



Extreme Heat Safety

Extended periods of extreme heat can overwhelm the energy output of both human beings and electrical systems in New York City. Your congregation can prepare for heat waves and the secondary hazards that can result from them. In addition, you may have opportunities to serve the public during these times.

Extreme Heat Hazards

Health Risks:

Extreme heat brings increased health risks. The risk of getting sick during a heat wave is increased for people who:

- Are younger than 5, or older than 64
- Have chronic medical or mental-health conditions
- Take medications, which can disrupt the regulation of body temperature
- Are confined to their beds or unable to leave their homes
- Are overweight

If you have a medical condition or take medications, check with your physician about precautions during hot weather.

Heat-Induced Illnesses

Exposure to heat and direct sunlight for prolonged periods of time, accompanied by high humidity, may result in mild to severe sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. (See chart on page 2 for symptoms and first aid for each of these illnesses.)

Mitigation and Preparedness

To prepare for extreme heat, you should:

- Install window air conditioners snugly; insulate if necessary.
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors (for use between windows and drapes), such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings, or louvers. (Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80 percent.)
- Keep storm windows up all year. http://www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/heat_before.shtm

Response and Recovery

When the weather is extremely hot, you should:

- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink fluids – particularly water – even if you do not feel thirsty. (POSSIBLE EXCEPTION: People with heart, kidney or liver disease, and others on fluid-restricted diets should check with their doctors before increasing fluid intake.)
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol, caffeine, or high amounts of sugar.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible.
- 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.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun's peak hours – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you must engage in strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- Cool showers or baths may be helpful, but avoid extreme temperature changes. Never take a shower immediately after becoming overheated – extreme temperature changes may make you ill, nauseated, or dizzy.
- Use an air conditioner if you have one. Set the thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.
- If you do not have an air conditioner, keep rooms well-ventilated with open windows and fans. Consider going to a public pool, air-conditioned store, mall, movie theater, or cooling center if you cannot cool your apartment (see last bullet).
- Fans work best at night, when they can bring in cooler air from outside.
- Seniors and others who may be especially sensitive to extreme heat should contact friends, neighbors, or relatives at least twice a day during a heat wave.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone, especially if they are seniors, young children, and people with special needs.
- Never leave children, pets, or those who require special care in a parked car during periods of intense summer heat.
- During heat emergencies, the City may open cooling centers. If cooling centers are open, call 311 (TTY: 212-504-4115) or log onto OEM's website (www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/heat_cooling.shtml) to locate a center near you.

Continued on reverse

Emergency Rest Centers (ERC) Cooling for the Public

You may be able to offer your house of worship and other facilities as part of the Emergency Rest Center program to serve your local community during a heat wave. NYDIS coordinates this program with the NYC Office of Emergency Management. If you can provide air conditioning and hydration (tap water okay), in addition to meeting some basic safety requirements, you can open as a Cooling Center for the public during the day. To find out if you can become an ERC, register with NYDIS' faith-based asset-mapping database, HOWCALM™ www.howcalm.org. For more information about ERCs, visit the NYDIS website at www.nydis.org or call 212.669.6100.

First Aid for Heat-Induced Illnesses

Condition	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches	Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally. Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles; heavy sweating	Get the victim to a cooler location. Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms. Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. (Do not give liquids with caffeine or alcohol.) Discontinue liquids if victim is nauseated.
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale, or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal body temperature is possible, but temperature will likely rise. Fainting or dizziness, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, and headaches are possible.	Get victim to lie down in a cool place with fans or air conditioning. Loosen or remove clothing, and apply cool, wet clothes. Have victim consume half a glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Discontinue water if victim is nauseated. Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs.
Heat Stroke (a severe medical emergency)	High body temperature (105+); hot, red, dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid shallow breathing. Victim will probably not sweat unless victim was sweating from recent strenuous activity. Possible unconsciousness.	Call 911 or emergency medical services, or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Use extreme caution. Move victim to a cooler environment with fans and air conditioners. Removing clothing and watch for breathing problems. Try a cool bath, sponging, or wet sheet to reduce body temperature.

Heat-Related Terms and Information from the National Weather Service

- **HEAT INDEX (APPARENT TEMPERATURE):** A number in degrees Fahrenheit that indicates how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. Exposure to direct sunlight can increase the heat index by 15 degrees.
- **HEAT WAVE:** Prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity. The National Weather Service (NWS) defines a heat wave as at least three consecutive days when the temperature reaches 90°F.
- **HEAT ADVISORY:** Issued by the NWS when the heat index is expected to reach at least 100°F but less than 105°F, or when nighttime lows are expected to remain above 80°F.
- **EXCESSIVE HEAT WATCH/WARNING:** Issued by the NWS, 24-48 hours in advance, when it is possible the heat index will reach 105°F for at least three hours for at least two consecutive days, or when there is a predicted heat index of 115°F.
- **OZONE HEALTH ADVISORY:** Issued when ozone levels in outdoor air are predicted to be high
- **ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION:** Ultraviolet or UV radiation, which is emitted by the sun, can damage the skin. UV radiation can lead to severe sunburn following an intense short-term overexposure, or serious skin cancers after long-term overexposure.

RESOURCES

- www.erh.noaa.gov/er/gyx/heatindexchart2.gif
- www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/heat_basics.shtml
- www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/heat_tips.shtml
- www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/heat_before.shtm
- www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/heat_during.shtm
- www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/heat_aid.shtm

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