



Summer 2007



In the United States, heat is the number one non-severe weather-related killer. Unlike the roar of an approaching tornado, heat waves kill with silence. In an

average year, about 175 Americans succumb to the effects of heat. From 1936 through 1975, nearly 20,000 people were killed in the United States by the effects of heat. Using improved heat-wave forecasting, plus greater public awareness and education, the National Weather Service is working to help reduce the number of heat-related deaths.

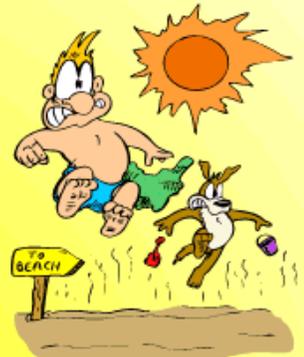
United States summers are hot, with a heat wave in one section or another. East of the Rockies, heat waves tend to combine high temperatures and humidity, although some of the worst heat waves in history have occurred in dry climates.

The stagnant air with heat waves will trap pollutants and add this stress to the dangerously high temperatures, creating an even more serious risk for health problems.



Cities in the Northeast and Midwest typically have a high number of heat related deaths because the weather is more variable. People

living in highly variable summer climates are not well adapted to extreme heat, mainly because it occurs so irregularly. As a result, cities like Boston, Chicago and New York exhibit extreme increases in the number of deaths reported when an intense heat wave occurs compared to more tropical cities.



The high inner-city death rates also may be attributed to the lack of air conditioning, particularly in houses made of materials such as brick that can trap hot and humid air. While air conditioning may be a luxury in normal times, it can be a lifesaver during heat waves.

Recent Historic Heat Waves

The July 2006 California heat wave led to 466 heat-related deaths

The August 2003 European heat wave led to 35,000 heat-related deaths.

The 1995 Chicago heat wave led to 600 heat-related deaths over a five day period.

In the summer of 1980, 1250 people across the United States died due to heat.