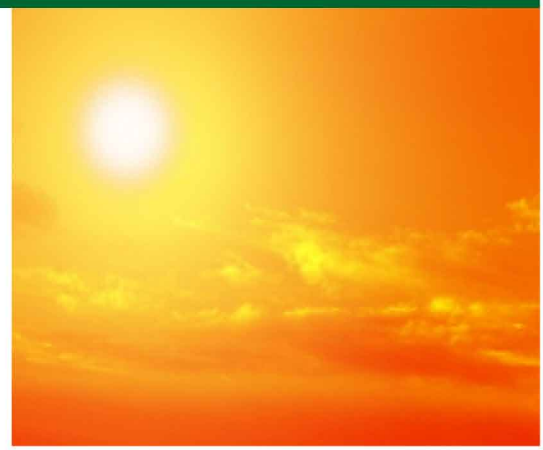
U.S. Forest Service

Know Before You Go

Preparing to Visit a National Forest



Heat Waves

A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessively hot weather that can be hazardous to your health. Sometimes it involves the combination of heat and humidity, which causes the air to become oppressive and stifling.

Heat waves are relative to the normal climate in a particular location. There is no universal definition of heat wave; it is not linked to an exact temperature.

Heat waves can cause officials to issue weather alerts for personal safety. A **heat advisory** is issued when high temperatures, or the combination of heat and humidity, are expected to become an inconvenience for much of the population and a problem for sensitive individuals. A **heat warning** is issued when the weather conditions are expected to be dangerous for a large portion of the population.

Safety Checklist

- ☐ Listen to a NOAA weather radio for heat advisories and warnings.
- ☐ Check the UV index on weather sites.
- ☐ Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- ☐ Eat small frequent meals.
- ☐ Wear loose-fitting, light-weight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors if trying to stay cool.
- ☐ Ensure that your animals' needs for water and shade are met.
- ☐ Know how to recognize and treat heat-related emergencies.
- ☐ Be familiar with the terms heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat stress and heat cramps.
- ☐ Visit http://preview.weather.com/ready/heat/risk.html and www.noaa.gov.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

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