



Department of Public Works
Milwaukee Water Works

Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Director of Operations

Carrie M. Lewis
Superintendent of Water Works

For release July 10, 2008

Contact Cecilia Gilbert, DPW Communications Manager, (414) 286-2803

Chilling in Milwaukee -- Don't Open Fire Hydrants

It is dangerous and against the law to open fire hydrants without permission. Milwaukee city officials today warned of the hazards of illegally opening hydrants as hot temperatures are predicted for the next few days. City Public Works, Health, Fire, Police, and Milwaukee Public Schools offered alternative ways to cool off.

Illegally opening fire hydrants causes water pressure to drop, making it difficult to put out a fire. When untrained persons with the wrong tools open hydrants, the hydrants do not function properly and must be repaired. Only the Fire Department, the Milwaukee Water Works, and specially permitted projects are allowed to open hydrants.

To date this year, 10 hydrants have been opened illegally in Milwaukee. By this date in 2007, there had been 139 illegal hydrant openings, resulting in the waste of millions of gallons of treated water as it drained into sewers. Wasting the water is expensive to everyone and a waste of a precious resource.

Play with Water and You Could Get Burned -- Fire Hydrants are for fires, not for fun It's Dangerous

- Breaking open a hydrant makes it unusable to put out a fire
- Lowers water pressure and hampers firefighting
- Strong spray hazardous to children and motorists may not see them in the spray
- Spray obstructs the view of motorists and can cause accidents

It's a Crime -- \$1,000 fine or 30 days in jail for tampering with a hydrant

Report Tampering and Illegal Opening -- Call (414) 286-3710

Costly to all Water Users

- Hydrant open one hour = cost to city \$227
- Hydrant open four hours = cost to city \$883
- Damaged hydrant = \$850
- Broken hydrant = \$3500
- Loss of a precious resource, water
- Buildings are flooded = property damage

Alternatives for Keeping Cool

Cool Spots provide a place to cool off in a water spray on hot summer days. Cool Spot sprinklers are staffed by Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Community Recreation staff on selected school playgrounds.

Cool Spots are open on days when the temperature is predicted to be 85 degrees or hotter. The Cool Spots will be available June 23 to Aug. 15 (closed July 4) and will open as needed Monday-Friday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Auer Avenue School
2221 W. Auer Ave.

Carmen Park
7320 W. Carmen

Columbia School
1354 W. Columbia St.

Doerfler School
3014 W. Scott St.

Maple Tree School
6644 N. 107th

Martin Luther King, Jr. School
3275 N. MLK Jr. Blvd.

Starms Discovery School
2035 N. 25th St

21st St. School
2121 W. Hadley

Wheatley School
2442 N. 20th St.

Wading pools, for ages 8 and under, June 23-August 15:

Burnham and Burbank Monday - Friday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Enderis Park Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Holt, Merrill, Modrejewski, Ohio Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Or,

Cool off in a Milwaukee County pool or water park -- 24-hour Pool Hotline (414) 257-7230 or see www.county.milwaukee.gov/Pools9145.htm

Jump in Lake Michigan. Turn on a hose and sprinkler in your backyard and invite the neighbors to come over and cool off.

For more summer playground information, see www.milwaukeeerecreation.net/activity-guide/playgrounds.pdf

The Milwaukee Health Department reminds people to keep cool and use common sense during extended periods of hot weather. Persons at greatest risk for heat-related illness are infants and very young children, persons over 65 years of age, persons who are overweight or obese, and persons who take certain medications including drugs for mental health. Drink plenty of fluids, wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen, pace yourself, stay cool indoors, and schedule outdoor activities carefully. Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. In the hot sun, a wide-brimmed hat will provide shade and keep your head cool. Exposure to air conditioning for even a few hours a day will reduce the risk for heat-related illness. Consider visiting a shopping mall or public library for a few hours. Drink cool, non-alcoholic beverages. For information about heat-related medical conditions, see www.milwaukee.gov/health