Detroit Health Department

Hot Weather Response Plan
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DETROIT HOT WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN

Introduction:
The City of Detroit’s Hot Weather Response (HWR) Plan is a protocol for hot weather response during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and is comprised of both proactive and reactive components. Since 2017, the Climate Change and Adaptation Advisory Committee, chaired by Detroit Health Department (DHD), has developed, monitored and sought to improve Detroit’s HWR Plan. Committee members consist of key partners who provide direct services under the HWR Plan. The HWR Plan is a living document that should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of each committee member to ensure all those involved in the response are familiar with the current plan. If there is a severe and prolonged heat event, the HWR Plan also identifies actions that may be taken to escalate the response under the provisions of the City’s Emergency Plan.

Purpose:
The HWR Plan provides a framework for the implementation and coordination of hot weather response activities which focus on reducing the negative health impacts of extreme heat in Detroit, including for vulnerable populations such as socially isolated seniors, people who are not acclimated to hot weather, children, outdoor workers and people who are marginally housed or homeless. Provide information to those with chronic and pre-existing illness including mental illness as it relates to staying safe in hot weather. Detroit has experienced a 172% increase in very hot, humid days, a 338% increase in hot, dry days, and a 70% decrease in cool dry days over the past 52 years. The Detroit Area experiences sharp increases in mortality and hospitalizations with extreme heat. As Detroit experiences hotter days and longer heat episodes, the impact of heat on health is expected to increase.

Objective:
- Alert the public, including those most at risk of heat-related illness that hot weather conditions are either imminent or currently exist, and to take appropriate precautions.
- During extreme heat conditions, advise the public to seek relief at the City’s recreation centers that also serve as cooling centers.
- Advise City Departments with field personnel to take the necessary precautions when working in extreme heat conditions.

Definitions
Heat Alerts: Heat Alerts are any number of the following, defined below: Excessive Heat Warnings, Excessive Heat Watches, and Severe and Prolonged Heat Events/Heat Emergencies.
Excessive Heat Warning: Issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) when a heat index of 105 degrees F or higher is expected for a period of 3 consecutive hours or more. The warning will continue through the overnight hours, following a day with excessive heat, if the heat index is not expected to fall below 75 degrees F. An Excessive Heat Warning can be issued for a heat index less than 105 degrees F when the cumulative effect of successive days or near-warning heat leads to life-threatening conditions.

Excessive Heat Watch: Issued by the NWS within 12 hours of the onset of a heat index of 105 degrees F or higher is expected for a period of three hours per day for two consecutive days or more. The warning will continue through the overnight hours, following a day with excessive heat, if the heat index is not expected to fall below “around 75 degrees F.” An Excessive Heat Warning can be issued for a heat index less than 105 degrees F when the cumulative effect of successive days of near warning heat leads to life-threatening conditions.

Emergency Operations Center: Physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place.

Emergency Support Functions: Emergency Support Functions (ESF) serve as grouping mechanisms for governmental and private sector support functions. ESFs organize emergency response efforts through a unified command structure to improve efficiency and maximize resources.

Severe and Prolonged Heat Event/Heat Emergency: May not be triggered by specific weather conditions, but the magnitude of the effects may extend outside healthcare services and social services, such as power outages or water shortages.

Policy:
The DHD HWR Plan is in accord with the Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (DHSEM) Adverse Weather Response Team (AWRT) Plan and appears as an Annex to the AWRT Plan. The DHD HWR Plan is in preparation or mitigation of a response to impacts that have the potential to adversely affect the Detroit population.

The National Weather Service will be the primary source of information and updates on the weather conditions. The DHSEM provides NWS information to the AWRT members which includes representatives from the DHD. DHD will monitor the information for heat index triggers set by the DHD Health Officer for initial activation of the DHD Hot Weather Response Plan until the weather conditions change favorably.

Heat Alerts are issued when weather conditions suggest that the likelihood of mortality is greater than what would be expected on a typical day.

If conditions warrant the activation of the DHSEM Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the DHD EOC representative will report to the EOC and continue response activities/responsibilities of Emergency Support Function #8 (Public Health and Medical Services). The DHD HWR Plan will be included in the AWRT Plan as an annex in the ESF #8 section of the plan.
The following ESF Teams will have responsibilities when related to Severe and Prolonged Heat Events/Heat Emergencies.

- **ESF #2**: Communications
- **ESF #5**: Emergency Management
- **ESF #6**: Mass Care (Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services)
- **ESF #7**: Logistics
- **ESF #12**: Energy
- **ESF #15**: External Affairs

**Procedure**

**1.0 Authority to Activate**

The Detroit Health Department (DHD) Health Officer has the lead role in providing advice and direction on health-related matters. The DHD Health Officer will advise the Mayor’s Office Communications Team of the activation of the DHD HWR Plan upon notification of conditions that would trigger an Excessive Heat Warning, or at their discretion as conditions warrant. The DHD Health Officer will then notify the Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management of the activation of the HWR Plan.

A Severe and Prolonged Event/Heat Emergency may initially be forecasted as an Excessive Heat Watch or Excessive Heat Warning. The Mayor has the legal authority to declare an emergency and to take necessary protective measures.

**1.1 Notification and Activation of the HWR Plan**

There are two distinct notification groups when the NWS reports indicate heat related weather conditions which warrant the activation of the HWR Plan: Key Response Notification Group and General Notification Group.

**Key Response Notification Group**

1. **DHSEM**: The designated person monitoring the NWS reports disseminates information to AWRT members. The information includes daily weather conditions for the Detroit area.
2. **Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness (OPHEP)**: The designated OPHEP person calculates the heat index based on the NWS report and twice per week provides the DHD Health Officer with a daily heat index for consecutive hours with indication on the report that the heat index has reached the alert status set by the DHD.
3. **DHD Health Officer/Mayor’s Office**: The DHD Health Officer, based on the report from OPHEP, will determine the necessity to activate the HWR Plan including media advisory, notification to the Mayor’s Office Communications Team of the weather conditions and coordination with the General Services Department and the Parks and Recreation Department to make the recreation centers available for use as cooling centers.
4. **PIO DHD and Mayor’s Communications Team**: The DHD and Mayor’s Office PIOs will collaborate on media messages upon notification from the DHD Health Officer.
General Notification Group

- Public: A DHSEM representative will contact Detroit Public Safety Communications to request the issuance of a Community notification alert (email and text message) to advise the public of the heat alert.
- Local hospitals and community agencies: DHSEM will send a Mass Notification Message to hospitals, The United Way for Southeastern Michigan, The Red Cross, and The Salvation Army.

1.2 Severe and Prolonged Heat Event/Heat Emergency Notifications

A Severe and Prolonged Heat Event/Heat Emergency is not automatically triggered by a predetermined set of weather related or other criteria. When an extended heat event is severe and/or prolonged, so that its effects extend outside healthcare services and social services, such as power outages or water shortages, and/or strains the capacity of the health and social services sectors or threatens public safety, The Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management will recommend to the Mayor to activate the City of Detroit’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The EOC complements the response and provides an established and recognized point of authority to coordinate response resources, personnel and incident information. The decision to escalate the municipal response from an Excessive Heat Warning will be taken in consultation with the DHD Health Officer and other impacted City Departments, coordinated by the Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

A prolonged heat event would likely impact public health although this would need to be confirmed at the time of the event. If the decision is made to escalate the municipal response (i.e. an emergency is declared), the City of Detroit Emergency Operations Plan will be implemented and the Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management will coordinate the response efforts in the EOC. DHSEM has the authority and responsibility to initiate, coordinate, and otherwise bring about the implementation of the Detroit Emergency Operations Plan to support the City’s response to the heat emergency.

2.0 Communication

Timely and effective communication of information to the public and between participating agencies is critical during an Excessive Heat Warning and during a Severe and Prolonged Heat Event/Heat Emergency.

- PIO DHD and The Mayor’s Office Communications Team will collaborate on media releases to Detroit residents whenever an Excessive Heat Warning is called. Refer to Appendix 2 for a template to support media releases.
- DHSEM shall support the use of the mass communication system for communication and coordination of resources amongst responding personnel and various healthcare sector partners (e.g. hospitals, EMS, medical examiner, community clinics, providers, and other health units), which may be used during a Severe and Prolonged Heat Event/Heat Emergency.
Current as of 06/18/2020

- With the activation of the EOC or PHOC, DHSEM may also activate the Joint Information Center to coordinate a synchronized public message. Short activation of the JIC, the DHD PIO will collaborate with the Mayor’s Communications staff to prepare a public message.
- In addition, the DHD website will be updated to reflect the current status of the cooling centers. Key spokespersons from Detroit Health Department (Chief Public Health Officer/DHD PIO), DHSEM and the Mayor’s Office have been selected to respond to media requests during Heat Alerts.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 Detroit Health Department
Detroit Health Department Health Officer or designee declares and terminates Excessive Heat Warnings, conducts media interviews as appropriate, and may request the activation of DHD’s Public Health Operations Center (PHOC) or DHSEM’s EOC in the event of an Excessive Heat Warning.

DHD responsibilities include the following:
- Lead agency in directing the response to a health-related emergency
- Request the activation of the City’s cooling centers and extended hours, if necessary.
- Issue timely media notifications to the public of the City’s cooling center hours and to take precautions or actions to avoid heat-related illness.
- Monitor and evaluate the National Weather Service reports.
- Detroit Animal Care and Control will disseminate hot weather information to pet owners and respond to calls of injured or stray animals related to heat stress.
- Maintain notification lists and initiate notification process.
- Update the heat alert on the DHD website.
- Develop and coordinate distribution of hot weather educational resources.
- Verify which recreation centers will serve as cooling centers during the summer season.
- Share the list of each year’s cooling centers on the DHD website.
- Activate Code Blue procedures when necessary to assist with multi-unit residential buildings loss of air conditioning.
  - Conduct emergency assessment
  - Communicate with building owner
  - Vacate and relocate residents to hotel until resolution is achieved

3.2 Parks and Recreation Department and General Services Department (2020)
- The following centers will be open from noon-8:00pm as cooling centers:
  Kemeny Recreation Center (west side)
  Patton Recreation Center (southwest)
  Adams-Butzel Recreation Complex (east side)
  Lasky Recreation Center (east side)
  Farwell Recreation Center (east side, no gym, accommodate 20 people throughout the building)
  Crowell Recreation Center (west side)
Northwest Activity Center could be available. However, this center is managed by a private company with a city administrator.

- Provide public education on hot weather and health through seminars, presentations and displays during hot weather season.
- Social Distancing of 6 feet will be required for individuals that are not with family members.
- Upon entering the center temperature checks will be taken and health screening questions will be asked to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone exhibiting symptoms will not be allowed to enter the center and will be advised to contact their Primary Care Physician. If symptoms occur while in the center individuals will be quarantined and facility protocols will be followed.
- Face masks are required at all times while in the Recreation Center. Facemask should not be placed on young children under age 2.
- All centers will provide signage throughout the building with practices that will be implemented to create a safe environment.

3.3 Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Detroit Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management responsibilities include the following: DHSEM maintains the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in a state of operational readiness. During a severe or prolonged heat event, the EOC may be activated with or without a Declaration of an Emergency.
- Support the application of the Incident Command System model to manage the response to a severe or prolonged heat event.

4.0 Abbreviations
AWRT: Adverse Weather Response Team
DHD: Detroit Health Department
DHSEM: Detroit Homeland Security & Emergency Management
EOC: Emergency Operations Center
ESF: Emergency Support Function
HWR: Hot Weather Response
NWS: National Weather Service
OPHEP: Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness
PHOC: Public Health Operation Center
PIO: Public Information Officer
Appendix 1: Flowchart of HWR Plan Activation

STEP 1: DHSEM monitors NWS Weather Reports.

STEP 2: DHSEM sends NWS reports to AWRT.

STEP 3: AWRT reviews reports and monitors weather conditions.

STEP 4: PHEP representative to AWRT or designee calculates daily heat index for consecutive hours, indicating whether the forecast will reach the alert status set by DHD. PHEP representative sends information to DHD Health Officer twice per week.

STEP 5: DHD Health Officer reviews PHEP information and determines whether to activate the HWR Plan. If yes, the DHD Health Officer continues with the following steps.

STEP 6: DHD Health Officer informs Mayor’s Office Communications Team that the HWR Plan will be activated.

STEP 7: DHD Health Officer informs DHSEM that the HWR Plan will be activated.

DHSEM contacts Detroit Public Safety Communications to request issuance of a Community Notification Alert advising the public of the heat alert.

DHSEM sends a mass notification message to hospitals, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, the Salvation Army, and the Red Cross.

STEP 8: DHD Health Officer informs DHD PIO that the HWR Plan will be activated.

DHD PIO contacts the General Services Department and the Parks and Recreation Department to inform them of the HWR Plan activation, to request a list of cooling centers, and to confirm their hours.

DHD PIO collaborates on media messages with the Mayor’s Office communications team.
Appendix 2: Press Release Template for Opening Cooling Centers

Pre-scripted Mass Notification to the General Notification Group by way of Neighborhood Message:

URGENT MESSAGE
Due to the extreme hot weather forecast, the City of Detroit will activate its Cooling Centers starting _____________. The City's recreation centers and libraries serve as Cooling Centers during extreme heat conditions. Check the City’s website for a complete list of the Cooling Centers and Heat Safety guidance. Please check on your neighbors, especially the elderly.