

Baltimore City
Code Red Heat Alert Plan 2007

May 30, 2007

SUMMARY

Baltimore City's Code Red Heat Alert activation provides for a coordinated approach to providing relief to seniors and vulnerable populations in Baltimore City during a heat crisis in the summer months.

STANDARD

The Health Commissioner declares a Code Red Heat Alert day during periods of extreme heat. In making the decision, the Health Commissioner will take into account information from two sources: 1) when the National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory, and 2) when the Baltimore Heat Health Watch Warning System (a protocol developed by the University of Delaware) has issued a heat advisory or an excessive heat warning.

The decision to activate Code Red Heat Alert on a particular day will be made before 6 am of that day, if possible. Health will send out a press release announcing Code Red Heat Alert status. Health will also notify the 311 Call Center, Fire, Police, the Mayor's Office, the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education, the Housing Department, and the Office of Emergency Management. Individuals unsure of whether Code Red Heat Alert is in effect can call the City's 311 Call Center for details.

SERVICES

1. Shelter

The Housing Department will open the following 6 cooling centers in daytime hours to provide cooling relief to seniors:

- Eastern Community Action Center -- 1400 Orleans Street
- Northern Community Action Center -- 5225 York Road
- Southern Community Action Center -- 606 Cherry Hill Road (inside the shopping center 2nd floor)
- Northwest Community Action Center -- 3314 Ayrdale Avenue
- Western Community Action Center -- 1133 Pennsylvania Avenue
- Southeastern Community Action Center -- 3411 Bank Street

The Commission on Aging and Retirement Education may open the following four senior centers:

- Waxter Senior Center -- 1000 Cathedral Street
- Oliver Senior Center -- 1700 Gay Street
- Sandtown-Winchester Senior Center -- 1601 Baker Street
- Hatton Senior Center -- 2825 Fait Avenue

Each center will offer air-conditioned space and cold water for citizens in need. Transportation to the senior centers will be provided for older adults needing

transportation. Information regarding the number and location of cooling centers will be made available through local media, and will also be given to 311 operators. Additional cooling centers can be opened in the event that more sites are needed.

2. Communication

311 operators will provide cooling center locations, safety tips and information about warning signs for heat-related morbidity. They will also attempt to link residents in need of transportation to cooling centers with available transportation programs, including CARE's TaxiCard voucher program.

3. Outreach

- Department of Housing and Community Development.
 - On-call staff will increase their already extensive outreach efforts.
- Commission on Aging and Retirement Education (CARE)
 - CARE will issue email alerts on Code Red Heat Alert days to senior serving organizations throughout the city instructing them to advise older adults to keep cool and safe, advise seniors of the harmful effects of the extreme heat, and encourage seniors to seek shelter in cooling centers.
- Health Department
 - Health will inform the public about ways to stay safe and healthy during periods of extreme heat via the media and 311 line.
- Police Department
 - The Police Department will do random checks of seniors in their data file throughout the summer. On Code Red Heat Alert days, patrol officers will give special attention to cooling centers.
- Fire Department
 - During late spring through summer, Fire will distribute heat safety and energy assistance information as a part of its normal day-to-day operations/home visits.
 - During an extreme or prolonged heat emergency, Fire will work with Housing to distribute heat safety tips and information about energy assistance, fans and/or AC units to targeted populations.

4. Energy Assistance Surveillance and Response

The Health Department will partner with Emergency Department and physicians to identify city residents at medical risk who can benefit from energy assistance. Identified individuals will be referred to the Department of Housing and the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education (CARE) to quickly link residents with assistance and supports.

5. Code Red Surveillance

To track heat wave severity and patterns of outreach efforts, the Baltimore City Office of Emergency Management will coordinate regular compilation of a Heat Impact Report. The Heat Impact Report will track weather parameters, hyperthermia-related medical incidents, outreach efforts, power outages and heat-related complaints to the City 311 phone line.