



9 October 2013

## **NSW Ambulance safety message: Heat can kill**

NSW Ambulance would like to remind the community to stay cool and hydrated in the hot temperatures today and tomorrow to avoid suffering medical conditions such as heat stroke.

The latest Bureau of Meteorology forecast is predicting temperatures in Sydney's west and the Hunter region to reach 30 degrees today.

But it is tomorrow the heat is expected to reach close to 40 degrees in Sydney and across the state.

These conditions could easily lead to life threatening situations if people don't take simple precautions.

Heat can kill - sunburn, dehydration and heat exposure can lead to heat stroke. If the body has to work too hard for too long to keep itself cool people can become very unwell. The signs of heat stroke include headache, weakness, vomiting and dizziness.

To avoid this medical emergency NSW Ambulance is urging people to follow a personal **Extreme Weather Plan** which involves:

### **1. Review Your Activity: Plan today for tomorrow.**

- Reschedule any non-necessary activity, particularly in the hottest part of the day.
- Those who are elderly, chronically unwell or very young are at greater risk should know their limitations.

### **2. Water is the Drink of Choice:**

- Drink regular, small amounts of water all day, starting in the early morning.
- Drink more water if you have to be outside or undertaking heavy activity.
- Drink alcohol, tea and coffee in moderation; all of these potentially increase dehydration.
- *Waiting until you feel unwell and then drinking large amounts is too late – large amounts of water at once can lead to vomiting - that makes the situation worse.*

### **3. Make Contact in Your Community:**

- Take a few minutes to make contact with family, friends and neighbours at higher risk of adverse outcomes in the heat. Dehydration in the elderly can rapidly cause confusion resulting in a fall that could easily break a hip.

People may hit the beaches and pools to cool down tomorrow, and on hot days paramedics treat more people who get into distress in the water.

NSW Ambulance strongly advises people to take safety precautions if they head to the water to cool down. A few tips include:

- Always swim between the flags at the beach and obey instructions given by lifeguards.
- Always check water depth and the possibility of submerged objects before swimming in rivers, creeks or dams. The Service does not recommend diving at all.
- Don't mix water sports with alcohol.
- Never swim alone.

**Save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives**