

Sun City West Fire District Partners with
Salvation Army and Arizona American Water for Hydration Campaign

Temperatures are starting to hit the triple digits and heat related illness and emergencies are a concern for our community members. To help address heat related illness, injuries, and death Arizona American Water donated water to the Salvation Army Sun Cities Corps to distribute to local communities. This partnership allows the Sun City West Fire District Administration office to distribute the bottled water to those individuals in the community who may find themselves in need of hydration during the summer months.

Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable yet annually many people succumb to extreme heat. People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. Staying cool and making simple changes in your fluid intake, activities, and clothing during hot weather can help you remain safe and healthy.

These are the main things affecting your body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather:

- **High humidity.** When the humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly, which keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.
- **Personal factors.** Age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use can play a role in whether a person can cool off enough in very hot weather.

Here are some facts about which people are at greatest risk for heat-related illness and what protective actions to take to prevent illness or death:

- People who are at highest risk are **the elderly, the very young, and people with mental illness and chronic diseases.**
- But **even young and healthy people can get sick from the heat** if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.
- **Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor** against heat-related illness and death. If a home is not air-conditioned, people can reduce their risk for heat-related illness by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned.

You can take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths during hot weather:

- Get informed. Listen to local news and weather channels or contact your local public health department during extreme heat conditions for health and safety updates.
- Stay cool indoors.

- Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages and increase fluid intakes regardless of activity level.
- Replace salt and minerals.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
- Pace yourself.
- Use a buddy system.
- Monitor people at high risk.
- Adjust to the environment.
- Do not leave children in cars.
- Use common sense.

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone dial 9-1-1 for medical assistance while you begin cooling the affected person. These self-help measures are not a substitute for medical care but may help you recognize and respond promptly to warning signs of trouble.

- Get the person to a shady area.
- Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the person in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the person with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the person in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°–102°F
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

For further information, contact the Sun City West Fire District at (623) 584-3500 or visit us on our website at www.scwfire.org.