

## **Fort Bend County Officials Highlight Summer Safety Tips**

**(FORT BEND, TX)** - Fort Bend County Judge KP George along with Fort Bend County Sheriff Eric Fagan, Office of Emergency Management Manager Mark Flathouse, Interim Chief of Emergency Medical Services Brian Petrilla, the Department of Social Services Manager Najat Elsayed, Health and Human Services Communications Director Kaila Williams, and Animal Services Renee McAnally held a Summer Safety press conference today.

The press conference, held at the recently opened Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center, allowed county officials to provide Fort Bend County residents with helpful resources and tips they can use to stay safe and enjoy their summer as temperatures continue to rise.

“The key message that we hope everyone takes away from the information that we have shared today is to be safe! Take precautions as the weather continues to heat up. Check on loved ones and neighbors,” said KP George.

Fort Bend County Sheriff Eric Fagan asks parents to be vigilant in monitoring their children’s activities and response to emergencies since they are out of school for the summer. Helpful tips include watching your children’s social media interactions and making sure they aren’t being asked to physically meet with unknown persons, secure your home’s doors and windows and tell your children not to open doors for strangers, even those who claim to be utility providers unless you have set an appointment and are expecting them.

Additionally, Sheriff Fagan asked that parents take precautions to not leave children in vehicles. Temperatures can get as high as 120-150 degrees within minutes, causing brain damage and death. One suggestion Sheriff Fagan gave was to place color-coded tape on your dashboard as a reminder to check your vehicle before exiting.

Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management Manager and Fire Marshal Mark Flathouse reiterated that the county’s Burn Ban was still in place and outdoor open burning is prohibited. Since July 1, Fort Bend County Emergency crews have responded to 46 fires in the area. As temperatures continue to rise, Flathouse announced that the county expects to set up multiple cooling centers throughout the county to help provide relief from the heat and reminded residents to check the Office of Emergency Management and County Judge’s social media pages for updates on the locations.

Interim EMS Chief Brian Petrilla focused on giving water safety tips to prevent drowning incidents. He emphasized teaching children to swim with a partner and urged parents to actively supervise children around water, noting that Fort Bend Emergency Medical Services has responded to eight drownings this year.

Additionally, Chief Petrilla spoke on how to recognize the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Signs of heat exhaustion include dizziness, headache, excessive sweating, nausea, vomiting, pale, and clammy skin. Signs of heat stroke include hot dry skin, confusion, disorientation, slurred speech, and high body temperature. He advised residents to call 911 immediately if they experience these symptoms.

Health and Human Services Communications Director Kaila Williams advised residents to exercise COVID precautions as the number of confirmed COVID cases reported in Fort Bend County increased roughly by 2,000 cases from last week. Residents who are in need of COVID testing and immunization are encouraged to call 832-471-1373.

Renee McAnally with Fort Bend Animal Services recommends that pet owners leave their pets at home when running errands, noting that temperatures can rise to 150 degrees within minutes in a car even with the windows down, potentially placing your pet in harm's way and could result in death. Additional tips for pet owners, include keeping their pets hydrated when they are left alone and watching for signs of heat exhaustion which can lead to heat stroke. If your pet begins to pant heavily, has labored breathing, becomes lethargic and their gums turn pink, she urged residents to contact a veterinarian immediately because the dog might be in heat distress.

Najat Elsayed from Fort Bend County Social Services shared information on how residents facing financial hardship can receive short-term assistance to help with utility bills, rent, mortgage, medication, or food needs. She noted that additional assistance is available for the homeless population, victims of crime, and the elderly, noting that emergency shelter, food assistance, and case management services are available. Residents can call Social Services at 281-238-3502 or 281-403-8050.

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