

Preventing Heat-Related Illness

A Checklist for working with People Experiencing Homelessness and People who use Drugs

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 clients, neighbors and community members are more likely to experience negative health effects during very hot weather and some may have multiple risk factors:

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

How can you check on your clients?

Keeping the living area cool and safe is especially important during times of extreme heat. When checking on clients, neighbors or community members, observe how they can stay cool and prevent the area they are staying or sleeping 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 has knowledge of city spray grounds and how to get to them.
- Community member does not use a/c because they do not have access.
- Community member has access to transportation to go somewhere else when it is very hot, if they are living outside. If so, where:
 - A shelter, drop-in center, or other resource hub.
 - A library, senior center, or other public space with a/c.
 - Another location: _____
- Community member has protective items, like a brimmed hat to wear when out in the sun to protect their face and head.
- Community member stays in the shade as much as possible and wears sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.
- Community member knows where the nearest cooling center is located and how to get there.
- Community member avoids being outside during the hottest part of the day, usually between 11am and 4pm.
- Community member is staying hydrated and drinking cool water throughout the day. Note: caffeine, alcohol, and sugary drinks can cause dehydration.
- Community member is wearing loose fitting clothing, made from breathable fabric (e.g., cotton), and is not overdressed for the weather.

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 client, community member or loved one is experiencing any of the following sign and symptoms of heat-related illness and respond appropriately.

Heat Stroke	Heat Exhaustion
<input type="checkbox"/> Very high body temperature (103 F or higher)	<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy sweating
<input type="checkbox"/> Confusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold, pale, and clammy skin
<input type="checkbox"/> Hot, red, dry, or damp skin	<input type="checkbox"/> Fast, weak pulse
<input type="checkbox"/> Fast, strong pulse	<input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting
<input type="checkbox"/> Pounding Headache	<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle Cramps
<input type="checkbox"/> Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiredness or weakness
<input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness	<input type="checkbox"/> Headache
<input type="checkbox"/> Losing consciousness	<input type="checkbox"/> Fainting

Heat stroke is an emergency, call 911.

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 Clients Safe?

To help keep your clients, neighbors or 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 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 for cooling center locations.
 - During a **Code Red**, the City performs **24-hour outreach** to find people who are unhoused and help transport them to safe indoor spaces. All available beds are also open for those in need.
- 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 signs, symptoms, and risk factors associated with heat-related illness with staff during extreme heat events.
- Notify community members when extreme heat is in the forecast, and where City-funded homeless shelters and daytime homeless service programs that offer the option to be indoors are located.
- On very hot days, make sure your team has water bottles to hand out to community members.
- During an excessive heat event, call the **City’s Homeless Outreach Hotline** at **(215)-232-1984**.
- Help develop a heat emergency plan for your organization, which addresses special operations to ensure at risk populations stay healthy during extreme heat events.