SUMMER WEATHER SAFETY

By Chief Michael Hapstak, Woodbridge Fire Company No. 1

Most of us learned the basics of summer safety– apply sunscreen to avoid sunburn and risk of skin cancer and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration during the hottest days. But you might not know of all the dangers lurking in the summer months.

Heat - Heat is known as the "silent killer" because people often don't realize they are suffering from a heat related illness until it becomes a critical situation. Heat exhaustion can quickly progress to heat stroke. The most common signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include: confusion, dark-colored urine (a sign of dehydration), dizziness, fainting, fatigue, headache, muscle or abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, pale skin, profuse sweating, and rapid heartbeat. It's essential to immediately get out of the heat and rest, preferably in an air-conditioned room. If you can't get inside, try to find the nearest cool and shady place. Drink plenty of fluids, especially sports drinks to replace lost salt (avoid caffeine and alcohol). Remove any tight or unnecessary clothing. Take a cool shower or bath and use other cooling measures such as fans or ice towels. If such measures fail to provide relief within 15 minutes, seek emergency medical help, because untreated heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke. Heat stroke can damage the brain and other vital organs, and even cause death. The hallmark symptom of heat stroke is a core body temperature above 104° F. But fainting may be the first sign. Other symptoms may include: throbbing headache, dizziness and light-headedness, lack of sweating despite the heat, red, hot, and dry skin, muscle weakness or cramps, nausea and vomiting, rapid heartbeat, rapid, shallow breathing, behavioral changes such as confusion, disorientation, staggering, seizures and unconsciousness. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. If you see someone with the signs and symptoms, call 9-1-1. If you work outdoors or spend time mowing or gardening, take frequent breaks, stay hydrated and seek air conditioning or shade to give your body a break from the sun and time to cool down. Better yet, do your outdoor work in the cooler hours of early morning or evening.

Lightning – If you are outside, in a tent, under a pavilion, or any place other than a sturdy building or vehicle, you can be struck and killed or seriously injured by lightning. NO PLACE outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area! If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you. When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter: a substantial building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with windows up. Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder. If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk: Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, never lie flat on the ground, never shelter under an isolated tree, immediately get out and away from pools other bodies of water, stay away from objects that conduct electricity (metal fences, power lines, etc.) Indoor lightning safety: Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets. Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches. Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

Look before you lock - You wouldn't leave fresh groceries like milk in a hot car while you run errands for obvious reasons. Likewise, don't leave children, pets or anyone in the car, even if the windows are partially open or the engine is running and the air conditioning is on. The sun's radiation heats objects that it strikes. A dashboard or seat can easily reach temperatures in the range of 200°F, even when outside temperatures are low. These objects heat the adjacent air by conduction and convection and also give off radiation which is very efficient at warming the air trapped inside a vehicle. In just over 2 minutes the interior of a car can reach unsafe temperatures, and death from heat stroke can occur in as little as 10 minutes in children. Remember to "look before you lock", and make sure everyone is out of the car before you head inside. If you aren't the regular caregiver, place important items on the floor behind the driver's seat to condition yourself to always open the back door before you lock the car and walk away. Keep your vehicle locked and keep your keys out of reach; nearly 3 in 10 heatstroke deaths happen when an unattended child gains access to a vehicle.

Volunteer Firefighters Wanted

Woodbridge Fire Company #1
Woodbridge & Sewaren

The volunteers of Woodbridge Fire Co. #1 have been serving the residents of Woodbridge proper and Sewaren since 1897, responding to an average of 750 calls per year.

If you are dedicated, motivated and want to serve your community in a vital role as a first responder; if you want to help protect the lives and property of the residents and businesses of the fire district; we invite you to join a family that will always have your back. Just a few hours per week is all it takes to have a rewarding and satisfying role in public safety.

We provide all the tools, training and equipment you need to become a firefighter. You will gain experience and skills that will help you both personally and professionally while making new friends, meeting new people and working as a team member of an organization that is based on tradition and rooted in service.

Membership Requirements

- Between the ages of 18-57
- US Citizen—NJ Driver License
- Satisfactory background check
- Resident of Woodbridge proper or Sewaren
- Pass medical evaluation
- Complete Firefighter 1 training at County Fire Academy
- Meet minimum response criteria, there are no set duty schedules or times
- A desire to serve your community as a first responder

Member Benefits

- Earn 401(k) type savings through Service Award Program
- College tuition reimbursement
- Scholarships for eligible family members
- Life Insurance / Workmen's Comp coverage
- Membership in NJ State Firefighter's Association with additional benefits
- Free/discounted health and recreation programs
- Additional training courses at no cost
- Various community/social activities

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For more information and details on volunteering with us:

E-mail: membership@woodbridgefd.org
Web: www.woodbridgefd.org/content/Volunteer

FIND THE FIGHTER IN YOU