

June 6, 2005

## **City of Toronto Hot Weather Response Plan**

Toronto's Medical Officer of Health declares a Heat Alert when an "oppressive" air mass is forecast and a likelihood of excess, weather-related deaths may occur.

The declaration of a heat alert activates the City's Hot Weather Response Plan that coordinates the efforts of the City and community agencies to provide services to homeless people, seniors and medically-at-risk persons.

If the air mass continues for a prolonged period of time, the Medical Officer of Health may declare an Extreme Heat Alert with additional measures including the opening of four City-operated heat relief centres.

The first hot weather of the year can be difficult for vulnerable populations who have not adjusted to the heat. Those most at risk include the elderly, infants and young children, the chronically ill, and those taking medications (e.g. for mental illness). The public is encouraged to call or visit family or neighbours who may be at risk.

The public is advised to "Beat the Heat" by taking these precautions:

- Drink lots of water and natural fruit juices.
- Stay out of the blazing sun or heat.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity outdoors.
- Go to places that are air conditioned, including shopping malls and libraries.
- Never leave children and pets unattended in a car.

The Hot Weather Response Plan includes the following actions:

- Community Information Toronto will contact more than 1100 community agencies working with vulnerable populations, such as elderly and isolated seniors and the homeless, to advise them of extra precautions to take during a heat alert.
- The Red Cross will operate an information line from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. to answer heat-related inquiries from the public and respond to requests to check on those at risk.
- The Red Cross will deliver bottled water to agencies where vulnerable people may gather.
- Toronto Emergency Medical Services will respond to requests to check on those at risk.
- Homeless shelters will allow people to stay inside during the day to keep cool.

During a heat alert, call the Red Cross Heat Information Line at 416-480-2615.  
For more information go to [www.toronto.ca/health](http://www.toronto.ca/health).