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**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Heat Safety Tips from The Houston Fire Department

HFD stresses the importance of taking safety measures when outdoors to avoid heat-related medical emergencies.

Before conducting outdoors activities and feeling thirsty , drink plenty of water and electrolyte-replacement beverages.

Avoid beverages or food sources with caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar because these can actually result in the loss of body fluid.

Conduct outdoor work or exercise in the early morning or evening when it is cooler. Individuals unaccustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment need to start slowly and gradually increase heat exposure over several weeks. Take frequent breaks in the shade or in an air-conditioned facility.

A wide-brimmed, loose-fitting hat that allows ventilation helps prevent sunburn and heat-related emergencies. A tight-fitting baseball cap is not the best choice when conducting strenuous outdoors activities. Sunscreen also helps protect injury from the sun's rays and reduces the risk of sunburn.

Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing that permits the evaporation of perspiration. Do not leave children, senior citizens or pets unattended in a vehicle.

The most common types of heat related illnesses are heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms that typically occur in the abdomen, arm, and legs in association with strenuous activity. If you have heart problems or are on a low sodium diet, get medical attention for heat cramps.

- If medical attention is not necessary, take these steps:
- Stop all activity, and sit quietly in a cool place
- Drink clear juice or a sport drink
- Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours until after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke.
- Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in one hour.

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt contained in sweat. Signs include profuse sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, a weak-but-rapid pulse and fainting. The skin may be cool and moist. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke.

Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating system fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given. Heat stroke symptoms include an extremely high body temperature (above 103°F, orally), red, hot and dry skin (no sweating), rapid and strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness.

For additional summer safety tips, please visit the HFD website at www.houstonfire.org

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Working Smoke Detectors Save Lives!