

France 40C heatwave could break June records

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France is braced for a heatwave with temperatures forecast to exceed 40C this week – potentially breaking the record for June.

Temperatures were expected to reach 35 degrees or more on Monday, and climb even further until the peak on Thursday and Friday.

The north of the country – including Paris - will be worst affected.

Temporary fountains have been put in place and public pools will stay open later as part of an extreme heat plan.



Water will also be distributed and a care plan will be put in effect for vulnerable people including the elderly, as high humidity will make 40C feel like 47C in the capital.

France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium could all see national records for June broken in the coming days – but France is particularly aware of the dangers posed by the hot weather.



Comparisons are being drawn to the heat wave France experienced in August 2003 - in which almost 15,000 people died. In the space of a single month, the top three temperatures ever recorded were all set, topping out at 44.1C on 12 August.

France's national forecaster, Météo-France, is warning that temperatures may not fall until the following weekend – even at night, when lowest temperatures are expected to remain above 20C in many places.

Large cities are particularly vulnerable, the weather service warned.



The city of Paris has activated its "level three" extreme heat plan - level four, the maximum, has never been used.

Part of that plan involves designating some 900 "cool places" that have lower temperatures than the surrounding city streets - such as parks, air-conditioned public halls, and areas where temporary fountains and mist machines have been set up. The city is also keeping an extra 13 parks open at night for people to cool down in.

The education ministry has postponed by four days national exams for 800,000 schoolchildren aged 15 and 16, to 1 and 2 July, explaining that it could not compromise with pupils' health.

A weather system over the Atlantic is creating high atmospheric pressure over the region, drawing up hot air from northern Africa and Spain, raising temperatures.

In Spain, weather agency Aemet is predicting temperatures of above 35C in large parts of the country, and above 40C in the centre - and 42C in the valleys of Ebro, Tajo, Guadiana and Guadalquivir. Holidaymakers in Mallorca or the Canary Islands can also expect 35C temperatures.

Germany is also predicting temperatures in the mid-30s in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt and other cities – with a forecast 38C for the capital by Thursday.

The building heat in Britain, on the other hand, is expected to cause thunderstorms on Monday and Tuesday.