

<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <p style="text-align: center;">Code Red</p>	<b>APPLICABLE TO:</b>  All individuals living on the Streets, Outreach Providers, Shelter and Drop in systems, DHS Staff, Collaborating City Agencies	<b>ISSUED:</b>  <p style="text-align: center;">June 11, 2008</p>
<b>ADMINISTERED BY:</b>  NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS)	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>  Robert V. Hess, Commissioner	

**CITY OF NEW YORK  
 DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES (DHS)  
 ADULT SERVICES**

**DHS CODE RED PROCEDURE**

**I. Introduction**

The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has established a Heat Emergency Plan that is activated by periods of extreme heat and humidity, as defined by the National Weather Service (NWS). This (DHS) plan expands that plan to include the following 3 levels:

- DHS Code Red Level 1 – Issued within 24 hours prior to the onset of a heat index reaching at least 90 degrees Fahrenheit (F).
- DHS Code Red Level 2 – Issued within 24 hours prior to the onset of the following conditions: Heat index of at least 100 degrees F, but less than 105 degrees F for any period of time or when nighttime lows are above 80 degrees for any period of time.
- NYC Excessive Heat Warning– The NWS issues an Excessive Heat Warning within 24 hours of the onset of the following conditions: Heat index of at least 105 degrees F for more than 3 hours per day for 2 consecutive days, or a Heat Index of at least 115 degrees F for any period of time..

\*For the purpose of this document it is assumed that when a higher level is activated, all activities encompassed in lower levels will also be included in the response

DHS' Code Red Procedure is activated by the DHS Operations Desk when the NWS predicts a heat index rising to at least 90 degrees or 100 degrees or when a Excessive Heat Warning is issued. The procedure, below, outlines the systematic steps that are taken to protect homeless individuals living outside, on the streets, in parks or on beaches, or in poorly-ventilated, contained settings (i.e. vans), who are at risk for heat related exposure and possible death. This procedure instructs outreach to:

- Identify and regularly monitor clients, who may be at risk during hot weather
- Assist at-risk clients to come indoors, voluntarily, to facilities, that are adequately cooled and well-ventilated
- Arrange for the involuntarily transport of at-risk clients, when appropriate, to hospital Emergency Departments

Participate and engage at-risk clients in accessing citywide activities/strategies, such as cooling centers, hydration vans, etc.

## II. Declaration of Code Red Emergency

A DHS Code Red Alert is issued by the DHS Operations Desk within 24 hours prior to the onset of the heat index rising to at least 90 degrees F. It lasts until 8pm of the day for which it is called, unless nighttime conditions exceed the above described thresholds.

## III. DHS Code Red Emergency Procedures

### A. DHS Operations

1. Reissues the Code Red Procedure, annually, during the first week of April;
2. Distributes “Beat the Heat” brochures and “OEM Tip Sheets”, each April, to the entire DHS system;
3. Holds mandatory training for the outreach teams in summer preparedness. These trainings will include a review of this Procedure, instruction on how to identify and assess at-risk clients, and resources available during a Code Red Emergency;
4. Facilitates a conference call with representatives from all outreach teams in the week following the activation of a DHS Code Red Emergency. The call will be used to identify where the teams may need more support and/or areas of collaboration.
5. The DHS Emergency Operations Unit receives notification of a Heat Emergency from OEM, disseminates the information throughout the DHS system, participates in OEM conference calls during a city wide heat emergency, and collaborates with other appropriate City agencies to help each maximize its effectiveness in serving street homeless clients and helping to keep them cool during Heat Emergencies.
6. Activates supplemental resources, as needed, throughout the season such as cooling/hydration vans.

### B. Outreach Programs

1. During a DHS Code Red Level 1 the following steps will be activated:
  - a. Code Red Priority List:
    - Each April, all outreach teams will create a **Code Red Priority List** of clients and identify usual locations of where they congregate. Clients in vehicles, without air conditioners, may be especially at risk and should be included on these lists.
    - This list is to be updated as additional at-risk clients are identified throughout the summer.
    - Individuals will be placed on the list if they are active alcohol and/or substance users; medically vulnerable with known chronic medical conditions, including, but, not limited to diabetes, heart disease, and peripheral vascular disease (especially, if on medications for poor circulation), Alzheimer’s disease, respiratory conditions, or morbid obesity; have a severe mental illness, especially if on anti-psychotic medications, anti-depressants, or medications for sleep; are aged 65 or older; are young children; and/or have been identified as at-risk.
    - When necessary, outreach teams should call the NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit (HOU) and/or Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) for assistance, when entering secluded or dangerous areas to check in on at-risk clients.
    - To keep clients who are not at immediate risk of heat related injuries and who refuse to go indoors safe from heat exhaustion/heat stroke, outreach teams will distribute supplies such as water and sunscreen.
    - Outreach teams will encourage clients to be transported to a safe place.

2. During a DHS Code Red Level 2 the following steps will be activated:
  - Outreach teams will contact clients on the priority lists **at least two times per shift** during the Code Red Emergency.
3. During a NYC Excessive Heat Warning the following will be activated:
  - a. **24-Hour Coverage Plan:** All outreach teams are required to submit plans that ensure adequate staff coverage during Heat Emergencies with the heaviest coverage occurring during daytime hours. Teams will contact clients on their priority lists a **minimum of once every two hours**.
  - b. **Outreach Code Red Report:** All outreach teams will submit the Code Red Report to DHS by 8am the following day. If the Citywide Heat Emergency is called to last through the night the report will be due 2 hours after the end of the period for which it was called.
  - c. **Resource Linkages:** Outreach teams will be informed of OEM resources available during a Heat Emergency, such as cooling centers, and offer these to clients they encounter
  - d. **Cooling/Hydration Vans:** DHS may operate cooling/hydration vans that will roam throughout identified hotspots. The vans will serve as a temporary respite from the heat by providing air conditioning, water and sandwiches.
3. During either a DHS Code Red Level 1, 2 or NYC Excessive Heat Warning the following activities will be ongoing:

**Assessment:** Outreach teams will follow the guidelines in Appendix III when assessing clients during a Heat Emergency.

**Transport:** For at-risk clients, teams should make every effort to secure clients' cooperation with voluntary transport to an adequately cool and well-ventilated setting.

**Involuntary Transport:** If at-risk clients refuse to go inside, or if a client appears to be suffering from heat-related health effects, the outreach team will call EMS and/or NYPD for involuntary transport. By the fall of 2007, all outreach teams will be trained as 9.58 mobile crisis teams and will have involuntary transport authority for mentally ill individuals. They will also have a lead medical person on staff that will be on-call, at all times, during a DHS Code Red or OEM Heat Emergency, to advocate with EMS and/or NYPD and aid in involuntary transports as necessary.

**Safety:**

- a. To keep clients, who are not at immediate risk of heat-related injuries and who refuse to go to a cool, well-ventilated setting, safe from heat-related injuries, outreach teams will distribute supplies, such as water and sunscreen.
- b. Outreach teams will encourage clients to be transported to a safe, cool place.

**Coordination with other Agencies:** Outreach teams should meet with appropriate stakeholders in their catchment area and near encampments (ie: NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit) to collaborate and review Code Red procedures.

C. DHS Drop-In Centers

During a Code Red, Drop-In Centers with adequate air conditioning are required to take in

as many clients as possible, within the fire and health code limitations. All efforts will be made to keep clients at the drop-in centers where they entered; however, drop-In staff can also make arrangements for clients at other city-wide facilities, as appropriate.

D. DHS Shelters

The DHS Shelters' role in this process will be reviewed annually at the Shelter Director's Meeting held in the spring.

During a Code Red Emergency:

- a. **Clients currently in shelter:** Shelters **cannot** suspend any individuals during a Code Red.
- b. **Clients returning to shelter:** During a Code Red, clients can access any shelter, not just their "official shelter". The shelter will check in with IVC to determine if a vacancy exists and, if so, the client will be given a bed. If no bed is available, the client will be given the option to sleep in a chair or be transferred to another shelter where an overnight bed exists.
- c. **Outreach or new walk-in clients:** Shelters will make available any beds within the system to accommodate all clients brought in by outreach or those who walk-in during a Code Red Emergency. All clients brought in during a Code Red by outreach will be engaged by shelter case workers the following morning in an effort to encourage them to stay indoors and access various services.
- d. **All clients:** Shelters will store clients' belongings overnight during a Code Red.

E. Hospital Emergency Departments

- a. During a Citywide Heat Emergency, hospital Emergency Departments, throughout the city, will accommodate street homeless individuals, who walk in and who are brought in by outreach, by allowing these individuals to stay in the ED waiting rooms, as possible, without being registered, during hot weather. The DHS Medical Director's Office will release an annual letter to the Health and Hospitals Corporation and Greater New York Hospital Association affirming their cooperation throughout the summer (See Appendix IV).

F. Interagency Collaboration

- a. During a Citywide Heat Emergency, the following city agencies will be requested during the OEM conference call to assist with identification and reporting of homeless clients at-risk for exposure, and involuntary removals, if appropriate
  - MTA - NYC Transit
  - NYC Department of Sanitation
  - NYC Parks Department
  - NYC Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications

#### IV. Notification Instructions

DHS Operations Desk monitors the NWS website and transmits a DHS Code Red Alert, when appropriate. The Operations Desk also receives notifications from OEM when a Citywide Heat Emergency is declared. DHS Operations Desk will disseminate the information across the DHS system.

A. DHS Operations Desk Heat Emergency Notification Procedure

1. Logs date and time of call from OEM and name of the person who called.
2. Telephones and/or contacts, via email, appropriate administrators, outreach programs, drop-ins, reception centers and shelters that a Heat Emergency was declared. (See Appendix I)

B. Code Red Administrator Notification List:

Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs	<a href="mailto:lgibbs@cityhall.nyc.gov">lgibbs@cityhall.nyc.gov</a>
Commissioner Robert V. Hess	<a href="mailto:rhess@dhs.nyc.gov">rhess@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
First Deputy Commissioner Fran Winter	<a href="mailto:fwinter@dhs.nyc.gov">fwinter@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Chief of Staff Mark Neal	<a href="mailto:mneal@dhs.nyc.gov">mneal@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
General Counsel Michele Ovesey	<a href="mailto:movesey@dhs.nyc.gov">movesey@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Deputy Commissioner George Nashak	<a href="mailto:gnashak@dhs.nyc.gov">gnashak@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Agency Medical Director Dova Marder, MD	<a href="mailto:dmarder@dhs.nyc.gov">dmarder@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Assistant Commissioner Jody Rudin	<a href="mailto:jrudin@dhs.nyc.gov">jrudin@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Associate Commissioner Sara Freeman	<a href="mailto:sfreeman@dhs.nyc.gov">sfreeman@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Deputy Commissioner Mike Gagliardi	<a href="mailto:mgagliar@dhs.nyc.gov">mgagliar@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Assistant Commissioner Glenn Pannazolo	<a href="mailto:gpannazo@dhs.nyc.gov">gpannazo@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Director of Emergency Operations Ruthie Vishlitzky	<a href="mailto:rvishlit@dhs.nyc.gov">rvishlit@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Director of Communications Linda Bazerjian	<a href="mailto:lbazerji@dhs.nyc.gov">lbazerji@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Program Administrator Mary Hall	<a href="mailto:mhall@dhs.nyc.gov">mhall@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Program Administrator Debra Hanton	<a href="mailto:dhanton@dhs.nyc.gov">dhanton@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Program Administrator Jennifer Kelly	<a href="mailto:jkelly@dhs.nyc.gov">jkelly@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Program Administrator Richard Matthews	<a href="mailto:rmatthew@dhs.nyc.gov">rmatthew@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
Program Administrator Danielle Minelli	<a href="mailto:dminelli@dhs.nyc.gov">dminelli@dhs.nyc.gov</a>
DOHMH Administrator Laura Grund	<a href="mailto:lgrund@health.nyc.gov">lgrund@health.nyc.gov</a>

The weekend Program Administrator will be called on weekends, all others are to be notified via email with "Code Red" in the subject line, except for those with the \*, who are to be both called and emailed.

Appendix II

## Contact Information for DHS Street to Home Outreach Teams

Bronx Street to Home – Citizens' Advice Bureau  
24 hour number: (718) 893-3606  
Director: Helen Forde - [hforde@cabny.org](mailto:hforde@cabny.org)

Brooklyn/Queens Street to Home – Common Ground  
24 hour number: (347) 573-1544  
Director: Amie Pospisil – [apospisil@commonground.org](mailto:apospisil@commonground.org)

Manhattan Street to Home – Goddard  
24 hour number: (212) 465-1707 and (212) 595-3066  
Director: Kristen Edwards - [kedwards@goddard.org](mailto:kedwards@goddard.org)

Staten Island – Project Hospitality  
24 hour number: (718) 720-0079 ext 10  
Director: Mario Geritano – [mario\\_geritano@projecthospitality.org](mailto:mario_geritano@projecthospitality.org)

## Contact Information for non-DHS Outreach Teams

MTA Connections  
24 hour number: (646) 773-2944  
Director: Melissa Caruso – [mcaruso@mtahq.org](mailto:mcaruso@mtahq.org)

## Appendix III

### Assessing Clients During a Heat Emergency

#### I. Heat Cramps/Heat Exposure/Heat Stroke

*Heat cramps are caused by a deficiency of water and sodium. They occur in worked muscles after exertion, often after profuse sweating and drinking water without adequate electrolyte replacement. Overexposure to high temperatures and humidity can quickly lead to heat exhaustion. It is imperative one be able to recognize the early signs and symptoms of overexposure. Early recognition can ward off serious consequences. Generally heat exhaustion is caused by loss of body fluids and important salts. If untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. Heat stroke is a **medical emergency** caused by the failure of the heat-regulating mechanism of the body, due to high heat and humidity.*

#### II. Heat Cramps/Heat Exhaustion/Heat Stroke

	Symptoms	Mental Status	Body Temperature	Treatment
<b>HEAT CRAMPS</b> (Deficiency of water and sodium)	- pain and cramps in the muscles	-no effect	-Normal	- rest in shady place - drink plenty of water - stretch the muscles
<b>HEAT EXHAUSTION</b> (Excessive water loss)	- headache - nausea - fatigue - dizziness - lightheadedness - actively sweating - skin cool & pale	- usually conscious - may faint	- over 101°	- rest in shady place or AC - keep cool - increase fluids - apply cold wet towels - fan to increase air flow - may require IV fluids
<b>HEAT STROKE</b> (failure of body's heat controlling mechanisms)	- headache - flushed skin - dry skin - rapid, bounding pulse - may develop seizures	- incoherent speech - disoriented - confused - aggressive - possibly unconscious	- over 103°	- <b>EMERGENCY, call 911</b> - rest in shady place or AC - remove most of clothes - apply cool, wet towels - fan to increase air flow

## TIPS ON BEATING THE HEAT

- Avoid direct sun exposure, particularly during peak hours between 11 am and 4 pm.
- Drink plenty of liquids. Water and diluted juices are the best. Those on fluid-restricted diets or taking diuretics (water pills) should consult their doctor.
- If possible, stay in air-conditioned areas.
- Avoid alcohol. Alcohol can actually harm one's ability to cool oneself.
- Avoid caffeine, including coffee and carbonated drinks (sodas) containing caffeine.
- In a heat emergency, one can cool down with repeated cool baths or showers, even if there is no electrical power.
- Avoid salt tablets.
- Get immediate help if a person appears to be in trouble because of the heat.