

Spain: Heat strokes and dehydration deaths soared in summer of 2022, the hottest year on record

June 27 2023, by Ciarán Giles



Children cool off at an urban beach at Madrid Rio park in Madrid, Spain, Monday, June 26, 2023. Spain sweltered in its first official heat wave of the year on Monday as the government announced a new agency to investigate and alleviate the effects of extreme temperatures on human health. Credit: AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

Deaths in Spain from heat stroke and dehydration in the hottest months of 2022—the hottest year on record—jumped by 88% compared to the same period in 2021, the National Statistics Institute said Tuesday.

The Institute said 122 people died of [heat stroke](#) and 233 of dehydration between May and August last year when temperatures soared in a succession of [heat waves](#). A total of 189 people died from the two conditions in 2021.

The data came as Spain sizzled in its first official heat wave of the year, with the state weather agency, AEMET, predicting temperatures to hit 44 degrees Celsius (111 degrees Fahrenheit) in much of the country during a hot spell expected to last until Thursday.

Officials in southern Spain said Monday that a 47-year-old agricultural worker had died from heat stroke, the first on record in Spain this year.

The weather agency noted that heat waves have become more common during the month of June over the last 12 years.

On Monday, the government announced a new department to investigate and alleviate the effects of extreme temperatures on [human health](#).

Ecological Transition Minister Teresa Ribera said the country's rising temperatures put vulnerable populations at risk, and more work is needed to understand how to prepare for longer, hotter summers.



Children cool off at an urban beach at Madrid Rio park in Madrid, Spain, Monday, June 26, 2023. Spain sweltered in its first official heat wave of the year on Monday as the government announced a new agency to investigate and alleviate the effects of extreme temperatures on human health. Credit: AP Photo/Manu Fernandez



A man cools off at an urban beach at Madrid Rio park in Madrid, Spain, Monday, June 26, 2023. Spain sweltered in its first official heat wave of the year on Monday as the government announced a new agency to investigate and alleviate the effects of extreme temperatures on human health. Credit: AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

The statistics institute said the total number of deaths in the May-August period last year were 157,580, 21% more than in 2019, the last comparable year before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The institute said excess heat increased deaths especially among people over 75 years of age and with prior health ailments such as [lung disease](#), diabetes and high blood pressure.

Spain has banned outdoor work during periods of extreme heat after the death of a municipal worker in Madrid last summer and set legal maximum and minimum temperatures for workplaces.

Last year was Spain's hottest ever, and spring 2023 was also declared the hottest on record. The Iberian Peninsula is currently the driest territory in Europe as a prolonged drought extends into summer.

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