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News

News releases and statements

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Thousands more emergency calls during hottest week of the year

21 June 2017

The sweltering conditions in the capital have caused a 40 per cent increase in 999 calls for ambulances.

Patients calling for non-emergencies are likely to wait four hours for an ambulance as the service faces unprecedented demand. On Monday (19 June) London Ambulance Service call takers answered 6,613 emergency calls, compared to 4,695 the week before (an increase of 41 per cent) and this is expected to continue while the heatwave lasts. The most common complaints are people fainting, collapsing and becoming unconscious.

Peter McKenna, Deputy Director of Operations, said: "Our crews are extremely busy. On Monday we attended twenty per cent more seriously ill and injured patients than the same day last week and we've also been involved in a number of high profile major incidents."

Medical Director, Dr Fenella Wrigley, added: "We see an increase in calls because people can forget to stay hydrated and the heat can exacerbate heart and breathing conditions." We are getting calls from people who do not need an ambulance – for minor sunburn, heat rash, hay fever. These can be dealt with by a pharmacist. If you call us for something minor, you may experience a long wait."

With mercury rising to above 30 degrees this week, paramedics have attended 300 more category A calls – which are the most serious – compared to the same day last week. Ambulance chiefs are warning people to only call for life-threatening or serious emergencies. The exceptionally high demand on ambulances services is expected to continue for the rest of the week.

Fenella added: "Older people, the very young and people with pre-existing conditions are more at risk so please check on friends, family members and neighbours who are vulnerable. We urge everyone out enjoying the sunshine to drink plenty of water, stay in the shade to keep cool, cover up, carry any essential medication with them and drink alcohol in moderation."

London Ambulance Service is urging those who need treatment for a minor condition to consider other healthcare options, such as calling NHS 111 or visiting a minor injuries unit, NHS walk-in centre or local pharmacist. Anyone needing non-emergency treatment at hospital should get a lift from a friend or relative or take a taxi.

Top tips

- During high temperatures the number of emergency calls for people thought to be unconscious increases. Please check if someone needs medical attention before calling 999 by speaking to them and checking if they are breathing
- Make sure you keep hydrated throughout the day and avoid drinking alcohol in the sun
- Older people, babies and young children and those with pre-existing medical conditions are more likely to be affected by the heat
- Try to keep cool by staying in the shade, keeping covered up, wearing a hat and applying lots of sun cream
- Patients with chronic respiratory conditions, such as asthma and bronchitis, should carry their prescribed medication
- Stay in the shade during the hottest part of day, usually between 11am and 3pm
- For less serious illnesses and injuries consider other healthcare providers in the community such as your local pharmacy or walk in centre.

Ends

Paying tribute to Eric Roberts, Unison Branch Secretary

Two hundred new ambulance vehicles for London

Paramedics half-century of saving lives in London

Statement - Road traffic collision on Ladbroke Grove

Statement - Croydon tram incident

London Ambulance Service medics attacked with fireworks

Remember Remember stay safe this November

TV documentary prompts pizza praise

Service joins 100 black taxis on the Children's Magical Taxi Tour

Annual public meeting Tuesday 27 September

London Ambulance offers viewers unprecedented access in new TV series

Lennard Road - Road Traffic Collision, 31 August 2016

Over 1000 people treated at Notting Hill Carnival

Fire in Harrow

Hundreds more clinical staff on the frontline but not enough people from BME backgrounds

Paramedics praise five year old boy for helping to save his nan's life

Hundreds more emergency calls in London because of hot weather

Paramedic features in latest Historic England exhibition

Thief steals London Ambulance Service bike

Remembering 7 July 2005

Chief Executive speaks at launch of Living on the Edge report

Eat, Drink and Be Safe as Euro 2016 kicks off

Paramedic honoured at Buckingham Palace

Incident in Russell Square, WC1

Smartphone app alert helps volunteer first aiders save a life

Ealing butcher praises London Ambulance Service medics for excellent care

Fire in Shepherds Bush

Increase in assaults on London Ambulance Service staff

Hero ambulance medic stops moped muggers in their tracks

London Ambulance Service gets ready for Notting Hill Carnival

Medic's bright idea makes ambulance crews even more accessible to blind patients

Incident at London City Airport

Incident at London City Airport

London Ambulance Service gears up for this weekend's Mad Friday

Skip the dreaded tinsel-itis and have your medication ready this Christmas

Ten years in the hot zone

Busiest night ever predicted for London Ambulance Service this New Year

Technical issues in our control room

London Ambulance medic honoured with Queen's Ambulance Service Medal

Don't get caught out in the cold, warns London Ambulance Service

Medics to provide life-saving support to refugee camps

Statement on incident in Southend Arterial Road

Prince Harry visits London Ambulance Service to launch Time to Talk Day

Innovator behind London's cycle paramedics praised at Healthcare Heroes exhibition

Fate brings man together with paramedic who helped save his life

Leadership team strengthened with two new non-executive directors

London Ambulance Service responds to Storm Doris

Card launched to improve safety of expectant mothers

Banker thanks life savers with charity run

New spit kits issued to track down offenders who spit at London's life savers

Prince William visits ambulance staff who treated patients in Westminster attack

Stock up on medication ahead of the long weekend, warns ambulance service

Statement following an incident on Warburton Road, E8.

London Ambulance Service appoints new Chief Executive

London Ambulance Service medic honoured at Buckingham Palace

Firefighter grants paramedic a final goodbye with fiancée

Paramedic who apprehended a violent criminal is awarded police commendation

Statement on the incident at London Bridge

Statement on the incident at Seven Sisters Road

[Thousands more emergency calls during hottest week of the year](#)

Investigation into 999 computer system outage on New Year's Day 2017

London Ambulance Service leads the way at Pride in London

Life-saving defibrillators rolled out across London thanks to emergency services partnership

Paramedic mugged by moped gang in London's West End

London Ambulance Service marks 100,000 followers milestone

We reveal the top London boroughs for alcohol-related incidents

Ambulance crews prepare for Notting Hill Carnival

Statement on the incident at Parsons Green

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