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France bans public drinking in red alert areas as temperatures approach 42°C

The emergency measure covers state-run events including Fête de la Musique as the heat wave affects about 90% of the population.

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French authorities have temporarily banned alcohol consumption at state-organized events and in public spaces in parts of the country as a severe heat wave pushes temperatures toward 42°C and places much of metropolitan France under the highest

weather alerts.

The restrictions were announced after a government crisis meeting, with officials citing the risks created by extreme heat, drinking and large outdoor gatherings. According to reports from France, the measures applied to events including the annual Fête de la Musique celebrations, which draw large crowds to free outdoor concerts across towns and cities on the summer solstice.

Prefects were instructed to prohibit drinking in public spaces in areas under red alert. Nearly half of metropolitan France was placed on red alert, while most of the remaining regions were under orange alert. The heat wave is affecting about 90% of the population, according to the reports cited.

Emmanuel Grégoire, the mayor of Paris, said the combination of alcohol, heat and proximity to water created three risk factors that “don’t mix well.”

The broader emergency response has extended beyond alcohol controls. More than 800 schools are expected to close temporarily, several outdoor sports events have been canceled and rail services have faced disruptions. France’s national rail operator warned that extreme temperatures were putting heavy pressure on infrastructure and air-conditioning systems.

The measures also carry potential consequences for the drinks business, especially for bars, festival operators and other hospitality venues that depend on summer events and outdoor consumption. Any limits on alcohol sales during a peak seasonal period could weigh on demand at the same time producers are dealing with weather-related pressure in vineyards.

For French wine growers, the heat wave adds to an already difficult season. Producers have already faced severe spring frosts followed by damaging hail in parts of Burgundy and other regions. Champagne producers reported bud losses of up to 40% earlier this year, while growers in Chablis and the Côte de Beaune also recorded significant damage.

The latest spell of heat raises fresh concerns as vineyards enter a critical summer period. While warmer weather can help grapes ripen, prolonged extreme heat can speed sugar accumulation, lower acidity, increase water stress and affect both yields and wine style.

French growers have increasingly relied on expensive frost protection methods such as candles, electric heating systems and water spraying. Heat waves present a different problem, one that is harder to manage and that comes with growing concern about the cumulative effects of climate change across Europe’s wine regions.

France is not alone. Spain, Portugal and Italy are also experiencing unusually high temperatures, with parts of the Iberian Peninsula expected to exceed 40°C. The United Kingdom is also under heat alerts, with forecasts calling for temperatures in the upper 30s Celsius in parts of England.

For wine producers across Europe, the latest heat wave adds to a pattern of climate volatility that is becoming a central challenge for vineyard management, production planning and future sales expectations.