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Officials urge caution as extreme heat moves in

HARRISONBURG, Va. – With the potential for extreme heat in the Harrisonburg area in the coming days, residents should be mindful of the symptoms of heat exhaustion and tips they should consider to avoid the impact of extreme heat.

Temperatures are expected to reach the mid-90s multiple times this week. That, coupled with high humidity, can create a dangerous situation and even life-threatening conditions such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke if the proper precautions are not taken.

Signs of a heat-related illness can include dizziness, headache, nausea, muscle cramps and confusion, among other indicators. Those experiencing such symptoms should move to a cool place as soon as possible, and call 911 if symptoms worsen.

“A heat-related illness can be tough to detect before it’s too late, so individuals should take whatever steps necessary to protect themselves during an extreme heat event,” Paul Helmuth, Harrisonburg Fire Department deputy emergency coordinator, said. “Stay indoors in air conditioning if possible, drink plenty of water and check in on friends and family who don’t have access to air conditioning.”

Additionally, individuals needing support with cooling and air conditioning may be able to apply for financial assistance through Rockingham County Social Services. Assistance may be available for those who are 60 years old or older, households with a resident younger than 6 years old or households with a resident who is disabled and receiving disability.

Financial assistance can help with the purchase of a fan or other air conditioning needs, or toward payment of an electric bill. Households can apply for financial assistance through August 15 by visiting Rockingham County Social Services at 110 N. Mason St. in Harrisonburg.

Residents also should be mindful of the impact of extreme heat on children and pets. A child’s body temperature can heat up three to five times faster than an adult, and children and pets should never be left in a parked vehicle under such heat conditions.

A number of valuable tips and important information is available at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management website, <https://www.vaemergency.gov/threats/extreme-heat/>.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

