



Home and Auto

HOT WEATHER DANGERS FOR YOUR HOME AND CAR

Whenever the mercury nudges triple digits, most of us scramble to make sure kids, pets, and elders stay well-hydrated and safe from heat exhaustion. (See the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [ASPCA](#) for more.)

But it's easy to overlook some not-so-obvious dangers of excessive heat for our **homes and cars**. The loss-prevention experts at PEMCO urge you to follow these tips.

FOR YOUR HOME

- **Avoid overtaxing your home's wiring system.** Before you plug in portable fans and air conditioners, make sure the extension cord you're using is in good shape and heavy enough to safely handle the load it's carrying. Cover extension cords with tape to prevent tripping, rather than running them under rugs.
- **Check fans for frayed cords before plugging them in.** If your fan's cord has spent the past year wrapped in a tight, tidy coil, wires may have pulled loose or become exposed through cracks in the insulating plastic.
- **Prevent air-conditioning puddles.** When you crank the AC, condensation from both central and portable units can puddle quickly. Make sure the water has a harmless way to escape. Consider placing a plastic tray under portable air conditioners used on hardwood floors.
- **Choose plastic rather than glass for your pet's water bowl on the deck.** When the sun beats down, the most unlikely objects can turn into fire-starting lenses. Keep reading glasses and vases off sun-soaked window sills.

(continued)

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- **Don't invite intruders with open windows.** Police departments across the country know that when temperatures rise, so does the rate of home break-ins as opportunistic thieves take advantage of easy entry through open windows. For your personal safety as well as that of your belongings, consider installing heavy-gauge screen doors with double bolt locks (available at most large hardware stores). They're more secure than typical window screens and, with their large size, allow even greater air circulation than an open window, especially when paired with a box fan to blow cooler evening air throughout the house. (Remember: For efficient cooling, keep doors and windows closed until the temperature outside is approximately equal to or less than the temperature inside.)
- **For maximum home safety at night,** close ground-floor doors and windows.
- **Shield furniture, floors, and carpets from fading and sun damage.** Keep shades drawn, especially on scorching southern exposure windows. Pop up patio table umbrellas and awnings to offer extra shade.

F O R Y O U R C A R

- **Clear your trunk of flammable liquids** (even aerosol cans) to avoid fire or explosion risks. (And speaking of toasty trunks ... once you've hit the grocery store, head straight home to avoid dangerous food spoilage.)
- **Circulate your engine coolant when stuck in traffic.** If you find yourself stopped amid a sea of taillights, periodically put your car in Park and gently step on the gas to circulate coolant. Keep your eye on gauges so you can get off the road at the first sign of overheating.
- **Pack a cell phone and water in the car,** even if you normally don't. Prepare for emergencies in extreme heat much like you'd take extra precautions when driving in snow.
- **Don't leave CDs or other fragile valuables in direct sunlight.** That applies anytime, but especially in hot temperatures.