

## Mother Nature turns her thermostat to HOT!

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 28 June 2012 13:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 June 2012 13:18

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A heat wave sizzling in our area brings increased risks for heat exhaustion or stroke.

But hey, it's summer in Nebraska.

Temperatures in the 100s and upper 90s, combined with high humidity, can create situations where heat illnesses are possible, according to National Weather Service officials.

Drinking plenty of fluids is a must, especially for people who work outside like lifeguards and city and construction crews.

At the city pool, lifeguards can get some shade from umbrellas.

Pool manager Alexa Ostergard said guards also fill up on ice water from a cooler which they take with them to each station.

"We also wear lots sunscreen and can swim from station to station to cool off," Ostergard said.

When the heat is on, city crews often rise earlier in the morning and go to work, said city services director Shane Gruber.

"We then knock concrete and do other hot outside jobs and take off early or do work indoors like taking inventory or repairing equipment," Gruber said.

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City trucks are equipped with coolers and workers often freeze water bottles in the shop freezer.

“Everyone stays hydrated and not overheated,” he said.



People who work outside are not the only ones who feel taxed by the heat.

High temps also put a strain on electricity and water usage throughout the city.

City administrator Bruce Clymer asks residents to refrain from using a lot of electricity during peak heat periods such as afternoons and early evenings.

Since power loads spike from noon to 8 p.m. Clymer requests residents not to operate washers and dryers or sprinklers during these times.

If the heat continues, Clymer said the city may have to restrict water usage.

“Just be aware that water is a limited resource,” he said.

Gruber can show that water usage is up.

During an average summer, about 1.5 to 1.8 million gallons of water are pumped daily.

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The recent heat spell has increased demand to between 2.5 to 3.6 million gallons.

“And that’s mostly for lawns and gardens,” he said.

Gruber advises watering early in the morning until 10 a.m. during extremely hot periods and from 7-10 p.m.

Watering during the heat of the day doesn’t do any good, he said, as moisture is lost through evaporation.

“Setting underground sprinklers to go at 3-4 a.m. really helps with our power load,” Gruber noted.

As far as getting rid of brown spots in yards with extra water, he said forget it.

“They won’t green up until we get a good rain,” Gruber said.

Which isn’t likely until at least Thursday when National Weather forecasters predict a chance of thunderstorms for the area.

The heat is expected to continue, with temps in the upper 90s, through the rest of the week.

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