

Orange County Emergency Services

Standard Operating Guideline

TITLE: Extreme Heat Events	GUIDELINE NUMBER: GEN-036
SUBMITTED BY: Kim Woodward	ISSUE DATE: June 27, 2012 PAGES: 3
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OBJECTIVE: To mitigate heat related stress and manage response to excessive heat incidents

BACKGROUND: Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year; claiming more lives each year than floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. When the body heats too quickly, to cool itself safely or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating, body temperature rises and heat-related illness may develop. Emergency operations and field activities can be hot, strenuous work. The management of heat stress requires an understanding of the contributing factors and how heat stress can affect a worker. Factors that affect heat stress are:

- environmental (climate)
- workload
- clothing

SCOPE: All OCES Staff

GUIDANCE/PROCEDURE:

National Weather Service Issued Excessive Heat Outlook: issued when the potential exists for an excessive heat event in the next 3-7 days.

1. Emergency Services initiates and releases a press release.(see attached sample)
2. Emergency Plans are reviewed and contacts are updated.
3. EMS Operations manager reviews staffing and mandates that the minimum staffing for ambulances is seven units from 12pm – 12am during excessive heat warning periods.
4. Communications Branch will update the existing Rehabilitation guidelines and activate based on information received from the caller, incident commander, EMS Supervisor, Watch Officer or Director.

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National Weather Service issued Excessive Heat Watch: Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours. A Watch is used when the risk of a heat wave has increased but its occurrence and timing is still uncertain. A Watch provides enough lead time so that those who need to prepare can do so, such as cities officials who have excessive heat event mitigation plans.

1. EMS Supervisors ensure:
 - a. all ambulances are equipped with water coolers
 - b. ice machines are operational at EMS stations
 - c. ambulances are stocked with additional cold packs.
 - d. ambulances fluids are topped off and all vehicle air conditioners in good working order.
2. EMS increases outreach effort to vulnerable populations.

National Weather Service has issued Excessive Heat Warning/Advisories: are issued when an excessive heat event is expected in the next 36 hours. These products are issued when an excessive heat event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. The warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property. An advisory is for less serious conditions that cause significant discomfort or inconvenience and, if caution is not taken, could lead to a threat to life and/or property.

1. Rehabilitation units are activated for every structure fire or any extended operation.
2. 1520, 1525 and EMS crews ensure that water coolers are cleaned, filled with ice and water throughout the period of June 1-September 30.
3. Water coolers are maintained on every operational unit.
4. At least 50 clean, disposable cups are stocked on all units.
5. EMS crews are responsible for ensuring that they are properly hydrated.
6. When encountering members of the public engaged in outdoor activities including but not limited to members of public safety staff should actively hand water and the heat safety pamphlet to these individuals.

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7. 1520 and 1525 will ensure that call load is balanced and that crews have opportunity to rest in air conditioned environments.
8. Active cooling procedures should be initiated after heavy workload in outdoor environment.
9. All non-essential outdoor activities are suspended between the hours of 1100 and 2000.
10. Emergency Services may establish an Orange County Heat Line to give real-time advice and information that can help people stay safe and avoid serious outcomes.