

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#32-16

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REMINDS NEW YORKERS THAT COOLING CENTERS ARE OPEN TODAY AND ALERTS NEW YORKERS OF POTENTIAL FOR SEVERE WEATHER

More than 500 cooling centers open across the City today; to find the nearest cooling center and hours of operation, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/beattheheat

Strong thunderstorms are possible later today with the potential for heavy rain and strong winds

July 18, 2016 — With the heat index expected to rise into the mid-90s today, NYC cooling centers remain open to help New Yorkers beat the heat. New Yorkers are advised to call 311 (TTY: 212-504-4115) or visit NYC Emergency Management’s Cooling Center Finder at www.nyc.gov/beattheheat to find the nearest cooling center locations – including accessible facilities – and hours of operation. Cooling centers are air conditioned facilities, such as libraries, community centers, senior centers and NYCHA facilities that are open to the public during heat emergencies.

The New York City Emergency Management Department also alerts New Yorkers of the potential for severe weather this afternoon into the evening. According to forecasts, heavy rain and damaging winds accompanied by gusts up to 50 mph may impact the NYC area. A total of 0.25 inch to an inch of rain is expected with this event, but locally higher amounts are possible. Localized minor urban flooding may occur in low-lying and poor drainage areas, and flash flooding could occur during the periods of heaviest rain.

“The severe thunderstorms expected this evening could also create dangerous travel conditions. New Yorkers should stay inside during periods of severe weather. If you are outside during a thunderstorm, avoid open areas and try to seek shelter indoors,” said **New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**

New Yorkers are 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 www.nyc.gov/notifynyc, or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.

During a thunderstorm, NYC Emergency Management urges New Yorkers to remain indoors. To stay safe during a storm, New Yorkers should follow the safety tips below.

If you are caught outside:

- Stay away from tall, isolated trees and other tall objects.
- Avoid open areas like fields or parking lots.
- Stay away from water and wet items.

- An automobile can protect you from a lightning strike because the current will flow through the car's metal frame. If you are in a car, do not touch any exposed metal connected to the car.
- If someone is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1.
- Do not walk or drive through flooded streets, the actual depth of the water may not be apparent. Turn around, don't drown!
- Flood water can be contaminated. Avoid contact with sewer water, as it poses a serious health risk.
- Have heightened awareness of cars, particularly when approaching or crossing intersections.
- Never touch or go near down power lines, even if you think they are safe.
- Report any downed power lines and avoid standing in flood water, as it can carry electrical current.

NYC Emergency Management continues to monitor the weather and encourages New Yorkers to take the following steps to beat the heat throughout the summer months:

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 and avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- 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: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 AM and 7:00 AM.



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- If possible, go to an air-conditioned building for several hours during the hottest parts of the day.
- 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) and wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and head.
- Never leave your children or pets in the car.

For more information on coping with the heat, visit: www.nyc.gov/beattheheat or view NYC Emergency Management's *Beat the Heat* video [here](#). The video is also available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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