

# Human Health Impacts of Global Warming on Tennessee



Around the world, global warming threatens irreversible damage not only to the environment but to human health and well being. And Tennessee will be no exception. A recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found global warming could harm Tennessee in many ways, including increasing risk of heat stress, heat stroke or hyperthermia, straining municipal water supplies and disrupting infrastructure and residential neighborhoods.

Climate-Related Possible Impacts	Health	Community Impact	Human Welfare
Heat Waves	✓	✓	✓
Drought		✓	
Tropical Storms	✓	✓	✓
Sea Level Rise		✓	✓

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research Final Report, Synthesis and Assessment Product, (SAP 4.6) July 2008.

According to the EPA, the impacts of global warming on Tennessee could include:

**Intense heat waves:**

- Increasing heat stress and heat stroke or hyperthermia.
- Increasing demand for energy.
- Greater physical discomfort.
- Limiting outdoor activities and recreation.

**Drought:**

- Straining municipal water supplies.
- Damaging crops and lowering farm productivity.

**Hurricane and storm surge:**

- Injuries from flying debris and drowning.
- Increased exposure to contaminated flood waters and to mold and mildew.
- Exposure to carbon monoxide poisoning from portable generators.
- Disruption of infrastructure, including levee systems, river channels, bridges, and highway systems.
- Disruption of residential neighborhoods.
- Increased flood and wind damage.

In order to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that industrialized nations like the U.S. need to cut their emissions of global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050. For more information, visit [www.pewglobalwarming.org](http://www.pewglobalwarming.org), or to view the full EPA report, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).