*Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health*

**Prevent and treat heat-related illness**

***Know the signs and beat the heat!***

# Heat cramps

## Recognize the signs:

* Lots of sweating
* Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

## Actions to take:

* Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
* Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
* Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

## Seek medical attention if:

* The person’s symptoms are getting worse
* Cramps last longer than 1 hour
* The person is on a low sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

# Heat exhaustion

## Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

* Feeling tired or weak
* Fast or weak pulse
* Cold, pale, and clammy skin
* Nausea or vomiting
* Headache or dizziness
* Irritability

## Actions to take:

* Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
* Move them to a cool place
* Encourage them to lie down
* Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
* Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

## Seek medical attention if:

* The person is throwing up
* The person is getting worse
* Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
* The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

# Heat stroke

## Look for:

## Symptoms above plus:

* High body temperature (higher than 103°F)
* Throbbing headache
* Seizures
* Altered mental state or confusion
* Unconsciousness (passing out)

## Actions to take:

* **Call 9-1-1 – this is a medical emergency**
* Cool immediately:
  + Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
  + Remove outer clothing
* Keep them safe:
  + If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
* If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury

[Extreme heat | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/extreme-heat)

Extreme Heat-Best practices for Correctional Facilities

# Plan and educate

**Use the *On-Site Unhealthy Heat Management Plan for Correctional Facilities,* which uses the best practices below and helps to customize them for your facility.**

* **Check the DPH** [**Unhealthy Heat Forecast webpage**](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-unhealthy-heat-forecast) to see if heat risk is in the forecast. Pay attention to DPH e-mail alerts when an unhealthy heat wave is expected.
* Train officers and staff on how to **recognize and monitor the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness** and the actions to take.
* **Identify incarcerated individuals and staff who are at greater risk for heat-related illness (HRI)**. Staff should know that people who work outdoors, older adults (age 65+), pregnant people, and people with chronic medical conditions like heart problems, asthma, diabetes, mental illness, or who are on certain medications are more likely to get sick from unhealthy heat.
* **Warn new staff and incarcerated people** about [acclimatization](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/mining/UserFiles/works/pdfs/2017-124.pdf). People who are not used to unhealthy heat are more at risk during their first unhealthy heat wave. **Remember, the first is the worst!**
* **Implement a buddy system** for staffto watchfor early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. Prioritize those at greatest risk and take actions quickly if they see signs of heat-related illness.

# Hydrate

* **Make drinking water accessible** to maintain hydration.
* **Provide** **ice** as needed.
* Remind staff and incarcerated individuals of the **importance of hydration**. People should **not** wait until they thirsty to drink.

# Consider schedules and clothing

* **Provide shorts** to incarcerated individuals.
* Provide increased opportunities for individuals to **shower.**
* Provide correctional officers with additional **breaks in cooler spaces a**nd options to **wear lighter uniforms.**

# Identify or create cooler spaces

* **Ensure proper operation and use** of existing mechanical or natural ventilation design/systems.
* **Use (or allow for) standing fans and personal fans** in areas that may not have adequate ventilation.
* **Tint windows** that get late morning and/or afternoon sun.
* **Provide access to cooler areas** like the lowest floor, open common areas, and areas with air conditioning.
* **Provide additional outdoor recreational time** if shaded areas are present.
* **Identify and provide priority housing (in cooler areas)** for heat- sensitive, at-risk, or newer individuals who may be less familiar with or acclimated to the facility.