



Prevent and treat heat-related illness

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



Heat cramps

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

Look for:

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

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 911 – 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- 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](#) 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](#). 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 staff to watch for 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** and 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

