

# EXTREME HEAT DISASTER RESPONSE

## **Background:**

In the District, the heat emergency plan is activated when the heat index (an accurate measure of how hot it really feels when the effects of humidity are added to the high temperatures) reaches 95°. You may have heard the news and media refer to a heat advisory or heat warning. These warnings are defined below and when they are issued:

- An *excessive heat* **ADVISORY** means that extreme heat is likely.  
A **heat advisory** is issued when the heat, or combination of heat and humidity, is expected to become an inconvenience for much of the population, and a problem for some.
- An *excessive heat* **WARNING** means that extreme heat is likely **and** can pose a threat to life if proper precautions are not taken.  
**Excessive heat warnings** are issued when the heat, or combination of heat and humidity, is expected to be dangerous for a large portion of the population.

## Health Impacts of Extreme Heat:

Heat Stroke	Heat Exhaustion
<p>Heat stresses such as heat exhaustion and heat strokes are not uncommon during extremely high temperatures. In fact, heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. Infants and children, older adults (over the age of 65 years), people with chronic conditions and individuals who work outdoors may be more prone to some form of heat stress. <i>Heat stroke</i> occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.</p> <p><b>Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke</b> Warning signs vary but may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)</li> <li>• Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)</li> <li>• Rapid, strong pulse</li> <li>• Throbbing headache</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Nausea</li> </ul>	<p>Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.</p> <p><b>Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion</b> Warning signs vary but may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy sweating</li> <li>• Paleness</li> <li>• Muscle Cramps</li> <li>• Tiredness</li> <li>• Weakness</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Fainting</li> <li>• Skin: may be cool and moist</li> <li>• Pulse rate: fast and weak</li> <li>• Breathing: fast and shallow</li> </ul>

## In the Event of Extreme Heat:

- Stay indoors as much as possible.
- Turn on the air-conditioner or fan.
- DO NOT leave children or pets in vehicles.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight and loose-fitting clothes.
- Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outside (SPF 15-30 is best).
- Limit exposure to the sun (the sun is most powerful between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.).
- Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- If you do not have access to a cool-temperature location, visit one of the District's "Cooling Centers" located throughout the city.

