



## NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

11 WATER STREET BROOKLYN, NY 11201  
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JOHN T. ODERMATT, COMMISSIONER  
FRANK MCCARTON, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**[www.nyc.gov/oem](http://www.nyc.gov/oem)**

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### **MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG JOINS OEM AND OTHER CITY AGENCIES TO ANNOUNCE CITY'S "BEAT THE HEAT" CAMPAIGN**

With the National Weather Service forecasting high temperatures and humidity for the next few days, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and John T. Odermatt, Commissioner of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) today announced New York City's "Beat the Heat" public information campaign, aimed at educating New Yorkers about the dangers of hot weather and steps they can take to prevent heat-related illnesses, as well as the importance of conserving resources during the summer months.

"A heat emergency is one event that adversely affects the entire City," said OEM Commissioner Odermatt. "Although certain segments of the population, such as children and the elderly, are more vulnerable to hot weather and thereby require special attention, we must look out for the needs of all residents when temperatures are high. It is our hope that our 'Beat the Heat' campaign will give New Yorkers the tips they need to make this summer a safe and healthy one."

Also joining Mayor Bloomberg were Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Commissioner Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH; New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta; Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Christopher O. Ward; Department for the Aging (DFTA) Commissioner Edwin Mendez-Santiago; and Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe.

New York City's streets and buildings tend to absorb high levels of heat during the summer. These conditions can prove dangerous to the health of those who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of high temperatures. Taking the following precautions will give New Yorkers the best opportunity to enjoy a safe summer.

Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Frieden said, "A few simple measures can significantly reduce New Yorkers' exposure to heat-related conditions, such as heat stroke. Make sure to stay hydrated, avoid the sun at its peak hours, and use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 whenever outdoors. Also, I encourage neighbors, friends, and relatives of the elderly to periodically check on them, as they are at highest risk for heat-related conditions."

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### **PERSONAL 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 using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- 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 operates **Cooling Centers** around the five boroughs. To find the one nearest you, call **(800) 4-COOL-NY**. TTY callers may use Relay.
- Cool down with repeated cool baths or showers. Never take a shower immediately after becoming overheated—you may cool down too quickly and become ill, nauseous or dizzy.
- 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 a high 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.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In addition to being uncomfortable, a heat wave can cause a variety of medical emergencies. In order to further safeguard your health, and the health of loved ones and neighbors, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Fire Department of New York in conjunction with Emergency Medical Services offer the following tips:

- **NEVER** leave children or pets in an enclosed automobile
- Get immediate help if a person appears to be in trouble because of the heat. Excessive heat is the cause of two dangerous health conditions that require emergency medical attention:

#### **Heat-Related Illnesses**

Prolonged exposure to the heat can be harmful and even potentially fatal. The following is a list of heat-related illnesses and suggestions for treatment:

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- **Heat Exhaustion**

**Symptoms:** Mild form shock marked by heavy sweating, weakness, headache, weak pulse, dizziness, exhaustion, fainting, nausea or vomiting, and cold, clammy skin. Body temperature will seem normal.

**Treatment:** Call 911 for medical attention. If heat exhaustion is not treated it can worsen and lead to heat stroke. Remove the victim to a cool place. Loosen clothing and apply cool, wet cloths to the neck, face and arms. If the victim is conscious, have him or her drink water slowly, unless nausea occurs. Give him or her half a glass of water every 15 minutes. *Under no circumstances should an unconscious person be given anything to drink by mouth.* Watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

- **Heat Stroke (Sunstroke)**

**Symptoms:** Hot, red skin; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing; loss of ability to sweat; throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness. Body temperature can be so high (103 degrees F or higher, though a person may feel chilled) that brain damage or death may result in fewer than 10 minutes if medical attention is not immediate.

**Treatment:** Immediately call 911 for medical help. Bring the victim to a cool place. Remove the victim's clothes and cool his or her body by wrapping it in wet sheets and fanning them. Watch for signs of breathing problems. Keep the victim lying down and as cool as possible. Do NOT give the victim any fluids.

### **PROTECTION FOR 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.

Pay special attention to the elderly, the very young, and anyone with a pre-existing medical condition. DFTA is asking New Yorkers to check up on older neighbors who may be isolated from friends and family.

"Although summer is the season to be outside, older people should be aware of the negative effects hot weather can have on our health," said Department for the Aging Commissioner Edwin Mèndez-Santiago. "Staying indoors during the middle of the day can help you avoid any heat-related problems."

Seniors should keep their homes well ventilated, and seek immediate help if they feel signals of heat stress.

### **IMPROPER FIRE HYDRANT USE**

While it may be tempting for citizens to cool off by opening a fire hydrant, the Fire Department warns all New Yorkers about the dangers of improperly opening fire hydrants, and urges the use of "spray caps."



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An open hydrant wastes 1,000 gallons of water per minute, and causes flooding on City streets. It also places the lives of citizens and firefighters in jeopardy by lowering water pressure to dangerous levels and hampering the ability 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.

### **WATER CONSERVATION TIPS**

During periods of high heat, it is important that New Yorkers adhere to water restrictions set forth by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Water use often rises to unusually high levels during periods of hot weather and causes fluctuations in water pressure in the City. In order to conserve and adhere to restrictions, follow these tips:

- Take short showers; only fill bathtubs halfway when taking a bath.
- Repair leaky faucets; turn taps off tightly.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only when they are full.
- Do not let water run while washing dishes, shaving, or brushing your teeth.
- Observe restrictions on watering your lawn or plants.

"It is important that all New Yorkers save water, particularly during times of drought and hot weather," said DEP Commissioner Ward. "An adequate water supply is essential for the health of the City and all New Yorkers, and conservation helps to ensure that we have enough water to meet the needs of this great City."

### **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.

**Air Conditioners (General):** *Set the control no lower than 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 come on no more than one-half hour before you arrive.*

*If your neighborhood is experiencing serious electrical distribution problems, Con Edison or KeySpan may ask you to:*

- Turn off all non-essential appliances.
- Wait until the problems are resolved before using your washer/dryer.

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- Turn off unneeded air conditioners. If necessary, try to limit air conditioner usage to one room.
- 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.

Only during a heat emergency, persons may call **(800) 4-COOL-NY** for more information on how to protect oneself from the effects of hot weather. The heat relief hotline telephone number for the deaf or hard of hearing is: **(800) 705-7360**.

### **CITY POOLS AND BEACHES**

The City's Department of Parks & Recreation manages the City's public pools and beaches—a totally free way for New Yorkers to cool down during the hot summer months.

“To beat the summer heat Parks offers 53 outdoor pools and 14 miles of beach for free for everyone to enjoy,” said Parks Commissioner Benepe. “Over 600 spray showers in our City's playgrounds have also been turned on to help children have a safe and cool summer. Finally, we have over two million shade-providing trees in parks, and many miles of waterfront promenades where New Yorkers can catch a breeze.”