

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPENS COOLING CENTERS

Due to the high heat and humidity forecast for the area, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) announced the opening of cooling centers in all five boroughs as of 12:00 p.m. today. Cooling centers are facilities that are air-conditioned and open to the public. Many senior and community centers serve as cooling centers. New Yorkers can call **311** or log on to **NYC.gov/oem** to find the nearest cooling center. Call your local cooling center to confirm hours of operations.

OEM also offers the following tips to help New Yorkers stay safe:

- If possible, stay out of the sun. When in the sun, wear sunscreen (at least SPF 15) and a hat to protect your face and head.
- Use an air conditioner if you have one.
- Make a special effort to check on neighbors and friends, especially seniors and those with special needs.
- Drink fluids - particularly water - even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool. Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- Never leave children, seniors, or pets in a parked car during periods of intense summer heat.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun's peak hours - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Cool showers and baths may be helpful, but avoid extreme temperature changes, as they may make you nauseated and dizzy.
- Report open fire hydrants by calling 311.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of heat-related illnesses including heat exhaustion and heat stroke:

Heat exhaustion: Symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, headache, weak pulse, dizziness, pale and clammy skin, and shallow breathing.

Heat Stroke: Symptoms include flushed, hot, dry skin, weak or rapid pulse, shallow breathing, lack of sweating, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and unconsciousness. Body temperature will be elevated, and victim should receive immediate medical attention.

Energy Conservation and Power Outages

During periods of hot and humid weather, regional electricity use rises. Residents should conserve energy to help prevent power disruptions.

- Set your air conditioner thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.
- Only use the air conditioner when you are home. If you want to cool your home before you return, set a timer to have it switch on no more than a half-hour before you arrive.
- Turn non-essential appliances off.

- Only use appliances that have heavy electrical loads early in the morning or very late at night.

Fire Hydrants and Spray Caps

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.

Residents can learn more about how to stay cool all summer long with OEM's Ready New York: Beat the Heat guide. For more information about heat-related hazards and the Ready New York campaign, visit **NYC.gov/oem** or call **311**.

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