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## ADVISORY

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To: Massachusetts State and County Correctional Facility Environmental Health & Safety Officers  
From: Steven Hughes, Director, Community Sanitation Program (CSP), Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health  
Date: May 23, 2024  
Re: Extreme Heat-Related Illness and Preventative Measures for State and County Correctional Facilities

Hot temperatures outside can lead to potential health concerns due to elevated temperatures inside. Since many correctional facilities do not have air conditioning, correctional officers and incarcerated individuals should be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and steps to take to mitigate this risk.

The first step to mitigating risk is preparation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS), has developed a [HeatRisk Dashboard](#) to provide a nationwide seven-day heat forecast model. This tool enables users to search by zip code to identify when air temperatures may reach levels that could negatively impact their health. The tool also provides recommended actions to take to safeguard health during extreme heat events. The CSP will use this tool to alert facilities of the predicted risk and to remind facilities of these recommendations.

There are other steps your facility can take to protect individuals through the prevention, identification, and treatment of heat-related illnesses. The CSP recognizes that facilities have different limitations, operational considerations, and building designs, which is why, in addition to the general guidance below, CSP staff also provides hands on site-specific heat surveys and heat audits to offer more tailored guidance for facilities. **The Community Sanitation Program will conduct two virtual extreme heat-related illness trainings for Environmental Health and Safety Officers, Facility Management Staff, and Medical Staff on May 29<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Administrative staff are encouraged to review and implement the following preventative measures, **when feasible** for their facility, during periods of extreme heat to protect incarcerated individuals and staff from heat-related illness:

- Make drinking water accessible to maintain hydration;
- Provide ice as needed;
- 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;
- Provide increased opportunities for inmates to shower;
- Ensure windows that get late morning and/or afternoon sun are tinted;
- Provide access to the lowest floor and open common areas that are cooler;
- Provide additional outdoor recreational time for inmates, if shaded areas are present;
- Identify and provide priority housing (in cooler areas) for heat sensitive, at-risk, or newer inmates who may be less familiar with, or acclimated to, the facility;
- Train correctional officers about the signs, symptoms, and increased risk factors for heat-related illness, e.g., old age, obesity, hypertension, asthma, mental illness, and medication use;
- Identify and provide priority break locations in cooler areas for correctional officers; and
- Provide correctional officers with additional breaks in cooler spaces and options to wear lighter uniforms.

As part of an ongoing effort to help prepare for extreme heat and document mitigation efforts implemented by correctional facilities, the Community Sanitation Program plans to provide a Model Extreme Heat Management Plan with template forms. Facilities can use the plan and template forms to document and track their efforts.

The Department of Public Health’s Community Sanitation Program recommends this information be shared with all corrections facility staff, including Medical Staff, Administration and Corrections Officers. As always, thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this important public health matter.

Listed below are further details on the signs and symptoms of the different types of heat-related illness, and what you should do if you see someone in distress from the heat. When in doubt, call 911 or emergency medical services.

<b>Signs of Heat Cramps</b>	<b>You Should</b>	<b>Go to the Hospital if:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy sweating</li> <li>• Muscle pain or spasms (often in the abdomen, arms, or calves)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Give them water, clear juice, or a sports drink</i></b></li> <li>• Tell them to stop exerting themselves and/or stop physical activity and move to a cool place</li> <li>• Have them wait for cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person has a history of heart problems</li> <li>• Cramps last longer than 1 hour</li> <li>• The person is on a low sodium diet</li> </ul>
<b>Signs of Heat Exhaustion</b>	<b>You Should:</b>	<b>Go to the Hospital if:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of sweating</li> <li>• Fast/weak pulse</li> <li>• Nausea/vomiting</li> <li>• Headache/dizziness</li> <li>• Fainting (passing out)</li> <li>• Muscle cramps</li> <li>• Cold, pale, and clammy skin</li> <li>• Fatigue/tiredness/or weakness</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Thirst</li> <li>• Decreased urine output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Give them water</i></b></li> <li>• Move them to a cool place</li> <li>• Allow them to lie down</li> <li>• Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing</li> <li>• Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person is throwing up</li> <li>• The person is getting worse</li> <li>• Symptoms last longer than 1 hour</li> <li>• The person has heart problems or high blood pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Signs of Heat Stroke</b>	<b>You Should:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast, strong pulse</li> <li>• High body temperature (above 103°F)</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Red, hot, dry, or damp skin</li> <li>• Throbbing headache</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Losing consciousness (passing out)</li> <li>• Altered mental state</li> <li>• Unconsciousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CALL 911 – this is a medical emergency.</b></li> <li>• Reduce the person’s body temperature with whatever means you can - apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person, immerse them in a cool bath/shower, or spray them with cool hose water</li> <li>• Move them to a cool place</li> <li>• <b>Wait until clearance from a medical professional BEFORE you give them anything to drink</b></li> <li>• If there is uncontrollable muscle twitching, keep the person safe, but do not place any objects in their mouth</li> <li>• If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open</li> </ul>	