

Heat wave forecast prompts Chicago public housing checks

July 18 2019, by Corey Williams

Public housing officials in Chicago were planning wellbeing checks on residents as the heat and humidity are expected to mount to dangerous levels as part of a wave of sweltering weather covering a substantial portion of the U.S.

Routine checks also will be done to make sure the temperature in housing units are at safe levels. Window air conditioners are available for [emergency situations](#), Chicago's Housing Authority said Thursday.

Excessive heat warnings were posted Thursday by the National Weather Service from central Nebraska and Missouri into western Ohio and parts of West Virginia. An excessive heat watch was put in place for the Cleveland area, part of New York State and parts of the East Coast.

Temperatures topping 100 degrees (38 Celsius) were expected for the southern and central High Plains.

Detroit was expected to reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32.2 degrees Celsius) Thursday, according to the National Weather Service. A high of 91 degrees Fahrenheit (32.7 degrees Celsius) was forecast for Chicago and the Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington D.C. areas. Cleveland was to see 92 degrees Fahrenheit (33.3 degrees Celsius), while a high of 96 degrees Fahrenheit (35.5 degrees Celsius) was expected in Louisville, Kentucky, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Ambulances in Oklahoma's two largest metropolitan areas of Oklahoma

City and Tulsa have responded to more than 40 heat-related calls since Tuesday, most in the late afternoon as the temperature peaks.

"We've had people who have been walking," said Emergency Medical Services Authority spokesman Adam Paluka in Tulsa. "We've had people who have been gardening. It doesn't matter how much you're doing or how little you're doing, the heat can still affect you."

At Cook County Health in Chicago, staff has been placed on-call and operational meetings are being held with emergency room leaders, said Dr. Trevor Lewis, interim chair of the health system's Emergency Medicine department.

"We have a lot of festivals in the city over the weekend. We make appropriate plans for that," said Lewis, adding that informing people how to take precautions during extreme heat is the best precaution.

Some intravenous fluids that normally are kept at [room temperature](#) at Detroit's Receiving Hospital are being cooled down and fans are being taken out of storage to be more readily available, said Rob Klever, emergency department medical director.

Heat exhaustion and [heat stroke](#) are the primary health issues emergency rooms could see Thursday through Saturday. Both can occur after temperatures hit 80 degrees or the humidity rises above 75 percent, according to Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis.

Heat stroke can lead to [permanent brain damage](#) and death if not treated promptly, said Dr. Tyler Stepsis, medical director of the Michael & Susan Smith Emergency Department at Eskenazi Health.

"Spending too much time in high temperatures and elevated humidity conditions, along with dehydration, may create an extremely dangerous

situation where the core body temperature exceeds 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius)," Strep said.

The coming [heat](#) already has caused a free Saturday evening concert at a public park in Toledo to be rescheduled and the Thursday night cancellation of a musical, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," at a park amphitheater in Normal, Illinois.

A half-marathon, 10K and 5K running event is expected to be held Saturday at Hoffman Estates, northwest of Chicago.

"Our race does start early in the day because July is hot," said Peter Strep, president of All Community Events. "The weather is 85, 90, 95 degrees. It's all hot. Half of our runners are done by 8:30 a.m. CT."

Ice will be available at course water stations and water misting tents will be put up. Hoffman Estates fire personnel and ambulances will be on-hand and medical personnel will be stationed at the finish line, Strep added.

"The accomplishment is running a race in hot weather ... not going a million miles an hour," he said. "At the end of the day we gotta make sure what we're doing is safe."

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