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Valley heat wave causing power outages, medical emergencies

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FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- Like an AC unit when temperatures rise, local officials have stayed busy during our latest heat wave.

The dangerous conditions are being blamed for causing the system failure of an underground cable that knocked out power for nearly 2,800 Fresno PG&E customers Sunday evening.

"Especially for these customers in Fresno who have experienced this extended outage, it goes beyond an inconvenience when you're talking about temperatures this high. We just want to let them know we're working safely and as quickly as we can to get their power back on," said PG&E spokesperson Denny Boyles.

If you experience an outage on a hot day, the utility recommends closing blinds and curtains to keep as much radiant heat out as possible.

And if you can, head to a cooler location such as a shopping center or movie theater with an air conditioner.

"We have a partnership with the City of Fresno. Anytime the forecast is above 105 degrees we've helped fund cooling centers that will open. We have those cooling center partnerships across the Valley," says Boyles.

Heat-related calls lit up the switchboard at American Ambulance over the weekend.

Administrators say they often see an uptick in call volume when temperatures reach triple digits for consecutive days.

Operations Manager Ben Garcia is reminding families about the dangers of overheating and how you can prevent it.

"We see patients that are complaining of dizziness, fatigue, altered mental status," he says. "Stay away from alcohol, make sure to wear loose-fitting clothing so the breeze can kind of cool you off a bit in order to maintain your normal body temperature."

Authorities are also encouraging residents to reconsider plans to recreate outdoors during extreme heat.

The Madera County Sheriff's Office was called into action over the weekend to help hikers in separate cases who were suffering from heat-related illness and dehydration.

"Pale face, heat cramps, nausea, vomiting, those are extremely important warning signs because the next step is potential heat stroke," says Sheriff Tyson Pogue.

If you have concerns about your electricity bill due to high usage, PG&E recommends calling them to work out a plan or asking about special programs.

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