

Hot Weather Response Plan Update

Date:	April 10, 2007
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of Toronto's Heat Warning System and Hot Weather Response Plan, including the implementation of the Hot Weather Response Plan in the summer of 2006. It also provides an overview of heat response measures in other jurisdictions.

The Hot Weather Response Plan for Toronto includes both proactive and reactive components. The primary challenge in implementing the response plan continues to be reaching those who are most vulnerable and at risk. A strong public education campaign early in the hot weather season, along with a collaborative campaign that encourages family, friends and neighbours to check on isolated adults and seniors during Heat Alerts and Extreme Heat Alerts are the most promising strategies to reduce heat-related illness and deaths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration be authorized to allocate up to \$200,000 gross (\$50,000 net) to implement the 2007 extended summer hours drop-in program;
2. Shelter, Support and Housing Administration increase the number of cooling centres operated during Extreme Heat Alerts from four to five, the fifth site to be in Scarborough; and,
3. This report be forwarded to the Community Development and Recreation committee for its consideration.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial implications for Toronto Public Health. Funding of \$200,000 gross (\$50,000 net) is required to implement the 2007 extended summer hours drop-in program per recommendation number 1, and is included in the 2007 recommended budget for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration. The cost of opening the fifth cooling centre in Scarborough will be funded from the 2007 Emergency Planning budget.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At the July 17, 2006 meeting of the Board of Health, the Medical Officer of Health was asked to report to the Board of Health on the activities undertaken as part of the 2006 Hot Weather Response Plan. The report was also to include information on heat-related policies and practices in other jurisdictions, including Chicago.

In addition, the Medical Officer of Health in cooperation with the Executive Director of Municipal Licensing and Standards was requested to report on the progress in implementing a maximum heat standard as part of the licensing of multi-occupancy premises.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Heat and its Health Effects:

Extreme heat impacts different people in different ways, depending on their age, underlying medical conditions and how well they acclimatize to hot conditions. Exposure to extreme heat over prolonged periods of time without access to cooling intervals (such as typically occur at night) makes it hard for the human body to maintain a consistent internal threshold. This stress can result in a rise of internal temperature, and/or increased stress on respiratory and circulatory systems. Either circumstance can result in illness or death. Even a short break of two or three hours from extreme heat helps to reduce this stress. The best defence against heat-related illness is prevention: staying cool, drinking fluids, moderating physical activities and wearing loose, light-coloured clothing.

Over the summer, the human body responds differently to the same climatic conditions. In early summer, people are just beginning to become acclimatized to high temperatures and humidity, and are therefore more sensitive to hot weather conditions. The same set of conditions at the end of the summer has less impact on health, as the body becomes accustomed to the heat. People who live in areas which experience irregular but intense heat waves, like Toronto, are most affected by oppressive hot weather. Socially isolated

seniors are at highest risk of heat-related morbidity and mortality. Other at-risk groups include people with chronic and pre-existing illnesses including mental illness, children and people who have poor housing or are homeless.

Heat Warning Systems and Hot Weather Responses:

Toronto has had a heat warning system since 1999. The first heat warning system used a threshold of a one-day forecast of Humidex over 40 degrees Celsius. However, Humidex levels change rapidly and are very difficult to predict. Therefore, in 2000 and 2001, Toronto Public Health collaborated with the Toronto Atmospheric Fund and the University of Delaware to develop a heat health alert system expressly for Toronto, based on a complex synoptic system. A synoptic system involves historical analysis of regional air masses that are associated with elevated mortality, while taking into account regional differences in population vulnerability to heat.

The synoptic method has provided an evidence-based tool with acceptable predictive value in forecasting periods of heat-related mortality. A Heat Alert is called when a hot air mass is forecast and the likelihood of deaths is more than 65 per cent. An Extreme Heat Alert is issued when the heat has become more severe or is expected to last longer and the likelihood of deaths is more than 90 per cent.

Toronto Public Health and its partners provide a coordinated hot weather response during heat alerts. Toronto's Hot Weather Response Plan is activated through the Heat Warning System, and is intended to alert those most at risk of heat-related illness that hot weather conditions are either imminent or currently exist, and to take appropriate precautions. Toronto Public Health reports yearly on the Hot Weather Response Plan implementation and recommended revisions for the next summer.

COMMENTS

Heat Warning Systems:

All heat warning systems use weather forecast data to predict health risks and trigger actions to reduce heat-related health impacts during unusually hot weather conditions. However, there are many differences among cities and countries as to the method used to identify heat alert triggers. There are also differences in the intensity of effort and costs associated with heat response programs. Systems vary as to the number of alert levels, and the response measures at each alert level.

In Europe, it is common to have a national heat warning system. Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal each have a countrywide warning system that is managed at the national level; however, implementation of the response program occurs at the local level. Table 1 provides an overview of European heat warning systems (see attached). Currently, Canada has no national heat warning system. The heat warning system in Montreal, like that in France, is driven by three-day temperature forecasts. The heat

warning system in Ottawa is based on Humidex forecasts, which while simple to implement, may be less accurate in predicting health risks.

For comparison, the heat warning systems in Toronto, Peel Region, Chicago and Philadelphia are all based on the complex synoptic system. A comprehensive evaluation of the relative effectiveness of diverse heat alert systems has not been undertaken to date. However, the synoptic system, based upon actual human responses to climate at specific locations, is considered to be superior to temperature-humidity methods in predicting heat-related illness and deaths.

Expected Average Number of Heat Alert and Extreme Heat Alert Days per Year:

In 2001, when Toronto Public Health launched its new Heat Health Alert System to help forecast heat alert days, the expected average number of heat alert and extreme heat alert days was 4.4 per year (heat alert: 3.0 days; extreme heat alert: 1.4 days). This estimate was based on the 46 years of meteorological data used to create the heat health alert system. Over those 46 years, there were four years where no alert days occurred and one year with 19 alert days. In the six years since the implementation of the new heat health system, the average number of heat alerts has been 8.2 days and extreme heat alerts 6.8 days, for a total annual average of 15.0 days. This higher number of heat alert days per year far exceeds the number of previously anticipated heat events, and it has been a challenge for Toronto Public Health and its partners to carry out the Hot Weather Response Plan within existing resources.

Other Jurisdictions:

A recent review of the specific heat response measures implemented across a variety of European and North American jurisdictions reveals that some measures are implemented often and others only rarely (see attached Table 2). Toronto's Hot Weather Response Plan fully incorporates all heat response measures identified in the review, with the exception of the distribution of fans and the use of heat notification (patient) registries.

In June 2006, the US Environmental Protection Agency released the Guidebook on Extreme Heat Events, a resource developed to assist communities in preparing for and responding to excessive heat events. The Guidebook highlights best practices that have been employed to save lives during excessive heat events in different urban areas and provides a variety of response options. Toronto's Hot Weather Response Plan is identified as a benchmark in that it is proactive, incorporates a needs assessment, and is reviewed and adjusted regularly.

Fans:

Fans can be effective in exhausting hot air from rooms or drawing in cooler outside air. However, in the presence of high temperatures (32.2 degrees Celsius and greater) fans are not protective and may produce a convection-oven effect that contributes to heat-related illness. Toronto Fire Services cautions strongly against opening fire doors to increase air

circulation from fans. Air-conditioning is the safer option, but consumes more energy and is more expensive and therefore, inaccessible to many people who are at risk. Toronto Hydro has agreed to work with Toronto Public Health to develop a pilot project to provide assistance for low-income vulnerable people to own and operate air-conditioners.

Heat Notification:

Toronto Public Health has worked with community agencies to develop and maintain agency-specific registries of at-risk clients they are currently serving in order to provide outreach to those clients during Heat Alerts and Extreme Heat Alerts. Some jurisdictions like Chicago use auto-dialing programs to inform those seniors who subscribe, of hot weather conditions. However, auto-dialing programs are expensive, difficult to maintain, and allow only for communication one-way. There is no way of knowing if the message gets through and is acted upon.

As an alternate approach, Philadelphia's Extreme Heat Emergency notification and response program makes use of "Block Captains" to spread the message to residents to check on those at risk. Block Captains are volunteers elected by residents of their block to help co-ordinate neighbourhood improvement projects with the city. Toronto Public Health will work with the Mayor's Office and community agencies to develop a strong communication campaign that will encourage family, friends and neighbours of seniors and other individuals who are most at risk for heat related illness, to reach out to and check on those individuals frequently during the hot weather season, and particularly during heat alerts. In addition, Toronto's City Watch Program will encourage all City staff to be aware of heat-related illness, the population groups most at risk, and what information to provide to people in the course of their daily work during hot weather.

The Experience of Summer 2006:

In the summer of 2006, Toronto Public Health called a Heat Alert or Extreme Heat Alert on a total of 17 days, in eight clusters. Nine (9) Heat Alerts and eight (8) Extreme Heat Alerts were issued. The first Heat Alert day was issued on May 29th. In two of the eight clusters, the Heat Alerts were followed by Extreme Heat Alerts for one day. The summer of 2006 was moderate in comparison to 2005, when there were eight (8) Heat Alert days and 18 Extreme Heat Alert days. In 2004, there were just two Heat Alert days.

Cool Places and Cooling Centres:

Last summer, 93 libraries and 81 community centres in Toronto were used as cooling places during Heat Alerts. Four cooling centres (at Metro Hall, East York, Etobicoke, and North York Civic Centres) were opened during the Extreme Heat Alerts. Metro Hall was opened on a 24 hour basis. In response to recommendations from community advocates and to better accommodate the needs of vulnerable people in the east region of the city, Toronto Public Health is requesting that in 2007 a fifth cooling centre be opened at the Scarborough Civic Centre during Extreme Heat Alerts.

The primary purpose of cooling centres is to provide access to a cool place and water for re-hydration. In Toronto, people who use cooling centres generally do so because they happen to be passing by. In the summer of 2006, most people who came to a Toronto cooling centre stayed for less than 15 minutes. It continues to be a challenge to get the most vulnerable populations, those who are isolated and at risk, to come to and use cooling centres. The reason for this is complex, although it is apparent that people are not inclined to leave their homes or immediate neighbourhoods. This is in keeping with the anecdotal experience of the use of cooling centres in the United States. In the U.S., any public gathering space that is air conditioned, including municipal buildings and shopping malls is designated as a cooling centre.

Currently, there are not sufficient dedicated supports and resources, such as door to door transport together with someone the person knows and trusts, to allow vulnerable adults to leave their familiar surroundings and go to a cooling centre. A more practical approach is to encourage people to use cool places that are nearby and familiar, like local library branches and community centres. Most of the library branches and community centres across the city are open in the evenings to increase public access year round. These locations will provide additional accessible cool places for people to use in hot weather conditions, and many of these spaces are already familiar to potential users.

Homes for the Aged worked with Toronto Public Health, Emergency Medical Services and Community Care Access Centres to make six short term stay beds available for frail isolated seniors during extreme heat alerts. However, these beds were not used because seniors in the community who were identified to be at risk of heat-related illness refused to leave their residences.

Last summer, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration provided \$80,000 to fund a pilot project to extend the hours of six air conditioned drop-in centres throughout the downtown to improve access to cool places for homeless individuals. The drop-in centres were open every Saturday, Sunday and statutory holiday from June 1st to mid-August, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., to provide heat respite whether or not an alert was called. Lunches were also provided. This was an effective strategy: clients accessed the drop-in centres during the extended hours, and the approach achieved a secondary Divisional objective of improving access to drop-in services. Funds are available to expand the program in 2007 in order to improve coverage in the downtown, and also to provide coverage beyond the downtown. Stakeholders have advised that in addition to increasing the number of drop-in centres included in this program, the number of extended hours funded should be increased. It is recommended that the General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration be authorized to allocate up to \$200,000 gross (\$50,000 net) to implement the extended summer hours drop-in program. This level of funding should be sufficient to fund approximately eight or nine drop-in centres throughout the City to be open on weekends and statutory holidays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day for the period June 1 to September 3, 2007.

Toronto Public Health also made available 2400 TTC tokens which were distributed by Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to 29 drop-in centres across the City for the use of homeless clients during an Extreme Heat Alert. In 2007 it is recommended that tokens be distributed in May in anticipation of Heat Alert days.

During Extreme Heat Alerts, Red Cross was prepared to provide transportation to a cooling centre by a van, and a token for the return trip home but no one requested this service. Emergency Medical Services was also available to transport people to a cool place as assessed when responding to referrals from calls to the heat information line operated by Red Cross. However, in 2007 Emergency Medical Services will no longer be able to provide this service due to budget constraints (see Appendix 1 for revised protocol for 2007).

Public Education and Outreach:

Toronto Public Health and its partners provided extensive public education through seminars, presentations and displays at the beginning of the hot weather season to seniors, child care providers, hospitals and the rooming house and boarding home sector. Public Health Inspectors prepared and disseminated Hot Weather Protection Plan packages to 631 landlords of boarding, lodging and group homes. Ninety-four premises were surveyed during and following periods of extreme heat in July and over 50% indicated that they had a hot weather protection plan in place. Public Health Nurses made 41 telephone contacts with vulnerable clients and conducted 23 home visits to known clients at-risk.

In 2007, Toronto Public Health will again follow up with the rooming houses and boarding homes on its registry and will provide telephone calls and home visits to vulnerable clients as needed. In addition, Toronto Public Health will intensify its public education campaign about hot weather and heat-related illness, continue to use media releases to advise the public of heat alerts and precautions to take during hot weather, and work collaboratively with community agencies and organizations serving vulnerable populations.

Heat-Related Deaths:

Toronto Public Health will provide assistance to coroners when they are investigating deaths where it is unclear whether high environmental temperatures may have been a factor in the death. This team approach will be presented at a June 2007 meeting of Toronto coroners. The Office of the Chief Coroner has agreed to contact Toronto Public Health to report possible hyperthermia cases that are identified during routine investigations. The Office of the Chief Coroner will be asking coroners to report their findings daily, and summaries of these findings will be provided to Toronto Public Health.

Energy Efficiency Office:

Toronto Public Health contacted the Energy Efficiency Office to explore the feasibility of expanding the Better Buildings Partnership to rooming houses and boarding homes which serve residents vulnerable to extreme heat. The Better Buildings Partnership of Enbridge Gas Distribution Incorporated, Toronto Atmospheric Fund, Toronto Hydro and Ontario Hydro Energy Incorporated has a focus on curbing CO2 emissions through measures including public education, and loans for energy efficiency retrofit projects. This initiative is funded by federal financial energy incentives.

The federal incentives start for buildings that are at least 600 square metres in size (~6400 sq ft). Most boarding homes and rooming houses are considerably smaller and therefore not eligible. There are also other eligibility requirements which are restrictive and unsuitable for the rooming, lodging and boarding home sector. Other program incentives that reduce energy costs apply only to non-profit housing and have a maximum 10% rebate. Hence, there is very little available to help this sector improve energy efficiency.

Maximum Heat Guideline:

Municipal Licensing and Standards Division is responsible for the development of new licensing standards for multi-occupancy residential buildings in Toronto and has been requested to consider a maximum heat standard as part of that licensing requirement. A maximum heat standard can be more easily applied to new residential buildings. It would be more difficult to apply the standard to older rooming houses/lodging homes/group homes in light of retrofitting costs that would be incurred by the owners.

Toronto Public Health will continue to work with Municipal Licensing and Standards Division to address the inclusion of maximum heat standard provisions, and will report back to the Board of Health upon finalization of the new licensing standards, anticipated for 2008.

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ATTACHMENTS

Table 1: Heat Warning Systems in Europe

Table 2: Comparison of 12 Heat Response Measures in U.S. and Europe

Appendix 1: Protocol for Hot Weather Response 2007

TABLE 1. HEAT WARNING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

Country	Description	Scale
Italy	Synoptic system based on oppressive air masses. Have 3 alert levels.	National program with city-level implementation (e.g. Rome, Milan, Turin)
France	Temperature-based system.	National program with extensive media outreach
Spain	Temperature-based system. Have 3 alert levels.	National warning system but health officials at regional level decide when to warn population and what protective measures to take.
United Kingdom	Temperature-based system. Have 4 alert levels.	System in place for England and Wales (not Scotland) with region-specific temperature thresholds for action.
Portugal	Temperature-based system. Has 4-point scale relating to probability of mortality.	National program which communicates warnings to 5 regional health authorities.
Germany	Based on physiological response to increasing heat load.	National warning system but health officials at regional level have authority for implementing response program

(Adapted from Kovats and Ebi, 2006)

**TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF 12 HEAT RESPONSE MEASURES IN U.S. AND EUROPE**

Measure	Description	Toronto Implementation	
		Status	Description
Media announcements (very often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Provide general advice on heat stress avoidance to public	Yes	MOH issues media release for each heat alert.
Web page or bulletin (very often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	May be open or restricted access (e.g. to relevant professionals)	Yes	Web page contains detailed information about the hot weather response. Heat Alert notifications are also sent by fax and/or email to over 811 community agencies and individuals.
Electricity companies cease disconnection for non-payment (very often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Utility companies have initiated and financially supported heat-warning systems in the U.S. Particularly important where population relies heavily on air conditioning.	Yes	Although there is no formal agreement to date with TO Hydro, they will not initiate disconnection for non-payment during heat alert days. Also available are emergency energy funds for low income citizens.
Information brochures (very often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	General advice to public, and advice for nursing home managers. Often distributed at beginning of summer via health centres, and places where vulnerable may be.	Yes	Distribute information kit to landlords where vulnerable populations live, such as rooming houses. General brochures distributed widely in community.
Cooling centres (often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Some evidence suggests cooling centres used by low-risk individuals, not by high-risk individuals as intended.	Yes	There are 81 air conditioned community centres and 99 libraries that are used as cooling places during the summer season in addition to 4 cooling centres that are opened during extreme heat alerts. As well, many housing stock locations where high risk individuals reside provide a common cool room for their tenants
Telephone help-line (often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Either a dedicated telephone service is opened, or people are encouraged to phone a pre-existing general advice line	Yes	Red Cross is contracted to operate a Heat Information Line from 9am to 9 pm during heat alert days.
Fan distribution (often implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Fans considered effective when circulating air that is not above 32.2 ^o Celsius.	No	

Measure	Description	Toronto Implementation	
		Status	Description
Alert to hospital emergency rooms, ambulance services (rarely implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Used to improve operational efficiency (such as deployment of extra staff). Needs to be based on local information and carefully evaluated.	Yes	Alert notifications are provided to EMS and hospitals. EMS is an active member of the response and hospitals also participate in providing discharged patients who were admitted for heat related illness with public health information on heat and available services.
Evacuation of vulnerable persons from homes to cooling centres (rarely implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Uses a registry of vulnerable people, who are visited at home, and evacuated if necessary.	No/Yes	There is no central registry of vulnerable people. However outreach to vulnerable individuals is provided through existing community agencies. Staff with these agencies are committed to provide additional services or make more frequent contact with current clients/patients during heat alert days. No formal evacuation procedures are in place however, minimal services are available to move small numbers of individuals to cooling centres if necessary.
Home outreach visits to vulnerable persons (rarely implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Important but usually expensive. Use pre-existing networks of volunteers or professionals. Requires some registry of vulnerable people.	Yes	Outreach to vulnerable individuals is provided through existing community agencies. Staff with these agencies are committed to provide additional services or make more frequent contact with current clients/patients during heat alert days.
Outreach to homeless (rarely implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Homeless are a high-risk group. Deaths have been documented in homeless population.	Yes	Extensive outreach provided to homeless individuals through Red Cross, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration programs.
Water companies cease disconnection for non-payment (rarely implemented in U.S. & Europe)	Uninterrupted water supply is important for providing drinking water and cooling by bathing.	N/A	Water supply is not disconnected due to arrears. Unpaid water bills are considered as a lien on property and can be transferred to the tax bill.

Appendix 1

PROTOCOL FOR HOT WEATHER RESPONSE 2007

Toronto Public Health continues to chair a Heat Committee that includes representatives from: Toronto Public Library, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Shelter Support and Housing Administration, Toronto Emergency Medical Services, Toronto Police Service, Toronto's Office of Emergency Management, Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, The Canadian Red Cross Society, Community Information Toronto, Regent Park Community Health Centre, Toronto Community Care Access Centre, Toronto West Seniors Network, and Woodgreen Community Centre.

The Committee has reviewed the hot weather response protocol for 2006 and has made revisions for 2007 as follows:

Proposed Roles and Responsibilities During Heat/Extreme Heat Alerts in 2007:

The following Hot Weather Response plan outlines the proposed roles and responsibility of key stakeholders for 2007. It builds on previous plans and incorporates changes based on the experience of 2006.

- (a) Toronto Public Health will monitor oppressive air mass conditions, call the Heat Alert or Extreme Heat Alert, contract with Community Information Toronto and The Canadian Red Cross Society to provide services as outlined below, print and distribute heat and health-related education materials and supply TTC tokens as appropriate. During an extreme heat alert, a maximum indoor temperature threshold will be used as a guideline to assess risk. Toronto Public Health will continue to promote messages to citizens on appropriate heat related behaviours through the local media. Extensive public education through seminars, presentations and displays at the beginning of the hot weather season to seniors, child care providers, hospitals and the rooming house and boarding home sector will also be provided.
- (b) Public Health staff will visit all known rooming houses / lodging homes / group homes and any other residential premises of concern prior to the hot weather season. During these visits staff will work with property owners / operators in developing site specific extreme heat contingency plans which will be activated at times of extreme heat alerts. In addition they will provide information on personal protective actions that should be taken to avoid heat related illnesses. Staff will also visit these sites during extreme heat alerts to confirm the activation of extreme heat contingency plans and to evaluate their effectiveness. Public Health staff will contact known clients who may be at high risk of severe health impacts due to the hot weather. Toronto Public Health will develop and provide education to landlords of rooming houses and boarding homes and will support property managers of Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Toronto Animal

- Services will develop and disseminate hot weather safety messages for pet owners.
- (c) Community Information Toronto will phone or fax area hostels, seniors' agencies (such as Community Care Access Centres) and other community groups working with vulnerable populations to advise them of the Heat Alert, and provide information to residents including what services are available.
 - (d) Libraries will display key health messages about hot weather and heat related illness throughout the warm weather months. During a Heat Alert, libraries will post notices about the Heat Alert/Extreme Heat Alert and will be available as places for people to cool off during regular library hours. During visits to schools to talk to children and teachers about summer library programs, library staff will include summer safety and hot weather messages in their information sessions.
 - (e) Shelter, Support and Housing Administration will request that all hostels make adjustments to permit clients to occupy air-conditioned space in common areas. They will provide street outreach to people who are homeless through the Streets to Homes Team. They will ensure ongoing coordination of street outreach services to people who are homeless, provided by community agencies through Shelter Support and Housing Administration's various funding streams. In addition, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration will extend hours at selected drop-in centres, subject to funding approvals, and will manage the five City cooling centres.
 - (f) Toronto Community Housing Corporation will circulate education materials and communicate with tenants to ensure that they are well informed about precautions to take for hot weather, including access to air-conditioned common rooms where they exist.
 - (g) Parks, Forestry and Recreation will encourage people to go to City pools to cool off or stay in the shade in City parks. "Parks Ambassadors" will visit City parks to provide information with telephone numbers and locations of services where people who are homeless can go to cool down. Nine pool locations will extend their hours during Extreme Heat Alerts. Recreation centres will be used as cool locations. Facilities that lack air conditioning are being refurbished under an on-going capital improvement project.
 - (h) Community Care Access Centres will identify vulnerable clients and develop response plans for them on Heat Alert and Extreme Heat Alert days.
 - (i) Toronto Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Community Medicine Program will work with Toronto Public Health to use various forms of media in delivering messages on the potential health risk of hot weather conditions.

- (j) The Toronto Police Service, when notified of a Heat Alert or Extreme Heat Alert, will ensure that its members pay special attention to areas where vulnerable citizens at risk of heat-related illness are found and encourage them to go to a safe place.
- (k) The Canadian Red Cross Society will provide training on recognition of heat-related illness and first aid for staff and volunteers of community agencies who serve vulnerable clients; co-ordinate the delivery of bottled water to public facilities such as libraries and community centres where vulnerable people are likely to gather; conduct street and park outreach to homeless people and provide them with transportation to a cool place if needed; operate a “Heat Information Hotline” to answer questions regarding heat related issues, refer concerned citizens’ calls as appropriate, and respond to requests to check on seniors who are at risk for heat related illnesses.
- (l) Members of the Ontario Community Support Association, an organization of home support agencies serving frail and isolated seniors, will receive a package that includes information on heat related illness, and education materials for distribution to their clients; will receive an invitation to participate in training on recognizing the symptoms and providing first aid for heat related illness; and will contact vulnerable clients on Heat Alert days.