



Heat Education and Alert Tools (H.E.A.T.)

UNHEALTHY HEAT ALERT



We are experiencing a prolonged period of dangerous heat over the next several days. Recent global tragedies show how vital heat and swimming safety are.

[Fourth of July events](#) will draw big crowds across Massachusetts. People can enjoy outdoor gatherings, concerts, fireworks, watch parties, and visits to historic sites. During these celebrations, many will want to cool off by swimming at our beaches and pools. This can raise the risk of swimming accidents. Drowning is a leading cause of death among young children in Massachusetts.

Use the links and resources below to help people prepare for safe swimming and extreme heat. **Please prepare yourself and your staff for the potential to see more people with heat-related illness and near-drowning injuries.** Share this information to promote prevention and support patients and communities.



Swimming Safely

Beat the heat and swim safely. Drowning is quieter and faster than you think. Encourage people swimming at beaches and pools to:

- Always swim with a buddy and designate a sober swimmer.
- Watch the water even if there are lifeguards. Keep a close eye on friends and family. **Stay within arm's reach of younger children.**
- Know their limits. Swimming is a skill. Encourage people to use life jackets or other personal floatation devices.

- Stay in the shallow water where others can help more easily.
- Understand “Reach or Throw, but Don’t Go.” Do not try to rescue someone from the water unless trained to do so.

People should swim at public and semi-public beaches and pools:

- Use DCR’s locators for [saltwater beaches](#), [fresh water beaches](#), [Swimming Pools, Wading Pools and Spray Decks | Mass.gov](#) and [accessible beaches and pools](#).
- Use the [Beaches dashboard](#) to find beaches open for swimming. All public and semi-public bathing beaches in Massachusetts are monitored for water quality.
- Be careful swimming in oceans, lakes, rivers, and ponds: Natural bodies of water may be more dangerous than they look because of steep drop-offs, invisible currents, cold water temperatures, and poor visibility in murky water.
- Check for any warnings or beach postings indicating that the water is not safe for swimming because of bacteria, riptides, or other hazards. [Hidden dangers can be deadly even for experienced swimmers](#).

Swimming Resources

- [Water safety for everyone](#)
- [Swim Safe Massachusetts](#)
- [Drowning data and facts](#)
- [CDC Drowning Prevention](#)

Celebrate the 4th of July and 250th Birthday Safely

Hot weather can be dangerous and even life-threatening. Anyone can be affected, but older adults, young children, pregnant people, outdoor workers, and people with chronic health conditions are at greater risk. People may be exposed to heat while attending events, walking outdoors, or waiting in direct sun during the hottest parts of the day.

Encourage people to:

- drink water
- limit alcohol
- avoid heavy activity in the heat
- take breaks in the shade or air conditioning
- keep food cold and throw it out if it has been left in the heat for too long
- check on people at higher risk and share the resources below to help communities stay safe.

H.E.A.T. Resources

- **[Celebrate Safely - Heat and Health Tips for Watch Parties and Summer Events:](#)** A collection of safety tips, guidance, and shareable materials to help people prepare for and stay safe during summer events and hot weather.
- **[Extreme Heat:](#)** A central hub for resources, tools, and guidance to stay safe during periods of extreme heat.
- **[Unhealthy Heat Forecast:](#)** Track upcoming heat conditions in your community with a 7-day forecast and color-coded risk levels.
- **[Community Heat Resources:](#)** Find heat safety tips, shareable outreach materials, and key state resources to help residents and communities prepare for extreme heat and stay safe.
- **[Unhealthy Heat Action Toolkit:](#)** A downloadable toolkit with ready-to-use social media posts, messages, and other resources to help organizations share heat safety information and promote action during periods of unhealthy heat.
- **[Heat resources and guidance:](#)** Clear, targeted fact sheets for specific settings and populations vulnerable to extreme heat.

Sincerely,

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health