

Disaster Planning Guide

A Guide to Help Idahoans Plan for Catastrophic Natural Disaster Events

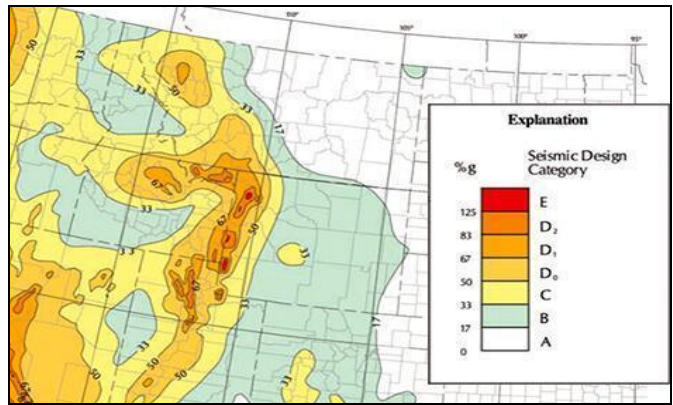
The Intermountain Fair Housing Council (IFHC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure open and inclusive housing for all persons without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, a source of income, or disability. The IFHC attempts to eradicate discrimination through education on the fair housing laws, housing information and referral, housing counseling, and assistance with mediating and or filing fair housing complaints, among other things. The IFHC also provides education and outreach on fair housing laws and practices to housing providers and others.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Earthquakes	2
Preparing for an Earthquake	2
Surviving an Earthquake:	2
Earthquake Safety for People with Disabilities	2
Recovering from an Earthquake	3
Wind Events	4
What To Do During a Tornado Advisory or Extreme Wind Advisory	4
Surviving a Tornado or Extreme Wind Event	4
Immediately After a Tornado or Major Wind Event	5
Severe Winter Weather	6
Surviving Ongoing Severe Winter Weather	6
Flooding	7
When Flash Flooding is Forecasted	7
What to Do In a Flood Emergency	7
Wildfire/Smoke Exposure	8
Preparing for Possible Evacuation	8
When Evacuation is Ordered	9
After You Have Safely Evacuated	9
Protecting Yourself from Wildfire Smoke	9
Extreme Heat	10
Preparing for Extreme Heat	10
During an Extreme Heat Event	10

Earthquakes

Idaho is the fifth-most earthquake-prone state after California, Alaska, Nevada, and Utah. Though Idaho earthquakes do not typically exceed a magnitude 3, we have experienced many significant earthquake events in the past and should plan to again in the future. Community members, tenants and homeowners stand the best chance of surviving an earthquake when precautionary steps are taken ahead of time.



Preparing for an Earthquake

1. Stock up on emergency supplies that can be used after an earthquake. These supplies should include a first aid kit, emergency supply kits, medications, diapers, hygiene products, extra water, and food. Store at least a three-day supply for you, your family, and any pets/service animals.
2. You should also make a list of important information (like telephone numbers of emergency contacts, insurance information, and important medical information) and gather any important documents (like medical documents, birth certificates, and passports). Store these items in a secure location like a fireproof or waterproof safe so that you know exactly where they are if you should need them. Make sure you have emergency cash saved in the safe as well.
3. Do not hang heavy mirrors or pictures above beds, chairs, and other places where you sit or sleep. Find other places for heavy wall art and anchor these items with wire through eye screws bolted into wall studs. Or place screws on both sides, top, and bottom of the frame and screw these into the studs.
4. Check your chimney or roof for loose tiles and bricks that could fall on you or your neighbors during an earthquake. Ask your landlord to repair loose tiles or bricks, as needed.

Surviving an Earthquake:

If you are in your home when an earthquake starts, drop to the ground and crawl beneath a desk or other table and cover your head and neck. If you have a pet/service animal with you, and they can be handled, drop to the ground with your animal. Hold on to the leg of the desk or table if you can. If your animal struggles to get away or becomes aggressive, let them run away and find safety on their own. Your safety should always come first, and animals often prefer to find their own safe spot. **Do not flee out of your home and into the street during an earthquake.** This can make you vulnerable to falling debris from buildings, trees, power lines, etc.

Earthquake Safety for People with Disabilities

People with mobility problems:

- If you are in a recliner or bed: Lie on your stomach and cover your head and neck with your arms or a pillow until the shaking stops.

- If you use a cane: Drop, Cover, and Hold On or sit on a chair or in a bed and cover your head and neck with both hands. Keep your cane nearby.
- If you use a wheelchair or walker: Lock your wheels. If using a walker, carefully get as low as possible.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Prior to an earthquake, identify and test multiple ways to receive warnings and evacuation information.

People who are blind or have low vision:

- Earthquakes can cause items to fall and furniture to shift. Regular sensory clues may not be available. Move with caution.

People with developmental/cognitive/intellectual disabilities:

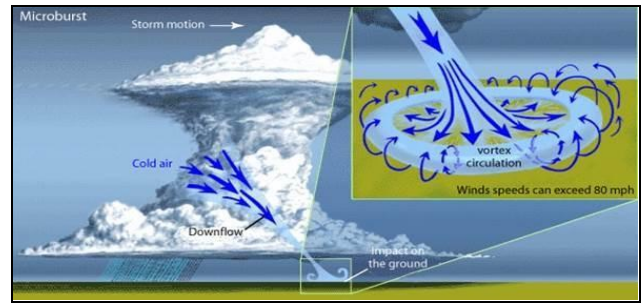
- If you have difficulty understanding, remembering, or learning, keep a simple list of what to do and important information with you and in your kits. Practice your plan.
- If you use an alphabet board, speech-generating device, or mobile device with an app to speak or communicate, include these in your planning.

Recovering from an Earthquake

1. If your home is no longer structurally sound, leave immediately! Do not stay inside to search for pets/service animals or valuables. **Call 911 for help.**
2. Check yourself and others (including animals) for signs of injury. **Call 911 if needed.**
3. Put out small fires in your home or neighborhood. **Call 911 if needed.**
4. Prepare for aftershocks - these can last for days or weeks.
5. Put on shoes before investigating your home in case of broken glass or debris.
6. Shut off the main gas valve if you suspect a leak because of broken pipes or odor. Do not light your stove or use gas furnaces until you are sure there has been no leak.
7. Stay away from downed power lines or any objects that are in contact with them.
8. Shut off power at the control box if there is any danger to house wiring.
9. Throw out food from open containers that are near shattered glass.
10. Clean up any spilled medicines, drugs, or other harmful materials such as bleach.
11. Beware that items may tumble off shelves when you open doors of closets and cupboards.
12. **Make sure that there are no immediate hazards in your own home before leaving to check on friends or neighbors!**

Wind Events

Idaho ranks 43rd in the nation for frequency of tornadoes, with an average of only one or two per year. However, downbursts, macrobursts and microbursts are much more common in the state and can be just as dangerous. Microbursts usually last for about five minutes and can cause wind speeds of more than 160 mph.



What To Do During a Tornado Advisory or Extreme Wind Advisory

1. Plan where you are going to go if needed. A cellar or basement is ideal if one is accessible to you, otherwise head to a bathroom, hallway or closet without any windows. Try to put as many walls between you and the storm as possible.
2. Mobile homes are not safe in a tornado, nor are sheds, outbuildings, or cars. Find an anchored structure in which to ride out the storm.
3. Large buildings with wide-span roofs may collapse if a tornado hits. Do not seek shelter in a church, gymnasium, or auditorium. Try to find a smaller room if you can.
4. Keep your pets/service animals nearby. Don't let them play for long outside in case you need to get them to your designated safe place at a moment's notice.
5. Find a bicycle or motorcycle helmet to put in your safe room as well as a sturdy pair of shoes. Most injuries during tornadoes or microbursts are due to flying debris, so a helmet could literally save your life! Keep a pair of shoes with you in case you need to navigate broken glass or other hazards afterwards.
6. If you use a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system, or other equipment that is power-dependent - call your power company before a power outage threatens. Many power companies maintain maps and lists of the locations of customers who are power-dependent in case of an emergency and offer advice about setting up alternate power sources in case of an emergency. Consider buying a generator that can charge your devices if the power doesn't return.
7. Keep the pathway to the safe room clear of furniture and other obstacles so it can be reached quickly and easily by everyone, including pets/service animals, children, or people with mobility impairments.
8. Move life-saving equipment to your safe room or as far away from windows as you can.
9. Listen to local radio or TV for weather updates.
10. Keep an eye on the changing weather. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:
 - A dark or green-colored sky
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud
 - Large hail
 - A loud roar that sounds like a freight train

Surviving a Tornado or Extreme Wind Event

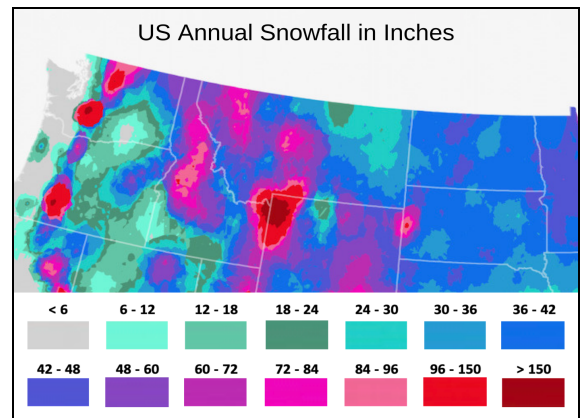
1. Get to your safe room as quickly as possible. If you cannot find your pets/service animal, do not go and search for them. As with other disaster events, animals sometimes prefer to find their own hiding places.
2. For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
3. Leave the windows alone when a tornado is coming. It's a myth that tornadoes cause houses to explode due to changes of air pressure.
4. If you can see a tornado, seek shelter immediately. Do not watch to see which direction it is moving in. A tornado is deceptive. It may appear to be standing still but is, in fact, moving toward you.
5. Be mindful of workmates, family or friends who may be hearing impaired or those who may not hear tornado warnings because they are sleeping, watching TV, or listening to music.
6. Do not pull a fire alarm during a tornado warning unless there is a fire. Otherwise, people may flee a relatively safe building and expose themselves to blowing debris.

Immediately After a Tornado or Major Wind Event

1. If you are trapped, attract attention to yourself. Send a text, bang on a wall or pipe, or use a whistle to help rescuers find you.
2. Use a cloth or mask to protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from dust.
3. If your home is no longer structurally sound, leave immediately! Do not stay inside to search for pets/service animals or valuables. **Call 911 for help.**
4. Check yourself and others (including animals) for signs of injury. **Call 911 if needed.**
 - a. Learn more about proper [wound care after a disaster](#).
5. Put out small fires in your home or neighborhood. **Call 911 if needed.**
6. If you are away from home when a storm hits, you may need to check with local authorities to learn if it is safe to enter your community or neighborhood. Follow the advice of your local authorities. If doors or windows have been cordoned off with yellow tape to indicate damage, do not cut or walk past the tape unless local authorities advise that it is safe to do so. If a structure bears a color-coded sign, do not enter it until you get official information about what the sign means and advice about the safety of entering.
7. Put on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes before investigating any damage on your own. Use battery-powered flashlights if the power is out and do not use candles in case of a gas leak.
8. Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window, and get everyone out of the building quickly. From a safe distance, call 911. Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Avoid damaged buildings. Keep all your animals under your direct control.
9. Take pictures of damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.

Severe Winter Weather

The number of blizzards in the U.S. has increased by almost a factor of four since the mid-20th century and, although Idaho does not regularly experience many “blizzards,” many Idaho towns are not properly prepared for major winter weather events. Idaho currently ranks 18th in the nation for annual snowfall. During extreme winter events the roads may shut down, stores can sell out of life saving resources, and many people can become trapped inside their homes for long periods.

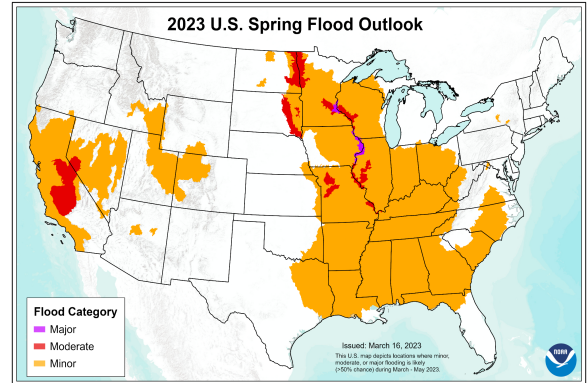


Surviving Ongoing Severe Winter Weather

1. Stay warm and indoors as much as possible to prevent frostbite and hypothermia.
2. Before the winter season begins, make sure you can heat your home safely. Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Talk to your landlord if you are concerned about how your home is weatherproofed.
3. Consider using an indoor thermometer or thermostat to monitor the temperature inside.
4. Plan to check on loved ones and neighbors to make sure they are staying warm. This is especially important for older adults, folks with disabilities, and babies.
5. If you must go outside, plan to dress properly. Keep your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes covered in warm, dry clothing. These areas are the first to be at risk for frostbite. Wear layers of loose clothing, a coat, hat, mittens, and water-resistant boots. Use a scarf to cover your face and mouth.
6. Know where you will go if your home becomes too cold. You could go to a friend’s house, a public library, or a warming center. **For help locating an Idaho warming center near you:** text 898211 or call 2-1-1 or 800-926-2588 to get information from a community resource specialist.
7. Get free emergency alerts through the [Idaho State Alert and Warning System](https://public.alertsense.com/SignUp/PublicUser.aspx?regionid=1135). Plan to monitor local weather and news.
<https://public.alertsense.com/SignUp/PublicUser.aspx?regionid=1135>
8. Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone and any other life saving devices that you rely on as well as a battery-powered radio to use during a power outage. Consider buying a generator that can charge your devices if the power is out.
9. You may lose access to drinking water. Set aside at least one gallon of drinking water per person per day and learn how to keep pipes from freezing:
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storage/frozen-pipes.html>
10. Consider having emergency supplies in your vehicle as well, such as a blanket, warm clothing, a first aid kit, and boots.
11. Stock up a 1-month supply of needed medications and medical supplies. Consider keeping a list of your medications and dosages on a small card to carry with you.

Flooding

Idaho flood potential is typically dependent on the winter snowpack. As higher elevation snow melts, smaller creeks and streams can overflow even when large rivers do not. This can affect roads or structures. Forecasters can often anticipate where a flood will happen before it occurs. Flash floods, on the other hand, happen in mere minutes and sometimes without any sign of rain. In 2023, above-normal snowpacks in the Great Basin (including eastern Idaho) have increased flooding potential in the long term.



When Flash Flooding is Forecasted

When a flash flood is forecasted, first review the [Flood Safety Checklist](#). Flash floods can occur at any time because of a heavy downpour, storm surge, coastal storm, snow, or overflow from a local dam or other waterway. They can quickly become life-threatening, so it's important to pay attention to any alerts from the National Weather Service about your area:

<https://www.weather.gov/enterprise/sw-alerts-text-1b>

What to Do In a Flood Emergency

If a flood warning turns into a [flood emergency](#), flooding has reached a point where it can cause catastrophic damage. In that situation, you should not travel if you're in a safe, high-ground location unless your area is being ordered to evacuate. Stay off bridges over water as water can rise and take out bridges without warning. If you are in a car, never attempt to drive through high water even if you think you can make it through. Just one foot of water is enough to lift a car off the ground. If your vehicle gets stuck in moving water, stay inside. If water starts to rise inside, then get out onto the roof.

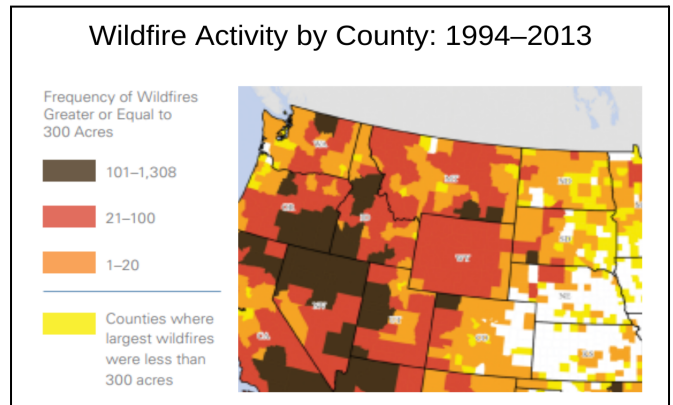
- Don't use electricity in a home that's flooded or leave it on if you're evacuating. If water touches live electrical outlets, someone could be electrocuted, or it could cause a fire.
- Make sure to have a [Weather Emergency Kit](#) packed and ready to go ahead of time.
- Don't leave valuables or irreplaceable furniture on the lower levels of your house. Bring them upstairs whether you're evacuating or not.
- Wear protective clothing if you need to brave the flood at all. Waders or tall rubber rain boots are great if you have them. If you must move any debris, make sure you're wearing gloves.
- Your home might be unlivable for a period after a flood. How to get rid of mold and repair your home after a flood: <https://twinfallscounty.net/des/flooding/>

Understand the alerts you may receive:

- A *watch* means **be prepared**
 - A *warning* means **take action**
- Learn More: <https://www.fema.gov/locations/idaho>

Wildfire/Smoke Exposure

Fires have always been a part of Idaho's forests, whether natural or human-caused. In fact, fire historically played an important role in maintaining forest health, particularly in dry pine-type forests and high elevation forests. Learn how to help [prevent wildfires](#) in your area and be proactive in protecting your community by learning how to make your home as [firewise](#) as possible before a fire ever starts.



Preparing for Possible Evacuation

1. Have your [Emergency Supply Kit/Evacuation Bag](#) ready to go
2. Ensure a [Wildfire Action Plan](#) is prepared ahead of time
3. Refer to the [Wildfire Safety Checklist for Older Adults](#) if necessary
4. Consider evacuating early if you are pregnant, have a mobility impairment, [respiratory condition](#) or other disability that could be complicated by smoke exposure. If you are pregnant, review the signs of early labor as it could be affected by smoke exposure.
5. Make sure you know your community's emergency response plan and have a plan on where to go when it is time to evacuate, and the best routes for leaving your location. Look up your county or local municipality's evacuation plan.
6. Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked. Remove flammable window shades, curtains, and close metal shutters. Remove lightweight curtains.
7. Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
8. Shut off gas at the meter; turn off pilot lights.
9. Leave interior and exterior lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions but shut off the air conditioning.
10. Gather up flammable items from the exterior of your house or building and bring them inside (patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, trash cans, etc.). These can also be placed in a pool if one is nearby.
11. Turn off propane tanks. Move propane BBQ appliances away from any structures.
12. Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters. Fill water buckets and place them around the house. Don't leave sprinklers on or water running as they can affect critical water pressure.
13. Back your car into the driveway with your vehicle loaded and all doors and windows closed. Carry your car keys with you so you do not have to look for them if an immediate evacuation is ordered.
14. Have a ladder available and place it at the corner of the house for firefighters to quickly access your roof. Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
15. Patrol your property and monitor the fire situation. Don't wait for an evacuation order if you feel threatened.
16. Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave.
17. Keep animals nearby so they do not seek their own shelter far away from you.

When Evacuation is Ordered

1. Know that danger in your area is current or imminent and you should evacuate immediately. **If you choose to ignore the evacuation, you must understand that emergency services may not be available to assist you further. This will be the last notice that you receive.**
2. Do not delay leaving to gather any belongings or make efforts to protect your home.
3. Tune in to the local radio station or monitor social media for instructions.
4. Obey orders of law enforcement and fire agency officials.
5. Follow the designated evacuation routes. Your normal route may not be the safest.
6. Drive with your headlights on for visibility and safety.
7. Drive calmly, obey the rules of the road and pay special attention to emergency vehicles.
8. Do not block access to roadways for emergency vehicles or other evacuees.
9. Do not abandon vehicles on the roadway.

After You Have Safely Evacuated

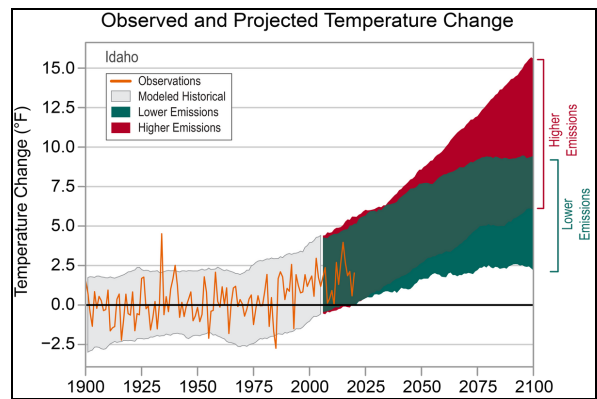
1. Locate and check in at an [Emergency Shelter Near You](#) whether you plan to stay there or not, your checking in will help others know you are safe and will save critical rescue services from looking for you. If needed, take pets to a Pet Evacuation Center except service animals. Locate an evacuation center near you:
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.htm>
!
2. **DO NOT call 9-1-1 for non-emergencies.**
3. Do not attempt to re-enter the fire area until it is declared safe by law enforcement.
4. Monitor weather alerts. Flash floods are a very real and potentially deadly hazard after a wildfire, particularly because of rain falling over a burned area upstream of your location. Stay away from burned forests, storm channels, and natural drainages.
5. Before returning home consult the [Post-Wildfire Recovery Checklist](#)

Protecting Yourself from Wildfire Smoke

1. Check local air quality reports. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Find out if your community provides reports about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#). Know that smoke can remain in both indoor and outdoor air days after wildfires.
2. Pay attention to any health symptoms if you have [asthma](#), [COPD](#), [heart disease](#), or are [pregnant](#). Get medical help if you need it.
3. [Children](#) are more likely to be affected by health threats from smoke. Children's airways are still developing, and they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. Remember that dust masks, surgical masks, bandanas and breathing through a wet cloth will not protect you or your child from smoke and that N95 respirator masks are not made to fit children and may not protect them at all.

Extreme Heat

Temperatures in Idaho have risen almost 2°F since the start of the 20th century. As periods of extreme heat in the summers continue to be exacerbated by climate change, watch for signs of heat-related illnesses and ways to respond. If you are sick and need medical attention, contact your healthcare provider for advice and shelter in place if you can. If you are experiencing a medical emergency call 9-1-1.



Preparing for Extreme Heat

1. Learn to [recognize the signs of heat illness](#).
2. Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature or prevent heat-related illnesses. Install window air conditioners and insulate the area around them.
3. Identify places in your community where you can go to get cool such as libraries, grocery stores, and shopping malls or contact your local health department to find a cooling center in your area. **Call 2-1-1 to find a cooling center near you.**
4. Cover windows with drapes or shades. Weather-strip doors and windows. Use window reflectors specifically designed to reflect heat back outside. Add insulation to keep the heat out.
5. If you are unable to afford your cooling costs, weatherization or energy-related home repairs, contact the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) for help.

During an Extreme Heat Event

1. If air conditioning is not available in your home, go to a cooling center.
2. Take cool showers or baths.
3. Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
4. Use your oven less to help reduce the temperature in your home.
5. If you're outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
6. Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
7. Avoid high-energy activities or work outdoors, during midday heat, if possible.
8. Check on family members, friends, people with disabilities, seniors, and neighbors.
9. Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
10. Never leave people or pets/service animals in a closed car on a warm day. If animals are outside, make sure they have plenty of cool water and access to comfortable shade. Asphalt and dark pavement can be very hot to your animals' feet.

If you have been discriminated in housing based on any of the seven protected classes, contact the Intermountain Fair Housing Council today

- Phone: 208-383-0695 and 1-800-717-0695 TTY
- Email: contact@ifhcidaho.org
- Address: 4696 W Overland Rd #140, Boise, ID 83705
- Website: ifhcidaho.org