



Weather agency looks into heat warnings

NEWS SECTION - MONDAY - JUNE 17, 2002 - PAGE 3A

By Paul Leavitt

USA TODAY

The National Weather Service begins testing today on a system of heat-stress advisories to provide earlier warnings for people vulnerable to heat and humidity. The system has three categories:

- Heat watch, when heat-stress conditions are expected in the next 24 to 48 hours.
- Heat advisory, when higher levels of discomfort are expected within 24 hours.
- Excessive heat warning, when the danger requires such steps as seeking air-conditioned buildings, drinking extra water, and avoiding outdoor activities.

The tests are being conducted in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Officials said it could be expanded nationally. The weather service will continue to use the heat index, a number based on a combination of temperature and humidity. Alerts are triggered when the index is likely to reach 105 degrees by day and 80 at night over 48 hours.

