



Division Guideline #49

Date: August 3, 2015

Title: Weather Precautions for Extreme Heat and Extreme Cold

Application: Habilitation Center Campuses and State Operated Waiver Programs

Purpose: To establish procedures and guidelines for monitoring and implementing weather precautions for persons supported by State Operated Programs.

Definitions:

Extreme Cold: Extreme cold is defined as the outside temperature being 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and/or when a wind chill factor is 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Extreme Heat: Extreme heat is defined as the outside temperature being 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above, and/or when the heat index is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Procedures

1. All weather precautions and/or weather alerts issued for the general public will be followed for all of the persons supported by State Operated Programs. Alerts can be followed at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/> or local weather sources.
2. These general guidelines will apply to all individuals supported by State Operated Programs.
 - A. In extreme heat:
 - i. All individuals will be assisted to dress in appropriate lightweight and loose fitting clothes including hats as appropriate.
 - ii. All individuals will be encouraged to use sunscreen or sun blocking agents on all exposed skin areas to avoid sunburn.
 - iii. All individuals will be monitored to ensure that appropriate fluid intake is maintained.
 - iv. All individuals will be monitored to ensure that outside activities are limited, and include frequent rest periods in shaded areas and adequate hydration.

- v. Individuals will be transported in well-ventilated vehicles, with working air conditioning systems. Staff will ensure the vehicle is cooled down before individuals enter.
- vi. Conditions will be assessed to determine whether inside activities should be substituted for outside activities when the heat index exceeds 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

B. In extreme cold:

- i. All individuals will be assisted to dress in warm layered clothing, including hats, gloves or mittens, scarves, and appropriate footwear.
- ii. All individuals will be monitored to ensure that walking is limited to short distances between well-heated buildings.
- iii. All individuals will be transported in well-heated vehicles with working heater systems in place.
- iv. When icy road conditions exist, no individual will be transported by a vehicle unless it is an emergency situation.
- v. Conditions will be assessed to determine whether inside activities should be substituted for outside activities when the wind chill is at or colder than 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

3. During all weather alerts affecting the local region, e.g., tornado watch/warning, earthquake, flooding, etc., emergency procedures for those events will be implemented as outlined in those procedures.
4. In addition to the precautions issued to the general public and the general guidelines stated above in # 3, the process outlined below shall be followed to determine any additional individual weather restrictions or weather precautions needed to ensure that individual's health, safety and well being.
 - The individual's interdisciplinary team (IDT), Primary Nurse, and/or Primary Care Physician (PCP) will meet to discuss any particular medical diagnosis, health condition, prescribed medication, and/or other concerns that may be impacted by outside weather conditions, e.g., hypothermia, hypertension, cardiac issues, diabetes, immobility, asthma, respiratory difficulties, seizure disorder, allergies, medications that can cause photo sensitivity, etc., and develop individual specific parameters for the weather restrictions or weather precautions needed to maintain that individual's health, safety, and well being.
 - For all individuals requiring additional weather restrictions or weather precautions, the physician shall write a Physician's Order describing the limitation(s) and/or safeguard(s) needed by that individual.
 - If any disputes or conflicts arise that cannot be resolved by the individual's IDT, Primary Nurse, and/or PCP, they will be brought to the attention of the Director of Nursing or Superintendent for resolution.
5. Superintendent/designated staff shall ensure all necessary supports regarding the prevention of health-related illness are identified in the individual's current support plan. This also includes ensuring any staff providing support to individuals is knowledgeable regarding currently prescribed medication(s) that may increase individual risk for heat-related illness, existing medical conditions or treatments that may adversely affect an individual's response to heat/sun, and currently prescribed medication(s) that may increase the skin's sensitivity to the sun.
6. Staff in State Operated Programs shall be provided with current health tips appropriate for the weather including prevention tips for what to monitor during extreme heat conditions.

A. **Support Advisory for Providers for Prevention of Heat-Related Illness**

B. Additional extreme heat facts can be located at
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/faq.asp>.

7. Staff of State Operated Programs shall be provided with current health tips appropriate for the weather including prevention tips for what to monitor during extreme cold conditions. These tips are located at: [Winter Tips and Advisory for Prevention of Cold Weather Illnesses](#).
8. The Superintendent shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate and meaningful work and/or activities during anytime where it may become necessary for persons to remain indoors during extreme heat and/or extreme cold weather conditions.
9. The Superintendent and other designated supervisory staff shall monitor during extreme weather conditions to ensure full implementation of this Division Directive ensuring the safety and well-being of all persons.
10. Quality Enhancement staff shall also monitor the implementation of this Division Directive and provide feedback to the Superintendent and Quality Enhancement Coordinator State Operated Programs.

Authority

Information from the National Weather Service regarding Heat Advisories and Warnings

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>

Information on weather advisories – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/faq.asp>

This guideline will be reviewed and updated annually, if needed.