



Quick Guide: Understanding and Responding to Heat-Related Illnesses Homeless Health Infectious Disease (HHID)

General Guidance: Homeless Service Providers

People experiencing homelessness (PEH) are vulnerable to injury or death from high temperatures. PEH are particularly vulnerable due to poor living conditions, insomnia due to poor sleeping arrangements, and an increase in risk of spoiled food. Additionally heat-related risks increase for those living with dehydration, diabetes or other health conditions. Find the following recommendations for preparing for the hot months ahead:

Plan and Prepare:

- Consider implementing early warning systems and expanding outreach to include wellness checks or heat notifications for individuals or communities staying outdoors.
 - Individuals staying outdoors may not have access to heat notifications provided by the national or local news.
- Identify potential cooling centers and community organizations to create a list of locations where individuals may be safe to spend the day.
 - Handouts for individuals with crucial information such as operating hours, available resources, or use limitations are recommended.
- Encourage community shelters and cooling centers to reduce barriers to entry (curfews, companion animal restrictions, ID requirements, etc.)
 - Loosening these requirements removes barriers for access for individuals staying outdoors.
- Consider making public transportation free or providing vouchers for transportation during heat emergencies.
 - Free or discounted transportation may enable individuals to reach cooling locations for services.

It is recommended that cooling centers open when the region is reported to be under a heat advisory, warning, or watch.

Excessive Heat Outlook

There is the potential for an excessive heat event in the next 3-7 days. Plan and prepare for a possible heat event.



Excessive Heat Watch

Conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24-72 hours. Prepare for a possible heat event.



Excessive Heat Warning

The maximum heat index is expected to be 105°F or higher for 2 days and nights minimum. Prepare for a heat event.



Heat Advisory

Issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. Deploy resources and coordinate a community response.



Quick Guide: Understanding and Responding to Heat-Related Illnesses Homeless Health Infectious Disease (HHID)

General Guidance: Homeless Service Providers

- If available, allocate resources for handouts such as sunscreen, lip balm, cooling cloths, water, and electrolyte drinks.
- If possible, develop and implement temperature related policies to temporarily allow people to stay at shelters during daytime hours.

Severe Heat Illness Signs and Symptoms:

- High body temperature (104°F+)
- Red, hot, dry skin – little to no sweating
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion, delirium
- Unconsciousness



Remember to protect and support staff who are a part of the heat response as they are also being exposed to the conditions.

Severe Heat Illness First Aid:

If you suspect an individual is experiencing the conditions described above, the following response is recommended:

- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Stay with the individual until help arrives.
- Move the individual into a shaded or cool area.
- Attempt to cool the individual by using cold water or ice bath, if possible, wetting the skin, and placing cold wet cloths or ice on the head, neck, armpits, and groin. If cold cloths are unavailable, soak their clothing in cool water.

Recommendations for Pop -Up or Temporary Cooling Center Locations	
Best Practice	Additional Accommodations
Air conditioned; fans	Backup generator available
Accessible to the public; signs clearly displaying operating hours, rules, and on-site assistance	Activities and resources available for guests
American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant	Separate room for families, children, and nursing individuals
Access to clean, chilled water	Access to snacks, provisions for pets
Seating available for all guests	Access to power stations so guests can charge phones or electronic devices
Advertised throughout the community in multiple languages	On-site health and social services, including respiratory illness precautions.