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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2015

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Emergency Management Officials Urge Caution When Temperatures Rise

Offer safety tips to help people beat the heat

SPRINGFIELD – The hottest days of summer are just around the corner, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies are offering heat safety tips to help people play it safe when temperatures rise.

“Warm weather is a welcomed relief after the long, cold winter we endured this year,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “But summertime comes with its own hazards, many related to excessive heat. We want to help people avoid these risks and enjoy a fun, safe summer.”

Joseph said one of the most important safety tips when temperatures rise is to never leave children, elderly people, disabled adults or pets in parked cars, even for a short time. Temperatures inside a parked vehicle can rapidly rise to dangerous levels even if the windows are slightly open, and can lead to brain damage or death. The effects can be more severe on children because their bodies warm at a faster rate than adults.

“Twenty years ago a heat wave led to the deaths of more than 1,000 people in the Midwest during a single week. The July 1995 heat wave tragically demonstrated that heat and humidity are a deadly combination,” said Chris Miller, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Lincoln. “Hot and humid conditions put a lot of stress on the human body and can lead to serious health conditions such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke or even death.”

Hot weather tips include:

- Always lock car doors and trunks, even at home, and keep keys out of children's reach.
- Stay hydrated by drinking at least 1½ to 2 quarts of fluids daily, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages and drinks containing caffeine.
- Avoid overexertion and strenuous outdoor activities if possible.

- Take advantage of cooling centers, public pools and air-conditioned stores and malls during periods of extreme heat. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can help prevent heat-related illnesses.
- Don't forget your pets. Offer pets extra water and place the water bowl in a shaded area if outdoors. Make sure pets have a shady refuge where they can escape direct sun exposure.
- If you or someone around you begins experiencing dizziness, nausea, headache, confusion and a rapid pulse, seek medical attention immediately, as these could be the symptoms of heatstroke.

Additional tips on how to protect yourself and others from heat-related illnesses are available on the state's Ready Illinois website (www.Ready.Illinois.gov).