

# Preventing Heat-Related Illness

## A Checklist for Faith Leaders



### Staying Safe during Extreme Heat

This checklist will help you support the health and safety of clients during very hot weather. Use this document to learn more about who is most at-risk, the health effects of extreme heat, methods to keep cool and stay safe at home, and how your organization can prepare for the dangerously hot weather.

### Who Is Most At-Risk?

Some of your community members and loved ones may be more likely to experience negative health effects during very hot weather and some may have multiple risk factors:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who work outside          | <input type="checkbox"/> People who are homebound                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People experiencing homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Older adults                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Infants and young children                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People without A/C               | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant people                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who live alone            | <input type="checkbox"/> People with some chronic medical conditions |

### How can you check on your community members?

Keeping the home cool and safe is especially important during times of extreme heat. When checking on community members, observe how your neighbors can stay cool and prevent their home from becoming too hot:

- Community member has access to working air conditioning (a/c). Using a/c is the best way to stay safe and healthy.
- Community member frequently uses a/c.
- Community member does not use a/c, even though they have access.
- Community member has access to transportation to go somewhere else when it is very hot, if they do not have a/c. If so, where:
  - A family member or friend's home with a/c.
  - A library, senior center, or other public space with a/c.
  - Another location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Community members knows where the nearest cooling center is located and how to get there.
- Check to see if community members have access to an electric fan to help circulate cool air. Note: fans will not prevent heat-related illness in temperatures greater than 95°F.
- Remind community members not to engage in outdoor activities during extremely hot days.
- Neighbor's windows, curtains, and blinds are closed during the hottest part of the day (typically 11am—4pm).
- Remind community members to stay hydrated and drinking cool water throughout the day. Note: caffeine, alcohol, and sugary drinks can cause dehydration.
- Frequently check on community members who live alone.

# What are the Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness?

Exposure to extreme heat can cause make some people extremely sick and make some chronic conditions worse. Note if your community member or loved one is experiencing any of the following sign and symptoms of heat-related illness and respond appropriately.

## Heat Stroke

- Very high body temperature (103 F or higher)
- Confusion
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Pounding Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Losing consciousness

Heat stroke is an emergency, call 911.

## Heat Exhaustion

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle Cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Headache
- Fainting

Cool down immediately and seek medical attention if the person does not feel better after an hour.

# How Can Your Organization Plan to Keep Your Community Safe?

To help keep your community members safe and healthy this summer, ensure your organization has a plan, stays informed, and knows of the below resources.

- Ensure that your organization is enrolled in the PDPH Community Response Partner Network at [bit.ly/PhillyCRPN](http://bit.ly/PhillyCRPN) to receive notifications when the City declares a Heat Health Emergency. During a Heat Health Emergency, the following services are activated:
  - The [Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's Heatline](#) is open for calls. Any Philadelphia resident can call (215) 765-9040 to get safety tips and talk to medical professionals to discuss health issues.
  - City-operated [cooling centers](#) are open for extended hours. Cooling centers are air conditioned public spaces like libraries, senior centers, and recreation centers. Call 311 or go to [bit.ly/PhilaCoolingCenters](http://bit.ly/PhilaCoolingCenters) for cooling center locations.
  - Philadelphia's power utility company PECO [halts utility shut-offs](#). For the duration of the Heat Health Emergency, PECO will not turn off the power of customers' homes due to unpaid bills.
- Sign up for [Ready Philadelphia](#): To receive free text alerts to your phone on emergencies and severe weather, text "ReadyPhila" to 888-777.
- Prepare and train staff on summer heat safety and heat-related illness each spring.
- Review the risk factors associated with heat-related illness with staff during extreme heat events.
- Review the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness during extreme heat events.
- Help develop a heat emergency plan for your organization, which addresses special operations to ensure at risk populations stay healthy during extreme heat events.
- Notify clients when extreme heat is in the forecast.
- Provide community members with educational materials, including the PDPH Heat Brochure and Summer Newsletter, available at [bit.ly/PHPmaterials](http://bit.ly/PHPmaterials).