Summer Heat Taking Its Toll

Heat is all the rage this July with many states broiling away under intense sunshine, day after day, week after week.

Each year an average of between 600 and 700 heat-related deaths occur in the United States. Hyperthermia, a situation where the body’s natural cooling ability is overwhelmed, is one of the leading causes of heat-related deaths. According to San Francisco University, during the period from 1998 through 2010, over 450 children have died as a result of being left in hot vehicles. In addition, there are dozens of other heat-related deaths or illnesses that occur each year at sports camps, band camps and in the occupational environment.

However, you do not necessarily need a well-advertised heat wave, record highs or 100-degree temperatures for life-threatening conditions.

Temperatures in an enclosed vehicle, a warehouse with poor ventilation or on a football field with full-sun exposure can be much higher than official area observations. These official sensors are in the open, but shielded from the sun above and reflection from below and may not be representative of how conditions really feel to the human body.

The meteorologists of the AccuWeather.com Forensics Department will utilize their expertise to determine if the conditions at the scene of the incident were higher than official observations in the region.

The forensic meteorologists at AccuWeather have the capability to reconstruct past weather conditions, including the components of not only the heat index, humidex or apparent temperature, but also a more representative index known as the AccuWeather.com RealFeel® temperature.

All of these indices give measure of the feel of the combination of the heat and humidity. However, the AccuWeather proprietary RealFeel temperature takes into account many additional atmospheric phenomena.

While archives of these indices are hard to come by, the AccuWeather.com Forensics Department can research the parameters that make up the indices and reconstruct their output as needed.

Our team of forensic meteorologists is there when you need them for a matter of simple preliminary research and consultation or for depositions and trials. Contact us at 814-235-8626 during normal business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Eastern, Monday through Friday. Or, leave a voice mail in confidence and one of our Forensic Meteorologists will get back to you as soon as possible. There is no fee for the initial phone consultation.