

## Extreme Heat Guidelines

Howard County Recreation and Parks recognizes the importance of taking precautions in extreme heat situations. Recreation and Parks will prepare and place into effect precautionary measures when the National Weather Service announces a Heat Advisory or Heat Warning. In the following guidelines, “Activity” means programs, camps, classes, leagues, childcare, concerts, and all types of recreation activities; and “Facilities” means inside and outside facilities. This plan will be reviewed annually.

### Standard Procedures & Protocols

- In situations with advance notice of advisories and/or warnings during normal business hours, Recreation and Parks will assess activities known to be scheduled in county facilities as well as those teams and programs representing Recreation and Parks with games or activities scheduled outside the county.
- The Director has the option to cancel all activities in County facilities on the advice of Emergency and Health Officials if they determine it is in the best interest of individuals and/or staff participating in activities. The Public Information Office (PIO) and our marketing staff would be notified, and all public media would be notified, and closure implemented.
- Divisions are to implement program specific adjustments as precautionary methods such as alerting key program coordinators of their on-call status, alerting those involved to contact the status lines, arrangements for water, ice buckets, cooling areas, cooling devices, options for activity-specific rule modifications, temporary postponements, curfew extensions, and if deemed feasible, arranging of staffed medical tents, etc.
  - Some programs (example - Community Sports with the additional resources) have more specific procedures and protocols in place for HI (heat indices) of 105 up to 115 degrees.
  - Participants of Howard County sponsored activities that are involved in a league or tournament not under Department jurisdiction have the authority to accept a forfeit if they feel it is in the best interest of their players from a health perspective.
  - On-site staff of activities that take place on artificial turf need to consider the additional impact of added heat on artificial turf. Clouds, breezes, and moisture can minimize the additional heat; but on-site staff should monitor activity closely if they find the conditions are significantly hotter at waist level.
- Program Coordinators in consultation with onsite program resources have the authority to make program-wide modifications, postponements, or cancel activities if they feel precautionary measures in place aren't satisfactory or if the participants desire to end the activity.
- On location, unless otherwise determined via pre-advisory/warning instructions, Event Directors, Field Marshals, Leaders, and Officials have the authority to modify, postpone or stop any activity if they feel precautionary measures in place aren't satisfactory or if the participants desire to end the contest, event or activity. Program Coordinators must be notified of such action at first opportunity. Except for typical league games or practices, some activities (camps, tournament games, etc.) must obtain the approval of the program coordinator for final cancellation of activity.
- Some organizations (internal or external) may prefer to cancel their activity in the event of an extreme heat episode. An option to accommodate individuals displaced by the cancellation of an activity may be to offer program credits (i.e., pavilion picnic users) or an alternate date and time if feasible. This accommodation would also include league teams working out scenarios with a sports manager.
- Alerts to Howard County Fire & Rescue Department as to significant activities scheduled that could benefit from an increased presence are made as practical.
- Department forced cancellation of any non-sponsored activity (SAC tournament, pavilion rental, etc.) due to heat concerns requires the approval of the Director of Recreation and Parks or designee as the appointing authority. Park Rangers and specific Park Operations staff shall be notified of these cancellations.

### Communications/Public Relations

Similar to other weather and emergency incidents, the standard Status Lines are utilized. Opening statement on such recordings for outdoor activities is as follows:

*The following activity cancellations or adjustments have been determined as of xxx pm on xxx. Please consult this line one hour before your activity or at intervals indicated in this recording for updates. All participation today in outdoor activities is voluntary and those with specific health conditions should refrain from participation today. Now for the schedule adjustments...*

The Public Information Office (PIO) and our marketing staff will handle all media questions and responses.

## Summary of Heat Advisory/Warning

Program Supervisor will notify camp staff of any Heat Advisory over 90° and the recommended actions in the table below will be followed.

### Overall Good Practices for Staff during Heat Advisory:

- Check the weather app each morning and every 30 minutes for heat index temperature updates.
- For programs and camps, be prepared to communicate to parents/guardians/caregivers during sign-in that a heat advisory plan is in place.
- Use the chart below for precautions as index increases and the additional chart below for signs of heat-related illnesses.
- Provide plenty of water and shade breaks and personal check-ins with participants and staff.
- Allow children and staff to sit in the shade if they choose.
- Limit the play for children and staff with pre-existing conditions.
- Lead activities that require the least amount of physical exertion.
- Reminders throughout the day to apply sunscreen and to stay hydrated.

Below are key markers that kick in the Extreme Heat Plan preparation and discussions.

Heat Index Guidelines & Precautions		
Heat Index	Precautions Required for Outdoor Activities Lasting 15 Minutes or More	Medical Precautions
<b>Under 90°</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 84-90° Coaches, leaders, event directors, officials observe participants carefully for signs of heat injuries or exhaustion (see chart on next page).</li><li>• Reminder – individual participants who choose not to participate in these conditions will not be penalized.</li><li>• Youth should be well hydrated prior to participating in sports: ideally drinking 8 to 16 oz 15-30 minutes prior to exercise.</li><li>• Provide easy access to ample supply of water or electrolyte sport drinks during athletic participation, swimming, and physical labor. Water should always be available and plentiful to youth and staff!</li><li>• Allow water breaks every 20-30 minutes for up to 10 minutes a break.</li><li>• Encourage sunscreen.</li><li>• Clothes for exercise should be light weight and light colored.</li><li>• Monitor youth for signs of exhaustion or heat stress.</li><li>• If available, have mechanism for rapidly cooling youth that overheat: close access to air conditioning, fans, shade, cold shower, ice, iced-down towels.</li><li>• Follow medical precautions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certain youth may be restricted from participation in sports/physical labor – parents/guardians/caregivers must communicate to staff restrictions for specific youth.</li><li>• For youth with increased likelihood of dehydration or heat illness (examples: diabetes, sickle cell, pregnancy), physicians should consider orders for daily water bottle or electrolyte sports drink and notify staff of increased risk for dehydration and symptoms to watch for.</li><li>• Staff must be prepared to call an ambulance if conditions do not improve after shade breaks and cooling steps.</li></ul>

<b>90° to 100°</b>	<i>Continue precautions on the previous page and the following:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 degrees automatically kicks in the discussion phase of Extreme Heat Plan Guidelines and begins preparation for additional activity-specific pre-cautionary measures as well as provides flexibility to onsite personnel and officials to institute activity or rule modifications.</li> <li>• Mandatory water breaks during outdoor activities and sports every 20 minutes for 10 minutes even if youth are not thirsty: recommend at least 8 ounces of water or sport drink every 15 minutes for youth and staff.</li> <li>• Recheck heat index every 30 minutes while outdoor activities are taking place until Heat Index is less than 90 degrees.</li> <li>• A minimum rest period of 10 minutes is required every two hours with breaks in a shaded area. Consider reducing duration of outside activity to no more than 40 minutes at a time or rearranging schedule to allow outdoor activity during cooler periods of the day.</li> <li>• Ideally there should be a source of shade.</li> <li>• Remove helmet and other protective gear when not in play.</li> <li>• Vans used for transporting youth off grounds must have working air conditioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth with certain medical conditions that put them at risk for dehydration or heat related illness should NOW be excluded from outdoor sports (except swimming): this includes youth with sickle cell disease, pregnancy, insulin dependent diabetes, poorly controlled asthma or seizure disorder, cystic fibrosis, anorexia, heart disease, prior heat injury, recuperation from recent fever, illness, surgery, or giving birth, or youth not accustomed to heat or exercise. Obese or underweight youth, youth with sickle cell trait, and youth on certain medications may be more at risk for heat related illness.</li> <li>• Staff with medical conditions or on medications that put them at risk for heat related illness and injury should limit physical exertion.</li> </ul>
<b>Over 100°</b>	<i>Continue precautions above and the following:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 15 minute break is required every hour.</li> <li>• Outside activities should be limited to option(s) with the least physical exertion.</li> <li>• Alert reminder to camp staff on on-call expectations. Allow swimming for youth on-site if youth have sunscreen, access at all times to drinking water or sport drinks and if youth are staying cool in the water rather than out of the water in the sun. Shade should be available.</li> <li>• Reduce time or cancel indoor sports activity if air conditioning is unavailable inside.</li> <li>• Facility should have iced-down towels available.</li> <li>• Vans used for transporting youth off grounds must have working air conditioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As heat index goes above 104, heat exhaustion is probable and possibility of heat stroke increases.</li> </ul>
<b>115° or higher</b>	<i>Continue precautions above and the following:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 115° heat index is the maximum temperature for cancellation per the Health Department.</li> <li>• CANCEL ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES</li> <li>• Only restart after index has been under 115° for 15 minutes or more.</li> <li>• Indoor activities can continue only if air conditioning is working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get indoors to an air conditioned area and rest.</li> </ul>

Heat-related illnesses are preventable. The symptoms and what to do if someone shows signs of having a heat-related illness are listed below.

<b>Heat-Related Illnesses</b>	
<b>What to Look for</b>	<b>What to Do</b>
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High body temperature (103°F or higher)</li> <li>• Hot, red, dry, or damp skin</li> <li>• Fast, strong pulse</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 911 right away-heat stroke is a medical emergency</li> <li>• Move the person to a cooler place</li> <li>• Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath</li> <li>• Do not give the person anything to drink</li> </ul>

What to Look for	What to Do
<b>Heat Stroke (Continued)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Losing consciousness (passing out)</li> </ul>	
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy sweating</li> <li>• Cold, pale, and clammy skin</li> <li>• Fast, weak pulse</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Muscle cramps</li> <li>• Tiredness or weakness</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Fainting (passing out)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to a cool place</li> <li>• Loosen your clothes</li> <li>• Put cool, wet cloths on the body or take a cool bath</li> <li>• Sip water</li> </ul> <p><b>GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting occurs</li> <li>• Symptoms get worse</li> <li>• Symptoms last longer than 1 hour</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Cramps</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy sweating during intense exercise</li> <li>• Muscle pain or spasms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop physical activity and move to a cool place</li> <li>• Drink water or a sports drink</li> <li>• Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity</li> </ul> <p><b>GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cramps last longer than 1 hour</li> <li>• Person is on a low-sodium diet</li> <li>• Person has history of heart problems</li> </ul>
<b>Sunburn</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painful, red, and warm skin</li> <li>• Blisters on the skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay out of the sun until sunburn heals</li> <li>• Put cool clothes on sunburned area or take a cool bath</li> <li>• Put moisturizing lotion on sunburn areas</li> <li>• Do not break blisters</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Rash</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay in a cool, dry place</li> <li>• Keep the rash dry</li> <li>• Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash</li> </ul>

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>