

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#38-17

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE URGE NEW YORKERS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS DURING EXTREME HEAT TUESDAY

Cooling centers are open across the City Tuesday; to find the nearest cooling center, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/beattheheat beginning at 8 a.m. Tuesday

August 21, 2017 — The New York City Emergency Management Department and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene today advised hot weather that could be dangerous to vulnerable populations is forecast for Tuesday, August 22. The National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory in effect from noon through 6 p.m. Tuesday. High heat and humidity are forecast with temperatures expected to be in the lower to mid-90s and heat index values around 100 degrees.

To help New Yorkers beat the heat, New York City will open cooling centers throughout the five boroughs on Tuesday. 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. To find a cooling center, including accessible facilities closest to you, call 311 (TTY: [212-504-4115](tel:212-504-4115)) or visit the NYC Cooling Center Finder at www.nyc.gov/beattheheat beginning at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

“We want everyone to stay safe during the extreme heat by drinking plenty of water, going to a cooling center if you need a place to take a break from the heat, and, checking in on vulnerable neighbors who are particularly at risk for heat-related illnesses,” said **New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**.

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 or extreme heat.
- Pay special attention to vulnerable friends, family, and neighbors such as 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.
- In New York City, most heat-related deaths occur after exposure to heat in homes without air conditioners. Air conditioning is the best way to stay safe and healthy when it is hot outside, but some vulnerable 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.

- The Department of Homeless Services has issued a Code Red Alert and has enhanced outreach. Single adults can present to any shelter to seek refuge from the heat. Transportation is also available to cooling centers via DHS outreach teams, which are checking on vulnerable, at-risk clients, with greater frequency.
- The Department for the Aging has opened senior centers as cooling centers, and home care agencies are on the lookout for clients who may need assistance. Case management agencies are also calling homebound seniors.

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 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.
- 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 unattended in a parked vehicle.

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

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 ages 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

- **Never leave your pets unattended in a parked vehicle:** Parked vehicles, even with windows open, become very hot in a short amount of time, and this can lead to heatstroke or death.
- **Exercise early and late:** When the temperature is very high, don't let your pet linger on hot asphalt. Your pet's body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn.
- **Avoid dehydration:** Pets can dehydrate quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water.
- **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.
- **Keep cats safe by installing screens in your windows:** Unscreened windows pose a real danger to cats, as they can fall out of them often during summer months.

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 your air conditioned to the highest comfortable temperature. Each degree you lower the thermostat drives up your bill by 6 percent.
- To reduce heat and moisture in your home, run appliances such as ovens, washing machines, dryers and dishwashers in the early morning or late at night when it's cooler outside.
- When the air conditioner is running, close doors to keep cool air in and hot air out.
- Keep shades, blinds, and curtains closed. About 40 percent of unwanted heat comes through windows.
- Turn off air conditioners, lights, and other appliances when not at home and use a timer or smart technology to turn on your air conditioner about a half-hour before arriving home.
- Keep air conditioner filters clean.

For more information on coping with the heat, visit: www.nyc.gov/beattheheat.

-30-

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