

For Immediate Release
#30-15

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE URGE NEW YORKERS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS AND HELP THE VULNERABLE DURING HOT WEATHER SUNDAY AND MONDAY

Use air conditioning to stay cool, drink water to avoid dehydration, limit strenuous activity

Cooling centers are open Sunday, July 19 and Monday, July 20; to find the nearest cooling center, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/oem

July 18, 2015 – The New York City Emergency Management Department (NYCEM) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) today advised hot weather that could be dangerous to vulnerable populations is forecast for Sunday, July 19, through Monday, July 20. The National Weather Service has issued a Heat Advisory in effect from 11:00AM Sunday through 6:00PM Monday. High heat and humidity are expected, with temperatures in the 90s and heat index values near 95 to 100 degrees Sunday and Monday. NYC Emergency Management urges New Yorkers to take precautions to prevent serious illness that can result from the heat, especially among vulnerable individuals such as seniors and those with chronic health problems or mental health conditions. New Yorkers who are vulnerable should use air conditioning to stay cool, go to a place that has air conditioning if it is not available at home, drink water at regular intervals, and limit strenuous activity, especially during the hottest parts of the day. New Yorkers are urged to check in on vulnerable friends, family members and neighbors to help them stay cool.

New York City cooling centers will be open on Sunday July 19, and Monday, July 20 to help New Yorkers stay cool. Cooling centers are air conditioned facilities, such as libraries, community centers, and senior centers, that are open to the public during heat emergencies. To find the cooling center closest to you, call 311 (TTY: 212-504-4155) or visit NYC Emergency Management's Cooling Center Finder at www.nyc.gov/oem. New Yorkers are encouraged to take the following steps to stay safe and cool:

CHECK ON THOSE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO THE HEAT

A small but crucial gesture can help ensure that we all have a safe and healthy summer: Get to know your neighbors, and contact neighbors and relatives—in person or by phone—at least twice a day during heat waves.

- Pay special attention to the elderly, the very young, and anyone with a pre-existing medical condition. New Yorkers should check in on older neighbors who may be isolated from friends and family.
- Air conditioning is the best way to keep cool when it is hot outside, but some people do not have an air conditioner or do not turn it on when they need it. Encourage them to use air conditioning. Help them get to an air-conditioned place if they cannot stay cool at home. Make sure they are drinking enough water.

ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE HEAT:

- Stay out of the sun—avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect some of the sun’s energy.
- Drink fluids—particularly water—even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool. (Those on fluid-restricted diets or taking diuretics should first consult their physician.)
- Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid beverages containing alcohol and/or caffeine.
- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun’s peak hours—11 A.M. to 4 P.M. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 A.M. and 7 A.M.
- If possible, go to an air-conditioned building for several hours during the hottest parts of the day.
- New York City may open cooling centers around the five boroughs when temperatures reach dangerous levels. When cooling centers do open, call 311 or go to nyc.gov/oem to find the nearest center.
- Cool down with a cool bath or shower.
- Participate in activities that will keep you cool, such as going to the movies, shopping at a mall, or swimming at a pool or beach.
- Cover all exposed skin with an SPF sunscreen (15 or above); wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and head.
- Never leave your children or pets in the car.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/health/heathealth

IMPROPER FIRE HYDRANT USE

The improper opening of fire hydrants wastes 1,000 gallons of water per minute, causes flooding on City streets, and can lower water pressure to dangerous levels and hamper the ability of FDNY to fight fire safely and quickly. Properly used “spray caps” reduce hydrant output to a safe 25 gallons per minute while still providing relief from the heat. To obtain a spray cap, an adult 18 years or older with proper identification can go to his or her local firehouse and request one.

ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

During periods of intense electrical usage, such as on hot, humid days, it is important to conserve energy as much as possible to avoid brownouts and other electrical disruptions. While diminishing your power usage may seem like an inconvenience, your cooperation will help to ensure that utilities are able to continue to provide uninterrupted electrical service to you and your neighbors.

- Set air conditioners at 78 degrees Fahrenheit. (A 75F setting uses 18% more electricity and a 72F setting uses 39% more electricity.) This setting allows for sufficient cooling while still conserving electric power.
- Use an air conditioner only when home. If you want to cool your room before you arrive home, use a timer to have it turn on no more than one-half hour before you arrive.

FACTS ABOUT HEAT ILLNESS

Heat illness is serious. Prolonged exposure to the heat can be harmful and potentially fatal. The added stress caused by heat can also aggravate heart or lung disease even without symptoms of heat illness. The risk for getting sick during a heat wave is increased for people who:

- Do not have or do not use air conditioning
- Are age 65 or older
- Have chronic medical or mental health conditions
- Take certain medications, which can disrupt the regulation of body temperature
- Are confined to their beds, have trouble with being mobile, or are unable to leave their homes
- Are overweight
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs

Know the warning signs of heat stress:

If you (or someone you know) feels weak or faint, go to a cool place and drink water. If there is no improvement, call a doctor or 911.

Call 911 immediately if you have, or someone you know has:

- Hot dry skin OR cold clammy skin
- Trouble breathing
- Rapid heartbeat
- Confusion, disorientation, or dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting

KEEPING YOUR PETS SAFE

- **Avoid dehydration:** Pets can dehydrate quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water.

- **Exercise early and late:** When the temperature is very high, don't let your dog linger on hot asphalt. Your pet's body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn.
- **Know when your pet is in danger:** Symptoms of overheating in pets include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor, or even collapse. Animals with flat faces like Pugs and Persian cats are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. They should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.
- **Never leave a pet inside of a parked car on a hot day.** Even with the windows open, extreme temperatures inside a parked car could quickly lead to fatal heat stroke for your pet.
- **Keep cats safe by installing screens in your windows.** Unscreened windows pose a real danger to cats, who fall out of them often during summer months.
- **Prepare with your pet:** Pet food, water, medications and supplies should always be included in your emergency preparedness plans and "go bags."

For more information on coping with the heat, visit [NYC.gov/beattheheat](https://nyc.gov/beattheheat), or view NYC Emergency Management's [Beat the Heat video](#). New Yorkers are also encouraged to sign up for Notify NYC, the City's free emergency notification system. Through Notify NYC, New Yorkers can receive phone calls, text messages, and/or emails alerts about traffic and transit disruptions and other emergencies. To sign up for Notify NYC, call 311, visit [NYC.gov/notifynyc](https://nyc.gov/notifynyc), or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.

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