

# Alexandria CERT: Community Emergency Response Team

Police – Fire – Medical Emergency	911
Alexandria Non-Emergency	703-746-4444
Alexandria Animal Control	703-746-4774
National Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255

July - August 2019

## Heat-Related Illnesses

Our bodies can be stressed by heat, resulting in adverse health effects. Heat waves can also lead to unhealthy air quality, which prompts local officials to declare Code Red or Code Orange days because of ozone.

**Dehydration.** Exerting yourself in hot weather can bring about dehydration, affecting your metabolism. The elderly, children, and persons with chronic illnesses are at higher risk, even when not exerting themselves. Mild to moderate symptoms include fatigue, dizziness, thirstiness, a headache, or fainting. Loss of more than 10% of body water causes physical and mental deterioration, and sodium levels rise. Symptoms of excessive sodium include nausea, confusion, and muscle twitching. To prevent dehydration, drink water regularly.

**Heat Cramps.** Symptoms are muscle pain or spasms and, if you have been exercising hard, heavy sweating. Stop physical activity until the cramps go away. Move to a cool place. Drink water. See a doctor if your cramps last more than 1 hour.

**Heat Exhaustion.** More serious than heat cramps, this causes heavy sweating, tiredness or weakness, dizziness, headache, skin that is cold, or clammy and pale, nausea or vomiting, fainting. Your pulse becomes fast or weak. Get medical help immediately if you are vomiting or if the symptoms get worse or last over an hour. You should move to a cool place, sip water slowly, loosen clothing, and put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool shower or bath.

**Heat Stroke.** This is extremely serious, and you need to call 911 immediately. Do not give the person anything to drink. Move them to a cooler location and place cool, wet cloths on their body or give them a cool bath. The body temperature exceeds 103°. Skin may be damp or it may be hot, red, and dry. The person is confused or may pass out. They may have dizziness, headache, or nausea.

**Sunburn.** Skin turns warm, red, and may be painful. Blisters may appear with severe sunburn. Do not break the blisters. Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath, and use a moisturizing lotion afterwards. Stay out of the sun or cover affected areas until the sunburn heals.

## Heat Wave Tips

During days of high heat in the summer, it is best to stay cool, stay hydrated, and monitor those at risk of heat-induced illness.

**Stay Cool.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing, and a brimmed hat. Apply sunscreen. If air conditioning is not working, seek relief somewhere that has A/C. Avoid strenuous exercise or activity, or exercise before 7 a.m., and take breaks as needed. Never leave children or pets in a vehicle.

**Stay Hydrated.** Drink fluids, but avoid sugary and alcoholic drinks. Persons with kidney disease should consult with their doctor about increasing fluids. Provide pets with lots of cool, fresh water.

### Monitor Others.

- When working or exercising outdoors, use the buddy system.
- Check on family members and neighbors who are elderly or have medical conditions, including heart disease, poor circulation, obesity, or mental illness: They may be taking medications that can make them more prone to heat illness and they may be less likely to sense unsafe heat conditions.
- Ensure children and infants keep hydrated and avoid sugar.

## Power Outages

Electricity can be disrupted by storms, events such as fires, or overuse during a heat wave. The result can be a blackout or a brownout. A power outage affects lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration and cooking, and our communications and other electronic devices. Medical devices and refrigeration of medicines rely on electricity. It also powers gas pumps, banking ATMs, retail point of sales terminals, traffic signals, and other essential functions. Alexandria and Dominion Energy set priorities for restoring power. During power shortages, Alexandria or the Commonwealth of Virginia may order energy conservation measures.

**During a Power Outage.** Use only flashlights, not candles. Leave one light on so you'll know when power is restored. Disconnect electronic devices and appliances to avoid damage from electrical surges. Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines and powering medical devices. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. A refrigerator keeps food cold for about 4 hours, and a full freezer for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if available. Throw away food that is not safe to eat. If you use generators and camp stoves, use them only outdoors and away from windows to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home. In hot weather, stay cool and drink plenty of fluids. In cold weather, wear extra layers of clothing. Go to a community shelter location if heat or cold are extreme. Check on your neighbors.

**After a Power Outage.** After storms, avoid downed power lines. If traffic lights are out, treat dark intersections as 4-way stops. Throw away all perishable food items that have been at 40 degrees or higher for 2 hours or more or if they smell bad or have an odd color or texture. Throw out any refrigerated medicines if the power has been out for more than a day. Replace all refrigerated medicines as soon as possible. Contact your doctor or the Alexandria Health Department (703-746-4996) for further advice on medication issues.

**Prepare for Power Outages.** Plan for both short and long (multi-day) outages and account for summer and winter weather extremes. Inventory items you need that rely on electricity. Talk to your doctor about a power outage plan for medical devices and refrigerated medicines; get specific guidance on life-critical medications. Stock up on non-perishable foods. Use a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer to determine if the temperature exceeds 40°. Have flashlights, a battery-operated radio, and extra batteries. Practice how you will charge your mobile phone; options include a car charger or an external battery pack. Keep mobile phones charged. Determine whether your landline phone will work in a power outage and how long the battery backup will last. Sign up for local alerts and warning systems; in Alexandria it is eNews (the Everbridge system): [www.alexandriava.gov/eNews](http://www.alexandriava.gov/eNews). Monitor weather reports and gas up your vehicle before a storm.

## Power Outages (continued)

**Downed Power Lines.** If a downed power line presents a clear and imminent danger to life or property (such as an electrocution or fire), call 911 immediately. Call the non-emergency number 703-746-4444 for Alexandria if it is not hazardous. Also contact Dominion Virginia Energy at 866-366-4357. Give as much detail as possible about the location and the condition of the downed line.

**Be safe** when you see a downed power line. The line could be energized and dangerous. If someone makes contact with a downed power line, don't try to rescue them because you risk becoming a victim yourself. Stay at least 30 feet away. Never touch a line or try to touch or move a line with an object. Electricity can move through conductive materials like water, metal, wood, aluminum, string and plastics. Do not stand in water or on wet surfaces near a downed power line. Also, keep away from piles of debris: power lines could be buried underneath.

If an electrical line falls on your vehicle, stay inside the vehicle and call 911. If you must exit the vehicle, jump as far away as possible, with both feet landing on the ground at the same time. Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

### **Power Outage Map.**

Dominion Energy has a map and summary of outages at [www.dominionenergy.com/outage-center](http://www.dominionenergy.com/outage-center)