

Maryland heat deaths, illnesses already above 2024 rates



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At least 13 people have died so far due to heat-related illnesses in Maryland during this year's "heat season," up from this time last year, according to a [report](#) sent to the Baltimore Sun from the Maryland Department of Health.

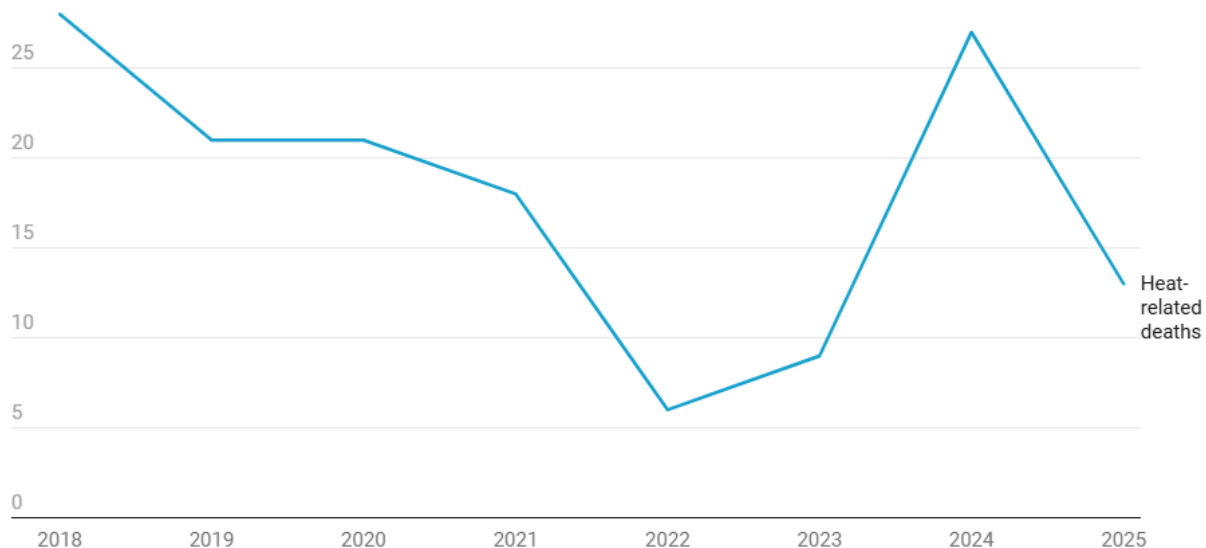
In 2024, there were 27 heat-related deaths across the state, according to [reports](#) from the state Department of Health. By late July last year, 11 people had died.

During Maryland's heat season, which the department defines as May through September, there have already been 1,008 EMS calls and 1,129 emergency department or urgent care visits related to heat-related illness in 2025.

Despite two more months of heat season, Maryland is close to meeting last year's total number of emergency department or urgent care visits due to heat, which was 1,206 in 2024.

"Heat illness is certainly an under-recognized, under-appreciated threat, and it can have real consequences," said David Gatz, the associate medical director of the Adult Emergency Department at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Heat-related deaths in Maryland during heat season



Data for 2025 is as of July 19

Source: [Maryland Department of Health](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

What is heat illness?

Children, seniors and people with chronic illnesses are most susceptible to heat illness, Gatz said, but anyone can be at risk if put in high-heat environments.

The lowest level of heat illness is heat exhaustion, which occurs when water and salt are depleted, typically from being outside and sweating. This can make people feel that they're going to pass out, their heart is beating faster or they feel nauseous, according to Cheyenne Falat, the assistant medical director of the Adult Emergency Department at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

At this stage, Falat said, getting hydrated, moving away from the heat and cooling the body can usually be enough to prevent serious illness.

Moderate heat illness can include heat rash, swelling — typically in the legs — and heat cramps and brief fainting, Falat said.

The most severe level of heat illness is heat stroke, which impacts the neurological system. Falat said looking out for any changes like slurred speech, difficulties with fine motor skills, and being unsteady could be signs to head to see a medical professional as soon as possible.

“The earlier you can recognize it and intervene, the more you can prevent it from transitioning to that next stage,” Falat said.

Recognizing when heat illness is severe enough to warrant a trip to the hospital is challenging, however, Gatz said, but the most important step is listening to your body. To prevent heat illness, Falat and Gatz recommend attempting not to over-exert, applying sunscreen, hydrating and limiting time exposed to extreme temperatures.

Heat in the workplace

Heat illness and heat-related deaths in Maryland have become top-of-mind for employers due to a [new law](#) requiring workplaces with high heat indexes to educate their employees on heat illness as well as provide water and frequent breaks.

The 2024 death of Baltimore City Department of Public Works trash collector [Ronald Silver](#) also ignited conversations in the region about monitoring the health of people working during high heat indexes.

The Maryland Department of Labor has not received any notifications of heat-related deaths at workplaces this year, a spokesperson for the department told The Sun. Maryland Occupational Safety and Health, part of the state labor department, has received reports of heat-related concerns that are being investigated, the spokesperson said, but did not specify the number of complaints.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 — a union representing state, municipal and county employees in Maryland, of which Silver was a member — has also not heard any reports of heat-related deaths at workplaces in the state. Still, leaders do have concerns over a lack of heat safety plans from some of their employers, according to a union spokesperson. The plans are required under the heat safety standards, which became law in September 2024.

Have a news tip? Contact Katharine Wilson at kwilson@baltsun.com.

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