



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	May 25, 2015
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Community Heat Response Plan (CES15028) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Marjorie Walker 905-546-2424 ext. 4837
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Emergency & Community Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

Not Applicable

## Information:

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with information regarding Hamilton's Community Heat Response Plan (the Plan). The Plan is a community initiative developed by the Community Heat and Cold Response Committee, a local social service, multi-agency committee convened by the City.

In consultation with community partners, the Plan was developed to help citizens cope with intense heat events. The goal is provide support and information for those most at-risk of heat-related illness and is typically in force from the Victoria Day long-weekend until Labour Day.

The Plan includes a robust communication strategy to alert the public that hot weather conditions are imminent or occurring and outline services that will be provided to Hamilton residents. The Plan includes education, awareness and response components with the objective of providing citizens with timely information about and relief from excessive temperatures. The Plan is designed as a community response with staff support from Community and Emergency Services (CES) and Public Health Services (PHS) Departments. City staff and community partners collaborate throughout the year to review and improve the Plan.

As part of the 2015 Pan Am preparations, the decision was made to harmonize the Heat Alerts criteria province-wide with respect to the triggers and stages. Each city will continue to be responsible for its own Heat Response Plan but they will all now use common triggers. The change in the triggers do not change or impact our protocol during a heat event, nor is there any change in our community response.

The changes to the heat triggers are listed below:

**Stage 1** - A Heat Advisory will be called when there is one day with a forecast temperature 31C or more AND 40 or more humidex. Formerly: one day with humidex of 40 or greater;

**Stage 2** - A Heat Warning is called when there are two or more consecutive days with a forecast maximum temperature of 31C or more AND a forecast minimum of 20C or more OR a humidex of 40 degrees or more. Formerly: two or more days with a humidex of 40 or greater;

**Stage 3** - An Extreme Heat Warning is called when there are three or more days with an observed minimum temperature of 20C and a maximum temperature of 31C. Formerly: four or more days with a humidex of 40 or greater OR one or more days with a humidex of 45 or greater.

The City of Hamilton has a variety of responses during a heat event. The Plan includes daily call conferencing with community partners and email conferencing with internal partners during Stages 2 and 3.

### **Cool Places**

In 2015, the City will again utilize Cool Places as locations in the community where the public can find short-term relief from the heat. While many of these Cool Places are city facilities, many are also operated by community partners. This year there are 77 Cool Places in the community. Community partners operate 40 Cool Places; 28 of those serve the unique needs of their clients.

There are 58 spray-pad locations with four of them extending their hours of operation during heat events. Cool Place information is available at [www.hamilton.ca/heat](http://www.hamilton.ca/heat).

- During Stage 1, the city and community partners operate locations as 'cool places'.
- During Stage 2 & 3, all scheduled public, family, adult and senior swims will be free of charge at indoor and outdoor pools. Capacity limits will be in effect according to Public Health Guidelines therefore, the Recreation Division may implement swim rotations, depending on line-ups at individual facilities.
- During Stage 3, Outdoor Recreation Camps will be suspended at all parks. Wading pools, except Dundas Driving Park, are closed in efforts to encourage people to use indoor facilities. Indoor pools continue to operate as Cool Places.

## **Communication**

The Community Heat and Cold Community Response Committee meets twice a year and met recently to discuss a variety of methods to communicate with the public including:

### *Media*

- Providing community heat response messaging and information via the Public Health Services Department media advisory, e.g. temporary interruptions of service if they occur and messages that stress the importance of having the public check on friends, neighbours, and family, and;
- Responding to various media inquiries to clarify information and help connect with internal spokespeople.

### *Community Organizations & Agencies*

- Connect with groups who have immediate connection to large segments of the population or serve vulnerable individuals, for example:
  - Agencies serving disabled/vulnerable populations
  - Neighbourhood associations
  - Best Start Network (approximately 50 child and family-serving organizations)
  - Landlords and related associations
  - Community Information Hamilton
  - Newcomer and immigrant associations

### *Social Media*

- Timely messages sent out via Twitter to Hamilton's broad community of social media users (currently 18,400 followers and counting).

### *Miscellaneous*

- The City of Hamilton's Heat website at [www.hamilton.ca/heat](http://www.hamilton.ca/heat) has information for citizens and partners and is managed and updated by the Community & Emergency Services Department;
- Heat messaging posted on city-owned LCD screens and the electronic sign located outside of City Hall;
- Internal staff notification via voicemail and email distribution;
- Public Health Services Department Emergency Response Messaging System notifies community partners.

## **Mobile Water Distribution**

The Salvation Army operates a mobile water distribution program that targets the homeless population. At Stage 2 the organization provides water at Gore Park.

Several other partners provide outreach in the community during heat events, extending their support through water distribution outdoors in addition to their usual indoor support.

Through the Community Heat and Cold Response Committee we continue to take advantage of our additional networks to share information on 'cool places', important health tips during extreme heat and the need to look out for others by checking on neighbours and vulnerable residents.