



Extreme Weather Fall Newsletter 2013



Photo credit: U.S. Geological Survey

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Newsletter**



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**Please feel free to
contact us for
information on
having the
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Program present
to your group or
organization!**

Drought & Health Issues in Arizona

Greetings, readers! Since the summer's monsoon was wetter than normal across northern portions of Arizona, drought might not have appeared to be much of a concern. However, the long-term drought effects on water resources still remain, due to the soil-moisture deficit from the last several dry years ([ADWR](#)).

Drought occurs when rainfall is lower than average for an extended period of time, resulting in inadequate water supply ([CDC](#)).



Ninety two percent of Arizona is considered to be experiencing moderate drought or more severe drought. ([CLIMAS](#)). Severe drought conditions can increase risk for wildfires and dust storms (CDC).

According to CDC, drought can lead to increased illness and stress due to the effects of: 1) dust, wildfires, and poor air quality; 2) low water levels and water contamination; 3) crop failure and food shortages; and 4) shortages in electricity, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.

Water conservation is necessary to deal with drought conditions, but should not discourage proper sanitation and hygiene.

How to Prepare for Drought Conditions

Be prepared:

- Know fire restrictions (fireworks, campfire bans, dry yard conditions)
- Know water limits (watering, hygiene, sanitation)
- Know your water resources, federal emergency assistance programs, resources for firefighters
- Create a drought plan for home and community

Stay aware:

- Monitor air quality (particles, dust, smoke, pollen)
- Consider low-flow faucets, water efficient toilets, and shower heads
- Monitor grey and recycled water for mosquitos
- Be attentive of water levels (boating and recreation danger)
- Check for contamination (toxins, chemicals, parasites, bacteria) caused by low water levels

Be safe:

- Continue sanitation practices (hands, dishes, food, drinking)
- Avoid stagnant water
- Use care with fire and barbecues
- Cigarette butts and ashes can also start fires
- Ensure good nutrition



Program Update: Outdoor Worker Toolkits

The Office of Environmental Health recently created the Guidance and Resources for Outdoor Workers



in the Heat (GROWTH) toolkit for outdoor workers and employers. The toolkit provides resources developed by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and materials developed by the Arizona Department of Health Services to prevent, recognize, and treat heat illness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from 1992-2006, 423 workers in agricultural and nonagricultural industries died from exposure to heat: an average of 30 deaths per year.

We would like to thank the following supporters who helped make the toolkit possible: the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH), Arizona Department of Transportation, Arizona Farm Bureau, ADHS Common Ground Community Garden, ADHS Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Volunteers, and Daisy Mountain Fire Department No 142.

In addition to the toolkit's fact sheets, training guide, brochure, poster, and reference card, the toolkit will also soon include a DVD training video for outdoor workers in the heat.

To view the toolkit, visit: <http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oeh/heat/outdoor-worker.htm>

Office of Environmental Health Receives CDC "BRACE" Grant

The Extreme Weather and Public Health Program within the Office of Environmental Health was awarded a new grant through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Climate-Ready States and Cities Initiative. Arizona is one of the 18 states and cities funded. The initiative helps states and cities develop ways to anticipate health effects by applying climate science, predicting health impacts, and preparing flexible programs.

The new funding will allow the Program to continue addressing heat-related illnesses as well as branch out to other climate and health effects such as drought, vector-borne diseases, wildfires, flash flooding, and air quality. With this grant, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) will incorporate the framework "Building Resilience against Climate Effects ([BRACE](#))" into program activities for the next three years.

With the grant funding, OEH will be better able to:

1. Forecast climate effects and assess vulnerabilities
2. Project the disease burden
3. Assess public health interventions
4. Develop and implement a climate and health strategic adaptation plan
5. Evaluate and improve quality of program activities

