News

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Residents Urged to Take Precautions as Heat Wave Approaches State

Residents can dial 2-1-1 to find a cooling center in their area

Hartford — With temperatures across the state expected to be well into the 90s this week, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) are urging people to protect themselves during the extreme heat and seek out options to cool down within their communities.

Many towns and cities have established cooling centers to help their residents get relief from the heat. The public can dial 2-1-1 to find a cooling center in their area. State officials are asking municipalities to report their cooling centers to 2-1-1 immediately once they open so residents can be kept up-to-date.

"Extreme hot weather can be very dangerous, especially for the elderly, young children, and those who work outdoors," said DPH Commissioner Dr. Jewel Mullen. "It's important that people take frequent breaks when doing heavy outdoor work during high heat days. Drink a lot of fluids, stay indoors or in the shade when it's most hot, and wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing to beat the heat."

"While pools, lakes and beaches are a great way to cool off from the heat, it's important that people are careful and take safety precautions in and around water," said Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Commissioner Reuben F. Bradford. "We also remind people to never keep children or pets in closed or locked vehicles and to check on elderly neighbors and loved ones, especially in extreme heat."

The Departments of Public Health and Emergency Services and Public Protection offered the following safety tips:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you

drink or has you on water pills, ask him/her how much you should drink while the weather is hot.

- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the movies, shopping mall, public library, or a friend's house/apartment with air conditioning–even a few hours spent in an air conditioned environment can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- If you must be out in the heat, limit your outdoor activity to early morning and evening hours.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels).

Particularly with regard to pool and swimming safety, the following tips are important:

- Never leave children (even those who can swim) unattended in, around or near pools or other water sources – not even for a few moments. A child can drown in the moment it takes to answer a phone.
- Never swim alone. Use the buddy system and maintain eye contact.
- Keep pool area locked and secure when not in use.
- Swim only in supervised and approved areas.
- Keep rescue equipment near the pool. Have emergency flotation devices and a phone near the pool.
- Enforce water safety rules. No running, pushing or dunking.
- Learn CPR and water rescue techniques.
- Have a professional inspect all entrapment hazards in the pool, including the pump and drain.
- Know and mark the location of the electrical cut-off switch for the pool pump.

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