



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#17-13

**DANGEROUSLY HOT WEATHER CONTINUES TO AFFECT THE CITY,  
COOLING CENTERS WILL REMAIN OPEN THROUGH SATURDAY, JULY 20**

*Life-threatening heat-related illnesses can increase as heat wave persists;  
New Yorkers are urged to take precautions and help the vulnerable*

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

**July 17, 2013** — The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) today advised that cooling centers will remain open through Saturday, July 20, many with extended hours, to help New Yorkers stay safe during the dangerously hot weather forecast to continue and worsen this week. According to the latest National Weather Service forecast, temperatures are expected to remain in the upper-90s through Saturday with a heat index near 100 or above each day. OEM 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 disability.

From 2006 to 2012, more than 100 New Yorkers died from heat. More than 80% of heat-related deaths in recent years occurred in homes without air conditioning. In addition, excessive heat can contribute to many additional deaths for chronic disease, such as heart disease and chronic lung disease. On average, an estimated additional 100 deaths of this type occur per summer from heat waves.

New Yorkers, especially those who are elderly or medically vulnerable, are advised to use air conditioning to stay cool, go to a place that has air conditioning if it is not available at home, and drink water regularly. Those going outdoors should limit strenuous activity and avoid exercise during the hottest parts of the day. New Yorkers should also check on their family, friends, and neighbors who live alone and are elderly or have chronic medical conditions, because they may be unable or unwilling to get to an air-conditioned space.

City cooling centers will remain open through Saturday to help New Yorkers stay cool. Some centers will operate with extended hours. Cooling centers are air conditioned places, such as Department for the Aging (DFTA) senior centers, libraries, and community centers, that are open to the public during heat emergencies. To find the cooling center closest to you, call 311 (TTY: 212-504-4115) or visit OEM's Cooling Center Locator at [www.nyc.gov/oem](http://www.nyc.gov/oem).

## **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

## **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 cooling centers do open, call 311 or go to [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) 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 on coping with heat, see the Ready New York: Beat the Heat guide at [www.nyc.gov/oem](http://www.nyc.gov/oem). For more information on the health effects associated with extreme heat visit [www.nyc.gov/health](http://www.nyc.gov/health).

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