

DEMHS Extreme Heat Emergency Management Procedure

July 2021

DEMHS follows the State Response Framework and also follows the basic structure of the Severe Cold Weather Protocol, although some of the services that become available with the Cold Weather Protocol are not activated for heat.

The DEMHS planner with weather background routinely monitors the NWS forecasts and weather models each day. Whenever the forecasts show the potential for a heat wave (three consecutive days with highs above 90 F), he prepares an internal update for DEMHS. If the heat wave looks significant and Heat Advisories are issued by the NWS, he also prepares an external update that goes to most state agencies, the Governor's office as well as most towns. Once the planner sends out a forecast, DEMHS reviews for additional actions, which may include:

- Governor's office notified of DEMHS recommendation to follow Extreme Heat Protocol;
 - Governor's office does press release;
- DEMHS sends email to towns;
- DEMHS opens a Web EOC incident, and requests that towns submit their cooling center information into WebEOC;
- PIO sends out social media alerts and also disseminates information to the ESF 15 Diverse Communities group to share with their contact lists;
- DEMHS contacts 211 to be ready to respond to calls re cooling centers;
- DEMHS Regional Coordinators and duty officer monitor WebEOC in order to respond to any requests from municipalities for assistance;
- DEMHS receives reports and updates from the energy utilities.

See next page for Sample Press Release

GOVERNOR LAMONT ADVISES CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT OVER NEXT SEVERAL DAYS

Cooling Centers Are Open Across the State and Can Be Located by Calling 2-1-1

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont is advising Connecticut residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable, to take precautions ahead of the extreme temperatures that are forecast to impact the state beginning Monday, June 28, 2021. The National Weather Service has issued heat advisories for most of the state through Wednesday, June 30.

Cooling centers are opening across Connecticut. Anyone in need of a place to get out of the heat can locate their nearest cooling center by calling 2-1-1.

“We want to remind everyone – particularly those in the most vulnerable communities – that cooling centers are available and can be located by calling 2-1-1,” **Governor Lamont said.** “Everyone should take the necessary precautions as the heat rises over the next several days. A few steps can greatly reduce heat-related issues, especially for the elderly, the very young, and people with respiratory ailments who are more susceptible to the effects of high temperatures.” Although anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others:

- Infants and young children are sensitive to the effects of high temperatures and rely on others to regulate their environments and provide adequate liquids.
- People 65 years of age or older may not compensate for heat stress efficiently and are less likely to sense and respond to change in temperature.
- People who are overweight may be prone to heat sickness because of their tendency to retain more body heat.
- People who overexert during work or exercise may become dehydrated and susceptible to heat sickness.
- People who are physically ill, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation, may be affected by extreme heat.

Some prevention tips to stay safe in extreme heat include:

Stay cool: Keep your body temperature cool to avoid heat-related illness

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. If you must be outdoors, try to limit your outdoor activity to the morning and evening. Try to rest often in shady areas so that your body has a chance to cool off.
- Find an air-conditioned shelter. (Call 2-1-1 for a list of cooling centers). Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device.
- Avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Check on those most at-risk several times a day.
- Pets that cannot be brought indoors should be provided ready access to water and shade to keep them cool.

Stay Hydrated: Because your body loses fluids through sweat, you can become dehydrated during times of extreme heat

- Drink more water than usual.
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Remind others to drink enough water.

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