



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Lanza Advises New Yorkers to Stay Safe in Summer Heat

ANDREW J LANZA July 28, 2015

Senator Andrew Lanza today urged New Yorkers to take precautions as high temperatures and humidity are being predicted throughout New York State this week. Temperatures are expected to top 90 degrees over the next few days in communities across the state.

“Temperatures are expected to climb significantly across the state this week, and it’s important for New Yorkers to take appropriate precautions,” Senator Lanza said. “I encourage everyone to remain indoors when possible, stay hydrated, and check on any neighbors who may need assistance. Together, we can make sure that everyone stays safe during the period of extreme heat.”

Excessive heat is the leading cause of preventable, weather-related deaths each year, particularly among the elderly. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heat causes more than 650 preventable deaths in the United States each year. In most years, excessive heat causes more deaths than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service statistics, there have been more than 80 deaths directly attributable to heat in New York State since 2006.

The expected high temperatures are prompting the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

(DHSES) to offer New Yorkers tips to help them stay safe.

To help New Yorkers stay safe during excessive heat, DOH and DHSES offer this advice:

- Minimize, if possible, strenuous activity and exercise, especially during the sun's peak hours 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Exercise during early morning hours or in the evening, when the temperatures tend to be lower.
- Drink at least 2-4 glasses of water per hour during extreme heat, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- If possible, stay out of the sun and seek air-conditioned settings. The sun heats the inner core of your body, which may result in dehydration. If air-conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine, or go to a building with air conditioning (such as libraries, malls, supermarkets, or friends'homes).
- If you must go outdoors, wear sunscreen with a high sun protector factor (SPF) rating of at least 15 and a hat to protect your face and head. When outdoors, wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing. Cover as much skin as possible to avoid sunburn and over-warming effects of sunlight on your body.
- Never leave children, pets or those who require special care in a parked car or other vehicles during periods of intense summer heat. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach over 140 degrees Fahrenheit quickly. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill within a matter of minutes.
- Make an effort to check on your neighbors during a heat wave, especially the elderly, infants and young children, or others with special needs.

- Make sure there is enough water and food for pets and limit their exercise during periods of extreme temperatures.

Individuals who are often at greatest risk during periods of excessive heat include:

- Elderly persons, infants and small children
- Persons with weight or alcohol problems
- Persons on certain medications or drugs

## **HEAT HEALTH HAZARDS**

Heat Stroke: Also known as sunstroke, heat stroke can be life threatening. Body temperature can rise and cause brain damage; death may result if the individual is not cooled quickly. Signals include hot, red, and dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse, and shallow breathing. A cold bath or sponge can provide relief and lower body temperature.

Heat Exhaustion: While less dangerous than heat stroke, heat exhaustion poses health concerns and it most often occurs when people exercise too heavily or work in warm, humid places where body fluids are lost. Signals include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness and exhaustion. If symptoms occur, move the victim out of sun, and apply cool, wet cloths.

Sunburn: Sunburn slows the skin's ability to cool itself. Signals include redness and pain; in severe cases, swelling of skin, blisters, fever, and headaches can occur. Ointments can be a relief for pain in mild cases. A physician should see serious cases. To protect yourself, wear sunscreen with a high sun protector factor rating (SPF) of at least 15. Always re-apply sunscreen after periods of heavy sweating or swimming.

Heat Cramps: Muscular pains and spasms are often caused by heavy exertion. Loss of water and salt from sweating causes cramping. Signals are abdominal and leg muscle pain. Relief can be firm pressure on cramping muscles, or gentle massages to relieve cramping.

Remember to hydrate often while exercising or working outdoors.

Heat Rash: Skin irritation that looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. Try to move the person to a cool place, keep the affected area dry, and have the person use talcum powder to increase comfort.

### **BE ENERGY SMART**

- Power outages are more likely to occur during warm weather, when utility usage is at its peak. To avoid putting a strain on the power grid, conserve energy to help prevent power disruptions.
- Set your air conditioner thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.
- Only use the air conditioner when you are home.
- Turn non-essential appliances off. Only use appliances that have heavy electrical loads early in the morning or very late at night.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/weather/hot>,

or <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/safety-info/publicsafety/heataware.cfm>.

**For information on New York City, including city cooling centers, visit:**

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get\\_prepared/beat\\_the\\_heat/beattheheat.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get_prepared/beat_the_heat/beattheheat.html).