Excessive Heat Events Guidebook for the public, developed by the EPA in 2006 in collaboration with the NWS, CDC and DHS, provides guidance that communities can use to develop mitigation plans. This guidebook is accessible online at:

http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/about/heatguidebook.html

OSHA: OSHA launched a heat illness prevention campaign for outdoor work in April 2011. Information on the campaign and new resources, including illustrated fact sheets and worksite posters, training resources, and public service announcements are available at:

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html

NWS and OSHA are also partnering to increase awareness for outdoor workers and their employers during excessive heat events. NWS will incorporate specific outdoor worker safety precautions when heat advisories and warnings are issued this summer.

CDC: Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, and the majority of these cancers are caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. Skin cancer risk can be reduced by seeking shade, wearing protective clothing, avoiding tanning beds, and using sunscreen. CDC provides leadership for nationwide efforts to reduce illness and death caused by skin cancer through education, surveillance and research efforts. Information on skin cancer statistics, prevention and CDC's skin cancer initiatives is available at:

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/

National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention: The National Council is an umbrella organization of 45 major national groups dedicated to preventing skin cancer, including the American Academy of Dermatology, the American Cancer Society, Melanoma Research Foundation, and the Skin Cancer Foundation, as well as Federal agency partners and many smaller family foundations devoted to disease prevention. Specific tips on preventing skin cancer as well as more than 35 "Don't Fry Day" resources, including media guides, posters, graphics and an "Action Kit for Meteorologists," are available at the National Council's website at:

http://www.skincancerprevention.org

FDA: The FDA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protects the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. Information on applying sunscreen, wearing the most effective sunglasses, and other sun safety tips are available at:

http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049090.htm#TipsforApplyingSunscreen

In general, the partners offer the following heat wave and UV safety tips:

1. Slow down. Reduce, eliminate or reschedule strenuous work or recreational activities to the coolest time of the day.

2. Get acclimated. Gradually work-up to outdoor work and recreational activities so that your body adjusts to hot conditions.

3. Dress in lightweight light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight; wear hats and sunglasses that provide 99 to 100 percent UV protection.

4. Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic fluids. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages.

5. Do not take salt tablets unless directed to by a physician.

6. Take frequent breaks during work or play. Spend more time in air-conditioned places and seek shade outside, especially during midday hours.

7. Check the UV Index and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun.

8. Never leave any person or pet in a closed, parked vehicle.

9. Generously apply sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher that provides both UVA and UVB protection.

10. Know what the signs and symptoms or heat illness are. Check on workers, particularly those wearing protective suits.

Elderly persons, children, invalids, those on certain medications or drugs, outdoor workers and persons with weight and alcohol problems are particularly susceptible to heat and should pay especially close attention to the above tips, particularly during heat waves in areas where excessive heat is rare.

Educate yourself and the public on the dangers of excessive heat and overexposure to the sun and what preventive measures to take to avoid skin cancer and heat-related illnesses or deaths. You may help save lives.

For further information, please contact:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

https://www.weather.gov/notifications/archive

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