



**HOUSTON HEALTH**  
DEPARTMENT



**Office of Surveillance & Public Health Preparedness**  
*Program of Public Health Informatics*

**Heat Surveillance Monthly Report**  
**July 2015**

## Highlights

- As of July 2015, there was 1 heat-related death in the Houston area in 2015. In 2013 and 2014, there were 6 and 2 heat-related deaths respectively.
  - This season 161 Emergency Department (ED) visits were related to Heat Related Illness (HRI) from March 2015 to July 2015. An ED visit is counted as HRI when chief complaints contains the term Heat. Examples include heat exhaustion, heat stroke, heat cramps, overheating, etc.
  - From 2013 to 2015, heat related deaths are more likely to occur when temperatures are above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - ED visits due to HRI have increased consistently from March 2015 to July 2015. The highest count (n=11) in any given day of HRI occurred on July 27, 2015.
  - Seventy-two percent of ED visits for HRI occur among men.
  - The age-group that accounts for the most ED visits due to HRI is 18 to 64 years of age.
  - ED visits due to HRI have occurred across all of ZIP codes in the greater Houston metropolitan area. The ZIP codes with counts higher than five are 77520, 77015, 77396, and 77365.
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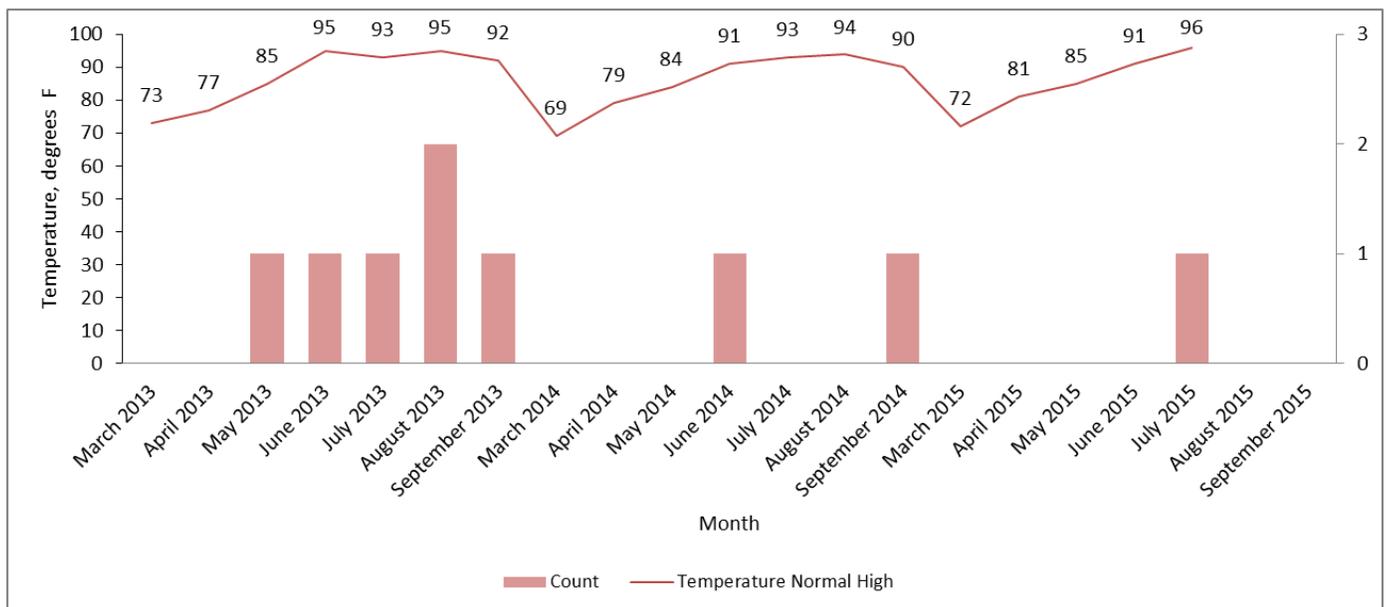
Table 1. Occurrence of Heat-Related Events in Houston, 2013 to 2015

Year	2013	2014	2015
# of heat-related illnesses in Houston/Harris County	144	151	161 <sup>a</sup>
# of heat-related deaths in Houston	6	2	1 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Total heat-related events</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>162</b>

a) Heat related illness for 03/25/2015 to 07/31/2015

b) Heat related deaths for 2015 as of 07/15/2015

Figure 1. Heat related deaths<sup>c</sup> by month, 2013 to 2015



<sup>c</sup> A heat related death is defined as a death whose primary cause is related to excessive heat.

Figure 2. Epi Curve for Heat related illness (HRI) from visits to emergency center, 2015

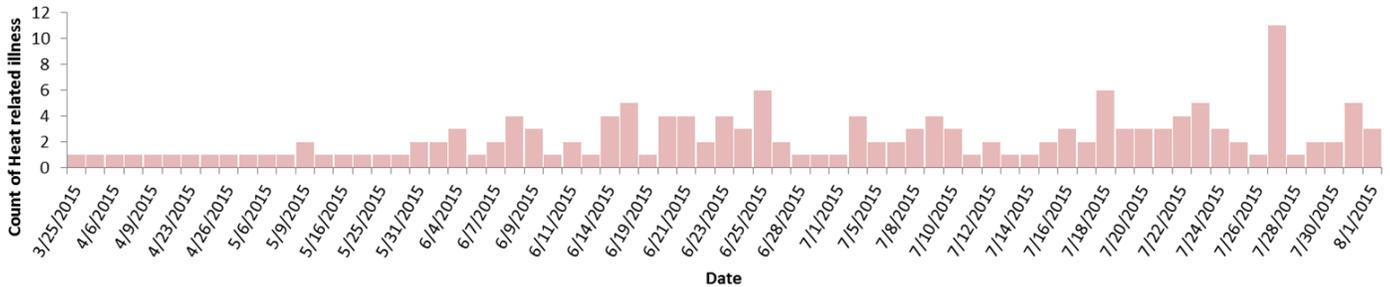


Figure 3. Heat related illness by gender, March 2015 to July 2015

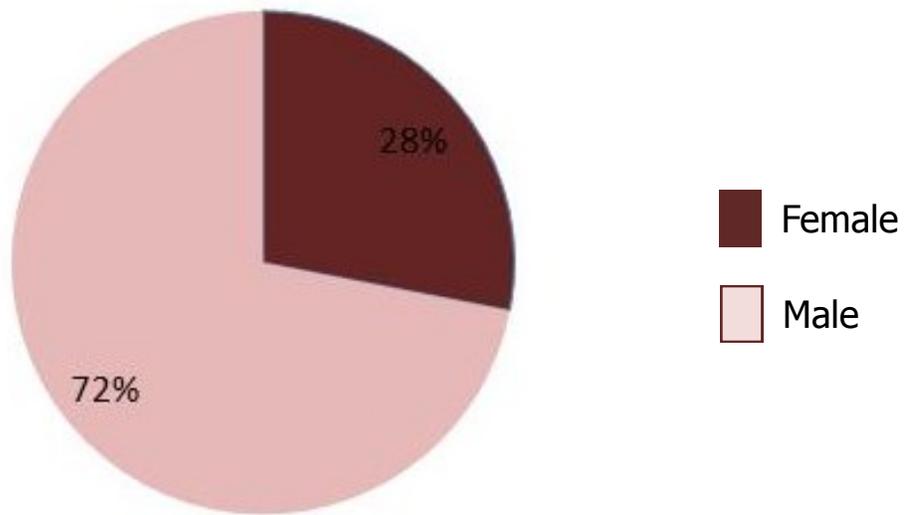


Table 2. Age characteristics of individuals with Heat related illness (HRI)<sup>d</sup>

Age Category (years)	Count of HRI
0 to 5	6
6 to 17	3
18 to 64	136
65 and over	16

<sup>d</sup> HRI from 03/25/2015 to 07/31/2015

## Tips for Prevention of Heat-related Illness

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) recommends Houstonians begin taking precautions against high temperatures to avoid heat-related illnesses. High body temperatures can lead to damage to the brain or other vital organs and even death.

### What Can You Do?

#### Stay cool.

- Find an air-conditioned shelter
- Avoid direct sunlight
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing
- Take cool showers or baths
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device

#### Stay hydrated.

- Drink more water than usual
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar
- Remind others to drink enough water

#### Stay informed.

- Check local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips
- Learn the symptoms of heat illness

For more information regarding prevention tips for heat-related events, please see:

<http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showClimateChangeExtremeHeat.action>

*The Houston Heat Surveillance Annual Report* is available on the Houston Department of Health and Human Services web site at:

[www.houstontx.gov/health/](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/)

*NOTE: Additional information regarding extreme heat can be accessed at:*

*<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>*

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