



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
UPDATES NEW YORKERS ON EXTREME HEAT**

Cooling Centers Open in All Five Boroughs -- Air Conditioning Is the Best Protection

The National Weather Service is forecasting that extreme heat conditions will continue through Tuesday, prompting the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to urge New Yorkers to take steps to prevent serious illness and death that can result from the heat, especially in vulnerable groups. High ozone levels, which can worsen asthma and other respiratory diseases, are also forecast to continue through today.

These are near record temperatures for this time of year and the heat's sudden onset makes the health risk greater than it might be in July or August, when people have adjusted to these temperatures. To assist New Yorkers during the heat, OEM will continue operating nearly 300 cooling centers throughout all five boroughs. Cooling centers are air-conditioned facilities, such as Department for the Aging senior centers and New York City Housing Authority community centers, which are open to the public. Over 7000 New Yorkers have visited the centers since they opened on Saturday. Residents can call 311 or log on to www.nyc.gov/oem to find the nearest cooling center.

Beat the Heat Tips:

- Use an air conditioner if you have one. If you do not have an air conditioner, go to a cooler place such as an air-conditioned store, mall or movie theater, or visit a cooling center.
- Make a special effort to check on your neighbors during a heat wave, especially if they are seniors, young children, and people with special needs. Many older New Yorkers live alone and could suffer unnecessarily in the heat because they are isolated from friends and family.
- Drink plenty of water or other fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid beverages containing alcohol, caffeine, or high amounts of sugar.
- If possible, stay out of the sun. When you're in the sun, wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible, wear a hat to protect your face and head, and use sunscreen (at least SPF 15) to protect exposed skin.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun's peak hours – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you must engage in strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.

The risk for getting sick during a heat wave is increased for people who:

- Are older than 64 or younger than 5
- Have chronic medical (heart and lung disease) or mental-health conditions

- Take medications that can disrupt the regulation of body temperature (check with your doctor)
- Are confined to their beds or unable to leave their homes
- Are overweight

Spray Caps & Fire Hydrants:

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reminds New Yorkers that opening fire hydrants without spray caps is wasteful and dangerous. Illegally opened hydrants can lower water pressure, which can cause problems at hospitals and other medical facilities and hinder fire-fighting by reducing the flow of water to hoses and pumps. Children can also be at serious risk, because the powerful force of an open hydrant without a spray cap can push them into oncoming traffic. Call 311 to report an open hydrant.

Hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a City-approved spray cap. One illegally opened hydrant wastes up to 1,000 gallons of water per minute, while a hydrant with a spray cap only puts out around 25 gallons per minute. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses.

Conserve Energy:

During periods of extremely hot and humid weather, electricity use rises which can cause power disruptions.

- Don't set your air conditioner thermostat lower than 78 degrees.
- Use air conditioners only when you're home, and only in rooms you're using. If you want to cool your home before you return, set a timer that turns on no more than 30 minutes before you arrive.
- Turn off nonessential appliances.

For more information on coping with extreme heat, see the *Ready New York: Beat the Heat* guide at www.nyc.gov/oem.

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