

CITY OF BALTIMORE
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Baltimore City Launches 2010 Code Red Heat Alert Plan

BALTIMORE, MD (June 18, 2010) – With summer around the corner and high temperatures forecast for the weekend, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined with City agency leaders in announcing the 2010 Code Red Heat Alert initiative, a multi-agency, coordinated approach to providing cooling relief to vulnerable populations in Baltimore City during a heat crisis.

“Baltimore’s multi-agency Code Red heat alert plan has been recognized as a model for cities all over America,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “With the coordinated efforts of City agencies working together, and the help of the public, Baltimore will be prepared for the heat this summer. Today, we especially want to reach out to our seniors and vulnerable populations who are most at-risk during these events.”

Published research shows the greatest risk of death is for vulnerable individuals without air conditioning or a strong social network. Those without electricity may be particularly vulnerable to heat-related health problems.

“High temperatures can be lethal, especially for our most isolated, vulnerable residents,” said Office of Emergency Management Director Robert Maloney. “We need everyone to do their part – be safe in the heat, look out for your neighbors, and call 311 if you are concerned about a neighbor’s well-being on extremely hot days. It’s the little things that will save folks from harm.”

The Baltimore City Health Commissioner is responsible for declaring a Code Red Heat Alert. A press release announcing Code Red Heat Alert is sent to local media. The public has several other ways to find out if a Code Red Heat Alert is in effect:

- Check the Health Department Website, www.baltimorehealth.org/coderedinfo.html.
- Call 311 – the city service line.
- Twitter users can sign up for real-time updates by following “Bmore_Healthy.”

“This is a creative response to potentially lethal heat-related emergencies,” said Interim Health Commissioner Olivia Farrow. “By partnering with City agencies throughout Baltimore, we have the ability to save lives.”

When a Code Red Heat Alert is in effect, the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education will open cooling centers around the city. The cooling centers will offer air-conditioned space and cold water for residents without access to cool air in their homes.

Below are the locations of the cooling centers:

- 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 -- 3939 Reisterstown Road
- Southeastern Community Action Center -- 3411 Bank Street
- Eastern Community Action Center -- 1400 E. Federal Street

- Waxter Center -- 1000 Cathedral Street
- Oliver Center -- 1700 Gay Street
- Sandtown-Winchester Center -- 1601 N. Baker Street
- Hatton Center -- 2825 Fair Avenue
- John Booth – 229 ½ S. Eaton Street
- Zeta Center – 4501 Reisterstown Road

Hours of operation will be announced when a Code Red is called. In addition, residents can go to Recreation and Parks centers throughout the city for relief from the heat.

During periods of extreme heat, the Baltimore City Health Department recommends that city residents:

- Drink plenty of water or juice
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Wipe skin with cool water as needed
- Reduce outside activities
- Wear light weight and light-colored clothing
- Stay inside during the hottest time of day (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles, even for short periods of time.
- Watch out for signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke:
 - Confusion
 - Nausea
 - Light-headedness
 - High body temperature with cool and clammy skin
 - Hot, dry, flushed skin
 - Rapid or slowed heart beat
- Seek medical help immediately if any of these symptoms occur
- Seek relief from the heat in air-conditioned locations
- Check on older, sick, or frail people in your community who may need help responding to the heat

“We are proud to participate in this effort,” said Fire Chief Jim Clack. “We want our city's residents to look at each station as a pillar of support during a challenging time.”

City residents who want information on the cooling centers can call 311. Any city resident experiencing the signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke should call 911. Additional information, including outreach materials for community groups, can be found at <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/coderedinfo.html>.