

# Deadly heat dome to sit over Eastern half of the US through Sunday

Kevin Reed  
19 June 2024

*Are you being affected by the high temperatures at your workplace? We want to hear from you. Fill out the form at the bottom of this article to tell us what conditions are like. All submissions will remain anonymous.*

Record and deadly temperatures near or above 100 °F (37.7 °C) are continuing for a third day across the Midwest and Northeast as an unusually large and persistent atmospheric heat dome sits over more than half the US, from the Great Plains to Maine.

As of Tuesday, more than 77 million people were under heat advisory warnings, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). Temperatures are expected to increase through Sunday evening and hit triple digits. The weather service is advising people to stay indoors and limit physical activities.

Marc Chanard of the NWS told the *Wall Street Journal*:

This heat wave is already ongoing but is really going to ramp up over the next few days. Multiple days in the high 90s and low 100s can really take its toll, especially when things don't seem to be cooling much at night.

The NWS has warned residents in Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston and New York City that they will face days of extreme and record-breaking temperatures as well as power outages due to the prolonged heat wave.

On Monday, Chicago broke its daily record temperature, hitting 97 °F (36 °C). Forecasters expect Pittsburgh to hit three straight days of temperatures of 95 degrees beginning Wednesday. Hartford,

Connecticut, is expected to tie a record of 95 degrees on Wednesday and 97 degrees on Thursday. Albany, New York, is expected to hit a record 97 degrees on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, *Scientific American* shared an unusual fact: “This Wednesday it will be hotter in Burlington, Vermont, than in Miami—by a whopping 10 degrees Fahrenheit (5.5 degrees Celsius).” *Scientific American* said that areas in northern New England “could see the warmest temperatures in 30 years.”

Heat domes are not new. A high pressure area that traps hot air below it usually forms in the South and Southwest. However, they are rarely seen in the Northeast in mid-June. The present system began earlier in the week over the Carolinas and then expanded west and north from Chicago to New England.

Meanwhile, another heat dome is expected in the Phoenix area on Thursday and Friday, when the highs could reach 114 °F (45.5 °C) and 116 °F (46.6 °C), respectively, according to the NWS.

Extreme heat has deadly consequences for the public. According to an analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data by the Associated Press, 2,300 people died from excessive heat in the US last summer, the highest number in 45 years.

At the same time, more than two dozen doctors, public health experts and meteorologists told AP that last year's official death toll was only a fraction of the real number who died. The heat wave of 2023 was relentless, and tens of thousands of ambulances were dispatched after people collapsed from the temperatures.

Last year saw the most heat waves in the US since 1936, and, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2023 was the

worst on record. Between mid-June and mid-October, for example, 40 percent of Miami's daily heat index records were broken.

In Houston, temperatures at William Hobby Airport broke daily records 43 times and nighttime lows set records for heat 57 times, according to meteorologists. People's bodies did not have enough time to cool down. For the public, the consequences of the sustained highs included the fact that the average rate of emergency room visits for heat illness in the summer of 2023 doubled that of the previous five summers.

This year, with heat records already broken in May, the June heat dome means the death toll will likely be much higher than in 2023.

According to Texas A&M climate scientist Andrew Dessler, people who die from the heat fall into two categories: people who work outside and people who cannot air condition their homes. As Dessler told PBS News at the end of May, "It's really quite, quite grim."

Others who are at risk during extreme heat include older people, very young children, people with certain health conditions and the homeless.

Conditions in manufacturing facilities across the impacted area have become unbearable, as most do not have any climate control equipment. Air conditioning is installed in factories only when temperatures and humidity adversely affect production processes, the product or raw materials. As with the response of the capitalist class to the pandemic, production will continue regardless of the harm to the health and safety of workers.

A worker at a Dana auto parts plant in Pottstown, Pennsylvania sent a photo to the *World Socialist Web Site* showing that the temperature inside his plant had hit 112 °F (44.4 °C).

*Scientific American* wrote:

Experts caution that people should make sure they stay hydrated by drinking water even before they feel thirsty. Time outdoors should be limited with plenty of rest breaks, ideally in a place with air-conditioning. People are also urged to check on family members, friends and neighbors who might be in the highest-risk groups, particularly if they don't have air-conditioning.

Little or nothing is being done by US government agencies to prepare the public for the catastrophic consequences of increasingly intense heat waves or their impact when they occur. Like previous administrations, the Biden White House has refused to make Federal Emergency Management Agency aid available during heat waves, even though they are responsible for thousands of deaths.

Climate experts believe that exposure to dangerous heat levels is bound up with global warming, and heat domes are expected to become more frequent and stronger in the future.

Kristina Dahl, a principal climate scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said in a statement:

Fossil fuel-driven climate change has increased the frequency and severity of extreme-heat events over the last half century. Last summer was the hottest on record, and this summer is shaping up to give 2023 a run for its money. Until we phase out fossil fuels, we can expect our summers to continue getting hotter and hotter and more dangerous and deadly.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**