

Talking Points about Extreme Heat

Talking points and message maps for local health professionals

Message mapping is one of the most important risk communication tools that public health agencies can use to convey important information in a concise, easy-to-understand, and credible manner.



CONCISE



CREDIBLE



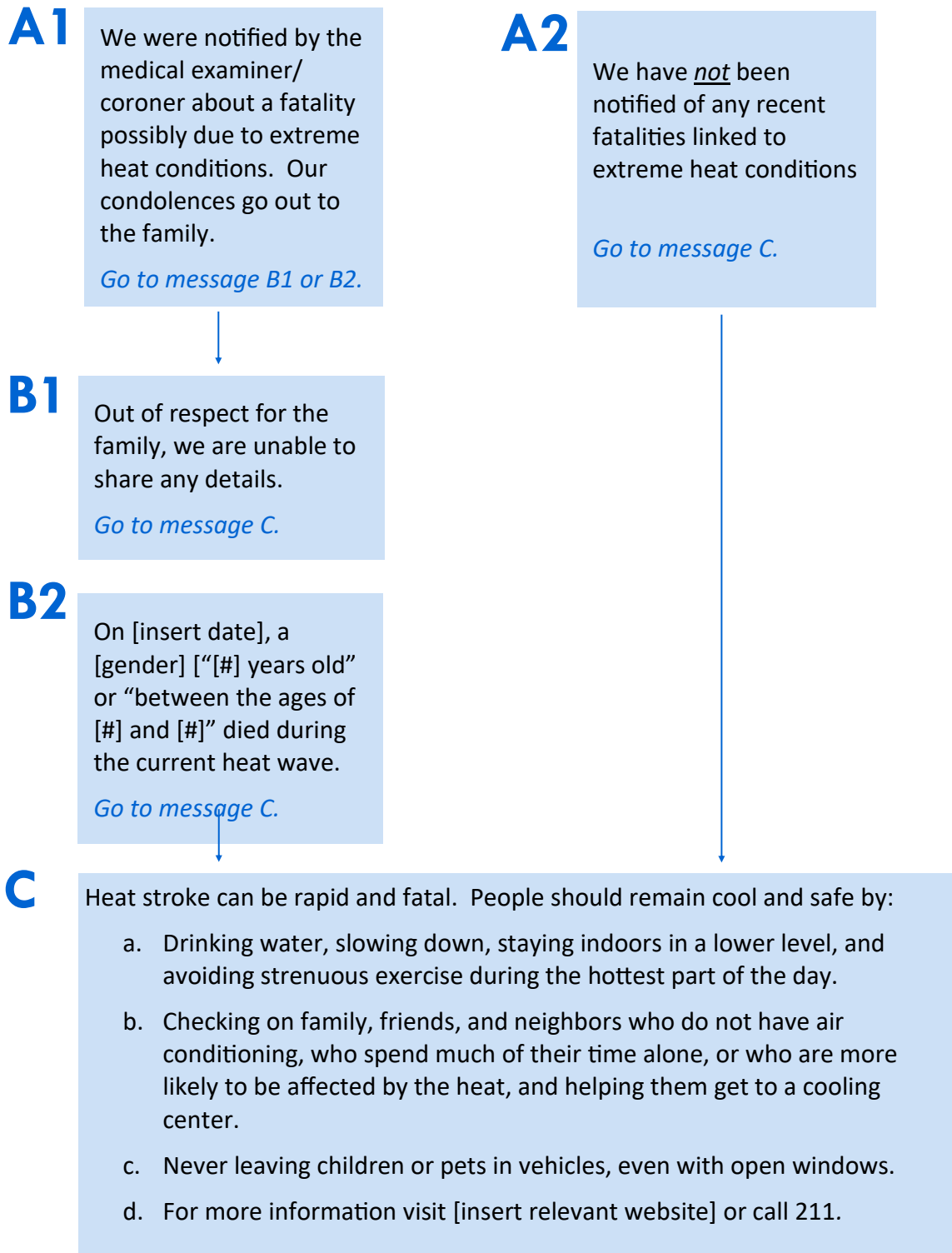
CLEAR

General Guidelines for Completing a Message Map

- Stick to one to three key messages or one key message with three parts for each underlying concern or specific question.
- Keep key messages brief. The reader should ideally spend less than 10 seconds per line.
- Develop messages that are easily understood by the target audience. (Use a 6th to 8th-grade readability level for communications with the general public.)
- Place messages within a message set. The most important messages should occupy the first and last positions.
- Develop key messages that cite credible third parties.
- Use data sparingly and on only if it has impact.
- Use graphics and other visual aids to enhance key messages.
- Keep a positive tone. Messages should be solution-oriented and constructive. Try to balance negative messages with positive ones.
- Avoid unnecessary uses of the words no, not, never, nothing, none.

TALKING POINTS FOR HEAT-RELATED FATALITY

If the media approaches you regarding a reported heat-related fatality in your jurisdiction, the following talking points may be useful. Start with message A1 or A2, and follow the instructions within that box.



The following is a message map that could be used when addressing the general public regarding heat-related safety.

Main Message:

“Since [June/July/August #], there [has/have been #] heat-related fatalities in Wisconsin. To help you and your loved ones stay safe during this heat wave...”

Key Messages <i>Three key messages</i>	Supporting Information <i>Three pieces of supporting information for each one</i>
Message 1 Check on your neighbors to make sure they are okay, especially older adults and those living alone.	Supporting Info 1 Older adults are less likely to sense and respond to high temperatures. Supporting Info 2 Those living alone can be isolated and unaware of the dangers posed by extreme heat. Supporting Info 3 When regularly checking on your neighbors or loved ones, look for signs of heat-related illness.
Message 2 If you must be out during the hottest time of the day, be alert for signs of heat illness.	Supporting Info 1 Symptoms include feeling hot, weak, dizzy or faint, cramping/muscle spasms, nausea, or rapid pulse. Supporting Info 2 Protect yourself by limiting physical activities, drinking plenty of water, and wearing light loose-fitting clothing. Supporting Info 3 Call 911 or seek medical attention if you or someone you know develops heat illness.
Message 3 Hundreds of cooling centers are available to the public across Wisconsin.	Supporting Info 1 Cooling centers are designated buildings with air conditioning where people can seek relief from the heat. Supporting Info 2 Call 211 to find the cooling center closest to you. Supporting Info 3 Ask 211 whether transportation is also available.

