



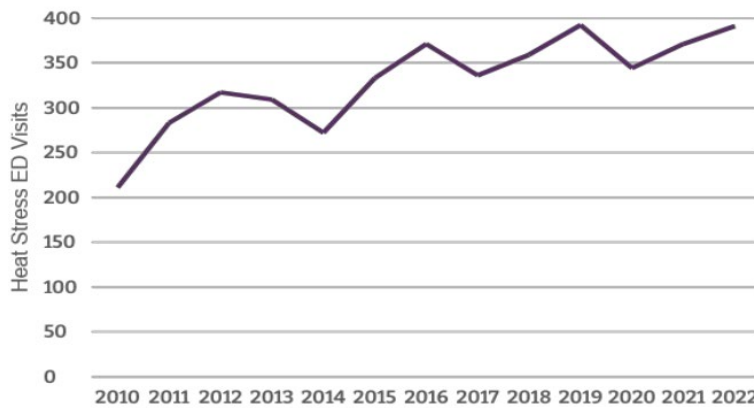
New Mexico Environment Department

SCIENCE | INNOVATION | COLLABORATION | COMPLIANCE

Extreme Heat and Public Health Water and Natural Resources Committee

July 22, 2024

Heat Stress Emergency Department (ED) Visits

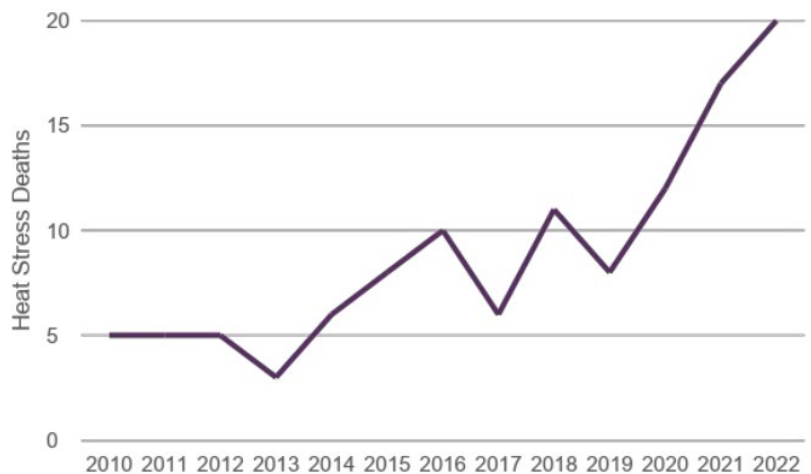


- Heat related illness visits to New Mexico Emergency Departments (ED) nearly doubled from 2010-2022
- Over 900 visits due to heat in 2023
- Over 600 visits due to heat so far in 2024

Source: NMHealth

- NMED has received 142 heat related complaints from workers since adopting federal OSHA's National Emphasis in May of 2023
- Many more heat exposure ED visits may be work related; majority of visits are patients in the 18-44 age category
- Nationwide, over 30 workers are killed by environmental heat each year, on average

Heat Stress Deaths



Source: NMHealth

Heat Impacts on Workers

Acute
(Recognized as heat-related in ED)

Chronic
(Unrecognized as heat-related in ED)

Delayed
(Unrecognized as heat-related in ED)

Coded Heat-related Illnesses

Heat Exhaustion

Heat Stroke
(High Fatality Rate)

- ED visits for heat diagnostic codes doubled from 2010 to 2019 and again from 2019 to 2023
- Most frequent in southern NM
- ED visits sharply increase for temps >90° F

Uncoded Heat-related Illnesses

Kidney Illness,
Injury, or Failure

Cardiac Events

Respiratory
Disease

- ED Physicians use diagnostic codes for the acute condition, but do not relate it to heat exposure
- Many conditions increase during or after heat waves
- Lost worker productivity results in company losses and increased costs to health care system

Employer Mitigations for All Heat-related Illnesses:

- Frequent short breaks in cool areas or rooms
- Access to water and/or electrolyte drinks through the day
- Use of a buddy system (not working alone)