

Arizona: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in Arizona exactly as written. What's different here is the specific hazard profile and the state, local, and legal context around it. This page is the starting point; the other three pages under Arizona go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

Extreme heat: an ongoing, worsening annual crisis

Phoenix and the rest of Maricopa County record a heat-related death toll every single year, tracked in unusual detail by the county's own public health department. 2023 set a record with 645 heat-related deaths; 2024 saw the first year-over-year decline in a decade, 602 deaths, despite being the hottest summer on record. During one 44-day stretch in the summer of 2024, at least one heat-related death occurred in Maricopa County every single day. See the Risks page for the full breakdown.

The Colorado River: Arizona takes the deepest cuts

Arizona's water supply is directly tied to the Colorado River, and under the river's current tiered shortage system, Arizona absorbs the largest mandatory reductions of any state sharing it. The river has operated under Tier 1 Shortage conditions in 2022, 2024, 2025, and 2026, cutting roughly 512,000 acre-feet from Arizona's allocation each year, and the 2007 operating guidelines governing the whole system expire at the end of 2026, with steeper cuts already planned for 2027. This isn't a single event, it's a standing, worsening supply constraint that shapes water policy statewide.

What this means for how you use the rest of this manual

The manual's Tier structure and the skill guides apply without modification. What's different in Arizona: heat safety (hydration, shade, checking on elderly or outdoor-working neighbors) needs to be a genuine year-round Tier 1 priority for a large part of the year, not an occasional summer concern, and this manual's water storage and conservation guidance carries real weight in a state whose primary water source is already under mandatory federal cuts.

Sources

- Maricopa County heat-related death figures: Maricopa County Department of Public Health; NBC News
- Colorado River Tier 1 Shortage and Arizona's allocation cuts: Central Arizona Project; Arizona Department of Water Resources

Arizona: Laws & Legal Considerations

Rainwater harvesting: legal statewide, and required for some development in Tucson

Arizona places no state-level restriction on residential rainwater harvesting, and the state actively incentivizes it with a tax credit, but the more remarkable legal fact here is local, not statewide.

Rule	Arizona
Source water	Rooftop or other catchment
Permit required	No, for typical residential rain barrels and cisterns
Permitted uses	Non-potable: irrigation, landscaping
Residential state tax credit	25% of installation cost, up to \$1,000, for a qualifying water conservation system
Agricultural state tax credit	Up to 75% of installation cost, for systems used for agricultural purposes

Tucson's ordinance was the first of its kind in the nation

In 2008, Tucson adopted Ordinance 10597, taking effect in 2010, requiring all new commercial development to submit a rainwater harvesting plan showing that at least 50% of the site’s yearly landscape water budget will come from harvested rainwater. It was the first ordinance of its kind in the country. Enforcement has been inconsistent over the years, according to local reporting, but the requirement itself remains on the books and is a genuinely distinctive local law not found in any other state covered on this site.

Where to find it: the Arizona Department of Revenue (azdor.gov) administers the state tax credit; Tucson’s Unified Development Code, Section 4-01, covers that city’s commercial requirement specifically.

Water law: two entirely separate systems for surface water and groundwater

Arizona’s surface water follows the same prior appropriation doctrine as Utah, Oregon, and Washington, but its groundwater is governed by a completely separate, more modern regulatory framework that most other states covered on this site don’t have.

Water type	Governing framework
Surface water	Prior appropriation ("first in time, first in right")
Groundwater, inside an Active Management Area	Groundwater Management Act of 1980: mandatory conservation, a 100-year assured water supply requirement for new development, and a legal goal of "safe-yield" (withdrawals balanced against recharge)
Groundwater, outside an Active Management Area	Comparatively few restrictions

Why this matters for most Arizonans specifically

There are 8 Active Management Areas statewide (including Phoenix and Tucson), and more than 75% of Arizona’s population lives inside one. The 1980 Act’s safe-yield goal for AMAs had a target date of January 1, 2025, now passed; whether that goal has actually been met varies significantly by AMA, and it’s worth checking current status with the Arizona Department of Water Resources rather than assuming the target was achieved statewide.

Where to find it: the Arizona Department of Water Resources (azwater.gov) administers both systems and publishes current AMA status.

Permitless carry since 2010, well ahead of most states covered on this site

Arizona has allowed permitless concealed carry since 2010, considerably earlier than Texas, Florida, Ohio, and Georgia, which adopted similar policies between 2021 and 2022.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Permitless ("constitutional") carry, open or concealed, since 2010
Minimum age	21
Optional Concealed Weapons Permit (CWP)	\$60, shall-issue through the Department of Public Safety, requires an in-person training class (no fully online option)
Why get the optional permit anyway	Recognized in 37+ states for reciprocity; exempts the holder from the federal 1,000-foot school zone restriction; skips the point-of-sale NICS background check at licensed dealers

Sources

- Arizona rainwater harvesting rules and state tax credit: Arizona Department of Revenue
- Tucson’s commercial rainwater harvesting ordinance: Arizona Daily Star; University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center
- Arizona Groundwater Management Act and Active Management Areas: Arizona Department of Water Resources; Audubon
- Arizona permitless carry and optional CWP: Arizona Department of Public Safety; ArizonaShooting.org

Arizona: Local Resources

DEMA: no single branded consumer campaign found, similar to Virginia's approach

The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA), through its Division of Emergency Management, coordinates the state's all-hazard preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. As with Virginia, this research didn't turn up one specific named public-facing household campaign (like "Ready Ohio" or "ReadyNJ"); DEMA's public presence centers more on training coordination and partner programs than a single branded consumer push.

Where to find it: dema.az.gov/emergency-management/preparedness.

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension: Arizona's version of the other states' land-grant Extension programs

The University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site, partnering with all 15 Arizona counties.

- **Master Gardener Program:** courses typically run 20 weeks, followed by additional volunteer training; specific hour requirements and schedules vary by county.

Where to find it: extension.arizona.edu lists Master Gardener programs by county, including Maricopa and Pima.

CERT: coordinated through DEMA's Training Branch

Arizona's CERT training is coordinated through DEMA's Training Branch, funded through Department of Homeland Security grants, with actual course delivery happening locally.

How to actually find a class

DEMA's Training Branch can be reached directly at 602-464-6225 or training@azdema.gov for current CERT course information, in addition to the standard approach of searching "[your county] CERT" for a program near you.

Where to find it: dema.az.gov/emergency-management/preparedness/training-branch.

Sources

- DEMA Division of Emergency Management and preparedness structure: DEMA
- University of Arizona Master Gardener Program: UA Cooperative Extension
- Arizona CERT training coordination: DEMA Training Branch

BY STATE › ARIZONA

Arizona: Risks & Trends

Same standard as every other page on this site: every figure below is independently sourced, and figures that vary across sources, or measure genuinely different things, are flagged as such rather than collapsed into one number that looks more precise than the underlying data actually supports.

Maricopa County heat deaths: a tracked, worsening annual toll

Metric	Figure
2023 heat-related deaths	645 (record high, 52% above the prior record)
2024 heat-related deaths	602 (first year-over-year decline in a decade, despite the hottest summer on record)
Longest daily-death streak (2024)	44 consecutive days (June 18-July 31) with at least one heat death every day
Deaths during that streak	355
Share of 2023 deaths aged 50+	~2 in 3
Share of 2023 deaths that were men	~3 in 4
Share of 2024 deaths that occurred outdoors	77%

Why 2024's decline doesn't mean the risk eased

2024 was Phoenix’s hottest summer on record, yet heat deaths fell for the first time in a decade, most likely reflecting expanded heat-relief efforts (cooling centers, outreach) rather than milder conditions. Both facts are true at once: the underlying heat exposure kept getting worse, and the death toll dropped anyway, a genuine public-health success story layered on top of a still-worsening climate trend.

The Colorado River shortage: Arizona’s deepest cuts of any state on the river

Metric	Figure
Current shortage tier	Tier 1 (in effect 2022, 2024, 2025, 2026)
Arizona's annual Tier 1 reduction	512,000 acre-feet
Share of Central Arizona Project's normal supply	~30%
Share of Arizona's total Colorado River supply	~18%
Share of Arizona's total water supply (all sources)	Just under 8%
Additional Lower Basin cuts starting 2027	1.25 million acre-feet
Current operating guidelines expire	End of 2026

Arizona’s Central Arizona Project water right sits junior to other states’ Colorado River allocations under the interstate agreements governing the river, which is why Arizona absorbs the largest share of cuts under the tiered shortage system even though its total allocation is smaller than California’s. The 2007 interim operating guidelines that have governed cuts since then expire at the end of 2026, and negotiations over what replaces them will directly determine how much deeper Arizona’s cuts go after that.

What these two have in common

Both of Arizona’s defining risks get worse the longer the underlying trend continues, and neither has a single fixed end date. Extreme heat and water scarcity reinforce each other in a practical sense too: less water available for landscaping and cooling infrastructure makes heat exposure harder to manage, which is part of why this manual treats water storage, heat safety, and general Tier 1-2 self-sufficiency as connected priorities rather than separate concerns here specifically.

Sources

- Maricopa County heat-related death data: Maricopa County Department of Public Health; azfamily.com; NBC News

- Colorado River Tier 1 Shortage and Arizona-specific cuts: Central Arizona Project; Arizona Department of Water Resources