

# HAZARDOUS WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK CONCLUDES TODAY

TODAY IS TEMPERATURE EXTREME AND WILD FIRE AWARENESS DAY

...TEMPERATURE EXTREMES...

WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA IS WELL KNOWN FOR ITS HOT AND HUMID SUMMERS. HOWEVER...DESPITE RELATIVELY SMALL TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUMMER AND WINTER...EXTREMES OF WARM AND COLD OCCUR JUST ABOUT EVERY YEAR.

...SUMMER'S HEAT...

BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER...THE COMBINATION OF HEAT AND HUMIDITY ACROSS WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA OFTEN MAKES IT FEEL LIKE 100 DEGREES OR MORE. THESE HEAT INDEX VALUES CAN TAKE A TOLL ON THE HUMAN BODY, ESPECIALLY IF UNPREPARED. WHEN THE HEAT INDEX REACHES OR EXCEEDS 105, THE THREAT FOR MORE SERIOUS HAZARDS INCREASES. THESE INCLUDE HEAT CRAMPS, HEAT EXHAUSTION, AND HEAT STROKE. HEAT ILLNESS CAN BE FATAL.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME HEAT SAFETY RULES:

- NEVER LEAVE A CHILD OR PET IN UNATTENDED VEHICLES, EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
- DRINK PLENTY OF NON-ALCOHOLIC FLUIDS, PREFERABLY WATER.
- DRESS IN LOOSE, LIGHTWEIGHT, AND LIGHT FITTING CLOTHING AND USE SUNSCREEN TO AVOID GETTING SUNBURNS.
- STAY OUT OF THE SUN, ESPECIALLY AROUND MIDDAY, AND REMAIN NEAR AIR-CONDITIONED LOCATIONS.
- RESTRICT STRENUOUS ACTIVITIES TO A COOLER TIME OF DAY.

A HEAT INDEX CHART IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB AT  
[HTTP://WWW.WEATHER.GOV/OM/HEAT/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.weather.gov/om/heat/index.shtml).

...WINTER'S FREEZE...

FREEZING WEATHER OCCURS OFTEN IN FLORIDA AND IT CAN BE A KILLER. SINCE 2001, 2 PEOPLE DIED FROM COLD-RELATED CONDITIONS ACROSS THE STATE. TEMPERATURES DON'T NEED TO REACH FREEZING TO CAUSE POTENTIAL HAZARDS. TEMPERATURES IN THE MID TO UPPER 30S WITH A MODERATE WIND CAUSES WIND CHILL VALUES THAT MAKE THE TEMPERATURE FEEL LIKE FREEZING.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME COLD SAFETY RULES:

- STAY INDOORS AND USE SAFE HEATING SOURCES.
- KEEP SPACE HEATERS AND CANDLES AWAY FROM ALL FLAMMABLE MATERIALS, SUCH AS CURTAINS AND FURNITURE, AND INSTALL SMOKE DETECTORS.

- INDOORS, DO NOT USE CHARCOAL OR OTHER FUEL-BURNING DEVICES SUCH AS GRILLS THAT PRODUCE CARBON MONOXIDE, AND INSTALL AT LEAST ONE CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR.
- OUTDOORS, STAY DRY AND IN WIND PROTECTED AREAS.
- WEAR MULTIPLE LAYERS OF LOOSE-FITTING CLOTHES AND A HAT AND GLOVES.
- DRINK PLENTY OF LIQUIDS AND EAT HIGH-CALORIE FOODS.

A WIND CHILL CHART IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB AT  
[HTTP://WWW.WEATHER.GOV/OM/WINDCHILL/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.weather.gov/om/windchill/index.shtml)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT TEMPERATURE EXTREMES, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/KIDS/INDEX2.HTM](http://www.floridadisaster.org/kids/index2.htm)

...WILD FIRES...

A WILDFIRE IS AN UNDESIRABLE FIRE OCCURRING IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. THE THREE COMPONENTS NECESSARY TO START A FIRE ARE OXYGEN, FUEL, AND HEAT. IN FLORIDA SINCE 2000, MORE THAN 34000 WILDFIRES HAVE DEVASTATED OVER ONE AND A HALF MILLION ACRES. WILDFIRES CAN ALSO RESULT IN THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WILD FIRES CAN BE FELT STATEWIDE. IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, ROADS AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS CAN BE FORCED TO CLOSE DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS. THE HIGH COST OF RESPONDING TO AND RECOVERING FROM WILDFIRES CAN DEplete STATE RESOURCES AND INCREASE INSURANCE RATES. BUSINESSES THAT DEPEND ON TIMBER, SUCH AS PAPER MILLS AND LUMBER COMPANIES, EXPERIENCE LOSSES THAT ARE OFTEN PASSED ALONG TO THE CONSUMERS THROUGH HIGHER PRICES, AND SOMETIMES JOBS ARE LOST AS WELL.

FLORIDA IS HOME TO MILLIONS OF RESIDENTS WHO ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AND WARM CLIMATE. AS FLORIDA'S POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW, MANY PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING TO LIVE IN OR AROUND WOODED AREAS. THE POINT AT WHICH WOODLAND AREAS MEET WITH RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND SUBDIVISIONS IS CALLED THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.

FEW PEOPLE REALIZE THAT THESE QUALITIES CREATE SEVERE WILDFIRE CONDITIONS. EACH YEAR THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF WILDLAND AND MANY HOMES ARE DESTROYED BY FIRES THAT CAN ERUPT AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR FROM A VARIETY OF CAUSES INCLUDING ARSON, LIGHTNING AND DEBRIS BURNING. ADDING TO THE FIRE HAZARD IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE NEW COMMUNITIES BUILT IN AREAS THAT WERE ONCE

WILDLAND. THIS GROWTH PLACES EVEN GREATER PRESSURE ON FLORIDA'S WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS. AS A RESULT OF THIS GROWTH, FIRE PROTECTION BECOMES EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY.

RESIDENTS CAN HELP TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY BY TAKING ACTION AND THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS FIREWISE THAT CAN REDUCE THE THREAT OF WILDFIRES THROUGH FIRE RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION AND LANDSCAPING TECHNIQUES. A FIREWISE HOME HAS DEFENSIBLE SPACE, LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN LANDSCAPING, FIRE-RESISTANT ROOF CONSTRUCTION AND FIRE-RESISTANT EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION AND ATTACHMENTS. THEY ALSO HAVE EMERGENCY ACCESS AND A DISASTER PLAN IN PLACE INCLUDING EVACUATION PLANS. REMEMBER TO ALWAYS FOLLOW LOCAL BURNING REGULATIONS AND LAWS.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FIREWISE AND OTHER FIRE RELATED INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

[HTTP://WWW.FIREWISE.ORG](http://www.firewise.org)

[HTTP://WWW.FL-DOF.COM](http://www.fl-dof.com)

[HTTP://WWW.FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/KIDS/INDEX2.HTM](http://www.floridadisaster.org/kids/index2.htm)