



Heat Alert Plan Guidance and Checklist

Administrators

The purpose of this document is to identify actions our clinic will take to maintain situational awareness and maintain clinic operations during extreme heat events. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines extreme heat events as periods of weather that are substantially hotter and/or more humid than typical for a given location at that time of year.

This Heat Alert Plan (HAP) should be implemented whenever the local weather forecast is above the average temperature for the time of year or an extreme heat event has been declared by the local weather forecasting agencies.

1. The Heat Alert Officer or designee is responsible for leading heat-planning and preparedness tasks.

The Heat Alert Officer can be a healthcare provider, qualified safety and health professional, or a manager. Assigning Primary and Alternate Heat Officer provides for continuity in case of staff absence.

The *Primary Heat Alert Officer* for our clinic is: _____.

The *Secondary Heat Alert Officer* for our clinic is: _____.

- a. The Heat Alert Officer will sign up for local wireless emergency alerts via local government notification system or other weather alert program (e.g., weatherUSA) and learn how to distinguish between the types/levels of heat alerts.

Heat Outlook: issued 3-7 days in advance of an anticipated excessive heat event to give advance notice of the possibility of excessively hot conditions.

Heat Watch: issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours. The risk of a heat wave has increased but its occurrence and timing are still uncertain. Be prepared to activate emergency operations Heat Alert Plan.

Heat Warning: issued within 12 hours of the onset of extreme heat conditions.

ACTIVATE THE HEAT ALERT PLAN.

These criteria vary across the country, especially for areas not used to extreme heat conditions.

Consider using the OSHA/NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app to obtain the heat index for your zip code and an assessment of heat risk.

- b. Heat planning activities for the Heat Alert Officer also include assessing the facility.
 - i. Open vents early in the morning and early evening (when temperatures are generally cooler) for greatest ventilation at places with high foot traffic. Open windows and blinds if the temperature outside is cooler than the temperature inside the building.
 - ii. Ensure thermostats are working properly and accurately measuring temperature inside the clinic. If no thermostats in the clinic measure air temperature, have at least one mobile thermometer to assess air temperature.
 - iii. Ensure weather strips on doors and window sills are in good condition.

- iv. Check ventilation ducts for proper insulation. If absent, consider installing insulation to increase cooling efficiency.
 - v. If the clinic uses window AC units, ensure they are properly sealed so that cool air stays in and heat stays outside.
- c. Refer to the Facility Preparedness for Extreme Heat Checklist resource for other steps to prepare the facility for and mitigate impacts of an extreme heat event.

2. Heat Alert Plan procedures are to be followed when an extreme heat event is declared by the local forecast agency.



Done	Task	Assigned to
✓	Inform the site manager of the extreme heat event declaration (i.e., Heat Warning).	Heat Alert Officer
✓	Use communications procedures identified in the EOP or other clinic communications plan to notify staff that an emergency alert was received. Methods of communication may include text messages to staff mobile phones or dissemination of an email.	Heat Alert Officer
✓	Check the local government sites (department of health) for information on activated cooling centers in the area, to know where to direct patients who need a cool location to go to. Consider posting a map of cooling centers for patients online or in the facility.	Heat Alert Officer
✓	Turn on fans/air conditioning units.	Front desk staff
✓	Turn off nonessential lights and electrical equipment (e.g., TV screens, printers, etc.) not in use, that generate heat.	Front desk staff
✓	Postpone non-essential tasks that involve high activity or heat exposure.	Clinic Supervisor
✓	Notify patients as needed if appointments need to be rescheduled. Work with clinicians to decide who may be too high risk to come to the clinic.	Front desk staff
✓	Consider telehealth for high-risk patients	Clinicians
✓	Consider working with local services to bring in high-risk patients who lack transportation.	Heat Alert Officer
✓	Check the condition of any medication or equipment that may be affected by extreme heat and relocate them as necessary.	Heat Alert Officer
✓	Provide instructions or heat informational resources to patients.	Clinicians and front desk staff
✓	In case of a power outage, refer to the Power Outage Guidance resource	Heat Alert and Facilities Manager
✓	Review power outage contingency plan for clinic. In the event power fails, plan to check air temperature in the clinic every 1-2 hours. Temperature should not exceed 86°F.	Heat Alert Officer and Facilities Manager

1. *Climate Change and Extreme Heat Events, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/climatechangeandextremeheatevents.pdf>*
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatapp.html>