Lancaster County
Homelessness
Coalition

PA-510 Homelessness Continuum of Care Code Red-Extreme Heat Alert Information

Code Red – Extreme Heat Conditions

A “Code Red Alert” will be called when the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory. The Lancaster County Emergency Management Association (EMA) will alert the Lancaster County Housing & Redevelopment Authority and Office for the Homelessness Coalition (O4C). During these times of the national alert, everyone should be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids, stay out of the sun, and go to an air-conditioned space or cooling center if possible. Best Practices for all community members include:

Tips on Staying Cool

- Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Reduce outside activities and stay inside in air-conditioned locations
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles, even for short periods of time
- Check on older, sick, or frail neighbors who may need help responding to the heat

Watch for signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which include:

- Confusion
- Hot, dry, flushed skin or cool and clammy skin
- Lightheadedness
- Nausea

Call 911 immediately if any of these symptoms occur.

For community members who are unsheltered, the PA-510 Continuum of Care provides additional guidance and protocol for the homelessness response system (CoC) which includes issuing a CODE RED for all service providers.

Office for the Homelessness Coalition Criteria and Protocol

Criteria: The O4C will issue a CODE RED when the daytime temperature is projected to be a "real feel" of 100 degrees or higher for a duration of at least 2 days (48 hours). Other special weather conditions will also be considered, such as hazardous air quality or tropical system (hurricane).

Protocol: The Homeless Response System (CoC) will mobilize to provide extended service hours and/or cooling centers to provide a safe, cool place for individuals who are unsheltered.

Cooling Centers: The public can utilize public spaces such as libraries, shopping centers, and eatery locations. Bus passes can be obtained from Street Outreach workers for transportation to these locations, if needed. Lancaster County EMA is exploring the viability of the local senior centers and municipalities. All shelters are requested to consider expansion of hours for access by registered guests. In collaboration with other systems, additional sites may be created to meet the needs of unsheltered community members.

Peak Hours: The targeted hours for extended services cover the peak hours of 10:00 am – 5:00 pm.

WebEOC
Lancaster County EMA uses the WebEOC System to provide up-to-date information regarding shelters and cooling centers. Shelters and Cooling Centers will need to update their information as appropriate. Access the system at https://sctfpa.webeocasp.com/sctfpa/default.aspx

Lifting the Code Red: Based on guidance from the local EMA, the O4C will lift the Code Red by informing the CoC partners.

Resources:
https://www.baltimorecity.gov/health/emergency-preparedness/code-red-extreme-heat
https://www.ready.gov/heat
https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/ready.gov_extreme-heat_hazard-info-sheet.pdf
https://www.weather.gov/bgm/heat#:~:text=Criteria%20for%20an%20Excessive%20Heat,for%202%20hours%20or%20more.

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