



**Maryland Department of Health
Extreme Heat Emergency Plan**

2026 Version 4.0

May 3 through October 3, 2026

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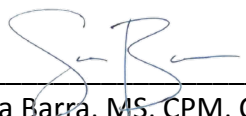
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Record of Changes

Date	Description	Draft Number
May 2021	Revised Draft Prepared	2021 Version 1.0
May 2021	Finalized Plan Distributed	Version 1.0
March/April 2022	Revised Draft Prepared	2022 Version 1.0
April 2022	Finalized Plan Distributed	Version 1.0
April 2023	Revised Draft Prepared	2023 Version 1.0* *This plan will reset the version history and be noted as plan version 1.0; each year there will be a new version.*
January - June 2024	Revised Draft Prepared	2024 Version 2.0
May 2025	Revised Draft Prepared	2025 Version 3.0
April 2026	Revised Draft Prepared, minor edits	2026 Version 4.0

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronyms

AAA	Area Agencies on Aging
BHA	Behavioral Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health
COMAR	Code of Maryland Regulations
DDA	Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Department of Health
DHS	Department of Human Services, Maryland
DSS	Departments of Social Services
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESSENCE	Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center
HHS	Health and Human Services
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LBHA	Local Behavioral Health Authority
LHD	Local Health Department
MACHC	Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers
MAT	Medication-Assisted Treatment
MDASH	Maryland Dashboard for Awareness of Situational Hazards
MDEM	Maryland Department of Emergency Management
MDH	Maryland Department of Health
MDoA	Maryland Department of Aging
MEAP	Maryland Energy Assistance Program
MIEMAC	Maryland Intrastate Emergency Management Assistance Compact
MIEMSS	Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems
MJOC	Maryland Joint Operations Center
MNCHA	Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration
NWS	National Weather Service
OCME	Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
OHCQ	Office of Health Care Quality, Maryland Department of Health
OP&R	Office of Preparedness & Response, Maryland Department of Health
PSC	Public Service Commission
SAL	State Activation Level
SCF	State Coordinating Function

SEAR	Special Event Assessment Rating
SHA	State Highway Administration
SOTA	State Opioid Treatment Authority, Maryland Department of Health
SWEM	Statewide Emergency Management
WFO	Weather Forecast Office

Definitions

Cooling Centers – Cooling centers may vary among local jurisdictions. For this plan, a cooling center refers to a building identified by local authorities as having air conditioning and water. A cooling center does not necessarily provide medical services. Cooling center plans may identify general locations, such as public libraries or malls, where the local government recommends seeking relief from the heat, or designate locations, such as community centers with extended hours and bottled water. [Cooling Center Contact Information](#) can be found on the [MDH Extreme Heat Resources](#) website.

Extreme Heat Event – An extreme heat event is a weather condition characterized by excessive heat and/or humidity that can cause heat-related illnesses. An extreme heat event is defined as a day or series of days when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Heat Advisory, Extreme Heat Watch, or Extreme Heat Warning.

- *Complex Heat Emergency* – A Complex Heat Emergency may be declared when an extreme heat event occurs **and** conditions exacerbate heat-related health risks, requiring additional response. Examples of complications include widespread water and power outages or an extended heat wave.

Heat Index – The heat index measures how the temperature feels. The heat index is a combination of both the actual temperature and relative humidity. It is the best indicator of an impending extreme heat event. NWS uses the [heat index](#) as a key indicator of an extreme heat event.

Heat-Related Illness – Heat-related illness refers to a group of conditions that occur when the body is unable to cool itself. This can occur when the body cannot efficiently dissipate heat to maintain a normal temperature, due to hot and/or humid weather, metabolic heat, or both. Heat-related illnesses range from mild (e.g., heat rash and heat cramps) to severe (e.g., heat stroke). Mild heat-related illnesses are usually resolved with rest or at-home treatments. Moderate or severe heat-related illnesses require prompt medical attention to avoid serious complications.

- *Heat Rash* – Tiny, itchy bumps on the skin that develop when sweat gets trapped beneath the skin.

- *Heat Cramps* – Painful muscle spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs following strenuous activity, and are typically caused by a loss of fluids and electrolytes in the body. Symptoms include muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs.
- *Heat Syncope (fainting)* – Fainting, dizziness, or light-headedness after prolonged standing or suddenly rising from a seated or lying position.
- *Heat Exhaustion* – The body’s response to excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating, due to an abnormally high body temperature (hyperthermia). Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, and decreased urine output.
- *Heat Stroke* – The most serious heat-related illness that occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. The body’s temperature rises (hyperthermia), the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, altered mental status, slurred speech, loss of consciousness, hot/dry skin or profuse sweating, seizures, and very high body temperature. Serious cases may result in death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.
- *Rhabdomyolysis (rhabdo)* – A medical condition associated with heat stress and prolonged physical exertion. Rhabdo causes the rapid breakdown, rupture, and death of muscle tissue, which can cause irregular heart rhythms, seizures, and damage to the kidneys.

Heat Wave – A heat wave is a period of abnormally hot weather generally lasting more than 2 days. Heat waves can occur with or without high humidity. They can potentially cover a large area, exposing many people to hazardous heat.

Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations – Facilities serving vulnerable populations include dialysis centers, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, long-term care facilities, hospice, group homes, and behavioral health facilities. A subset of these facilities, licensed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), including hospitals, assisted living facilities, dialysis centers, hospice, and long-term care facilities, are monitored in the [Facility Tracking Dashboard](#)¹. See [Appendix A](#) for a complete list of facilities and organizations that serve vulnerable populations.

Shelters – Maryland's Division of Homeless Solutions (often operating through local departments or social services) initiates inclement weather plans during extreme heat. Sheltering operations may be employed or expanded during extreme heat to reduce the risk to vulnerable populations. Emergency management shelters are temporary operations that meet the basic humanitarian needs of the whole community before, during, or after an emergency event. Both homeless and emergency management shelters will be referred to in this plan as ‘shelters.’

¹ The Facility Tracking Dashboard is only accessible to MDH OP&R, OHCQ, and local health departments.

Vulnerable Populations – Vulnerable populations include individuals disproportionately affected by extreme heat. These groups include infants and children, older adults, people with chronic or pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma and heart disease), pregnant women, individuals experiencing homelessness, people taking certain medications, and those with no access to air conditioning. In addition, athletes and outdoor workers are more likely to become dehydrated and develop heat-related illnesses.

Weather Alerts

- *Heat Advisory* – As defined by NWS, a Heat Advisory is issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The general rule of thumb for this advisory is that the maximum heat index temperature is expected to be 100°F or higher for at least 2 days, and nighttime air temperatures will not drop below 75°F. An advisory is for less serious conditions that cause significant discomfort or inconvenience and, if caution is not taken, could lead to a threat to life.²
- *Extreme Heat Watch* – As defined by NWS, Heat Watches are issued when conditions are favorable for an extreme heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours. A Watch is issued when the risk of a heat wave has increased, but its occurrence and timing remain uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to set their plans in motion can do so, such as established individual city extreme heat event mitigation plans.³
- *Extreme Heat Warning* – As defined by NWS, an Extreme Heat Warning is issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The warning is issued for high-heat conditions that pose a significant threat to life. The general rule of thumb for this Warning is when the maximum heat index temperature is expected to be 105°F or higher for at least 2 days and nighttime air temperatures will not drop below 75°F.⁴

Purpose

The Maryland Extreme Heat Emergency Plan, developed by MDH, guides the state’s public health actions during the heat season to prevent heat-related illnesses and death. This plan also guides the local jurisdictions as they fulfill their responsibilities.

² [NWS Weather Forecast Offices \(WFO\) Baltimore/Washington issues a Heat Advisory](#) when heat indices reach 105°F or higher EAST of the Blue Ridge, and 100°F or higher WEST of the Blue Ridge.

³ [NWS WFO Baltimore/Washington issues an Extreme Heat Watch](#) when conditions are favorable for an extreme heat event in the next 12 to 48 hours. This is defined as a heat index of 110°F or greater EAST of the Blue Ridge, and 105°F or greater WEST of the Blue Ridge.

⁴ [NWS WFO Baltimore/Washington issues an Extreme Heat Warning](#) when an extreme heat event is expected in the next 24 to 36 hours. This is defined as a heat index of 110°F or greater EAST of the Blue Ridge, and 105°F or greater WEST of the Blue Ridge.

Scope

This plan establishes the framework for MDH's response to extreme heat emergencies, defining roles, responsibilities, and procedures to protect the public health and safety of those affected by extreme heat.

The Concept of Operations for this plan addresses operations that occur prior to the start of the heat season, during the heat season, and post-heat season. The Office of Preparedness & Response (OP&R) within MDH provides weekly updates to the [Weather Related Illness Dashboard](#) during Heat Season Operations (usually May through September). Enhanced operations are outlined to occur during an extreme heat event, such as a Heat Advisory or Extreme Heat Warning. At the end of the extreme heat event, enhanced operations would end, and regular heat-season operations would resume.

Public Information Actions

Public Information actions could be taken by MDH, local health departments (LHDs), or both. The activities may also be coordinated through a Joint Information Center (JIC) or Joint Information System (JIS). In addition, the public can find their local heat risk using the [CDC HeatRisk Tool](#) or [NWS HeatRisk Map](#). The CDC also provides [Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#).

Local Jurisdiction Actions

All actions listed for local jurisdictions in this plan are recommendations. Each local jurisdiction handles extreme heat events differently. The recommendations included in this plan may not be applicable or practical for all local jurisdictions or may be fulfilled by a different organization at the local level. Typically, the agency or organization that has a permit to host a public event may cancel it due to a weather emergency, including a Heat Advisory, Extreme Heat Watch/Warning, or Complex Heat Emergency. The health officer rarely exercises the authority to cancel third party events, but LHDs can provide targeted risk communication messaging to the public during extreme heat.

Cooling center and shelter managers should contact their local health officials for information specific to their locations, as conditions vary from community to community.

Maryland Regulations on Power Termination

[COMAR 20.31.03.04](#) forbids utility companies from disconnecting either gas service used for cooling if the customer has notified the gas utility of that usage, or electric service due to nonpayment, for any customer occupying a residential building, when the temperature forecast made for the utility's weather station area for that customer at 6 a.m. is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above during an extreme weather period.

Maryland Regulations on Worker Protections

[Maryland's heat stress standard](#), COMAR 09.12.32, went into effect September 30, 2024. The standard applies to all workplaces where the heat index is 80° F or higher.

Concept of Operations

Pre-Heat Season Operations

Trigger

- Pre-heat season activities begin in April.

MDH Actions

- Conduct an annual review of the MDH Extreme Heat Emergency Plan and update as necessary.
- Distribute the revised Extreme Heat Emergency Plan to LHDs and other partners.
- Provide guidance and recommend best practices to help jurisdictions revise their local Extreme Heat Emergency Plans, as requested.
- Update its website to include accurate LHD contact information.
- Review Continuity of Operations planning in preparation for extreme heat events.
- Recommend that agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), update contact lists of Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations.
- Recommend that MDH units, including Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and OHCQ, update contact lists for Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations, including facilities listed on the [OP&R Facility Tracking Sheet](#)⁵.

Public Information

- MDH will update public education materials on the [MDH Extreme Heat Resources](#) website, including fact sheets and links to the [CDC HeatRisk Tool](#) and the [Maryland Energy Assistance Program \(MEAP\)](#).
- MDH and LHDs will review and revise written and electronic public information materials and distribute them to partners as appropriate, including the Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), and DHS.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

- Conduct an annual review of the jurisdiction's extreme heat plan.
- Verify [LHD contact information on the MDH website](#) is accurate.
- Monitor NWS for local temperature data.

⁵ The OP&R Facility Tracking Sheet is only accessible to MDH OP&R and OHCQ.

- Review planning activities and maintain situational awareness with local partners.
- Engage school systems to review and set guidelines for conducting and canceling outdoor activities, including field trips.
- Begin actively tracking large public events that could have severe public health consequences in an extreme heat event.
- Ensure heat safety warnings are included with all summer event permits.
- Review the list of facilities within their jurisdiction on the [Facility Tracking Dashboard](#)⁶. Note that counties may only access their specific data. (See Appendix B of the MDH Power Outage and Facility Tracking Plan for instructions on using the Facility Tracking Dashboard.)
- Coordinate with other local agencies, such as Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Departments of Social Services (DSSs), and Local Behavioral Health Authorities (BHAs), to identify and update contact lists for other Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations.
- Review locations to be utilized as shelters as well as cooling centers and verify [Local Cooling Center Contact Information](#) is accurate.

Heat Season Operations

All actions identified in this section will be completed throughout the Heat Season, including during an extreme heat event.

Triggers

- Heat-related morbidity and mortality surveillance begins Sunday, May 3, 2026.
- MDH and local jurisdictions should launch extreme heat plan activities by the first week of June if no extreme heat events have occurred.

Surveillance

- NWS determines the potential heat impact in the forecast. MDEM and MDH monitor data from three NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO): Baltimore/Washington; Mt. Holly, NJ; and Wakefield, VA.
 - MDEM will also monitor Mesonet weather stations for weather impacts.
- MDH and local jurisdictions will monitor weather forecasts for the possibility of predicted weather conditions consistent with extreme heat.
- MDH will conduct surveillance for heat-related illness, including EMS calls and visits to the emergency department and urgent care, and hyperthermia deaths reported by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) from May 3 through October 3, 2026.

⁶ The Facility Tracking Dashboard is only accessible to MDH OP&R, OHCQ, and LHDs.

- MDH will post weekly updates analyzing the impact of heat-related illnesses on public health on the [Weather Related Illness Dashboard](#). These reports will include, but may not be limited to:
 - Emergency department visits and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) encounters for [heat-related illness](#) through MDH's syndromic surveillance system, the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE), and
 - Number of heat-related deaths reported by OCME.
- MDEM will coordinate with local offices of emergency management (OEMs) to monitor large public events that could be impacted by extreme heat through the MDEM Duty Officer, Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC), or Liaison Officers.
- MDEM will routinely update the [SEAR Special Events Dashboard](#)⁷ to display Special Events Data for partners.⁸
- MDEM will monitor power outages in the state and provide the information on its [Maryland Power Outages site](#). Power outages can also be monitored at [PowerOutage.us](#). In addition, the [Maryland Dashboard for Awareness of Situational Hazards \(MDASH\)](#) displays current and forecasted weather, traffic, power outages, Mesonet status, and links to external resources, such as hospital alerts and road closures.
- The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) will monitor EMS incidents statewide and track emergency calls for heat-related illnesses.

MDH Actions

- Review and revise this plan following any extreme heat events as necessary.
- Contact regulated Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations, such as skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities, to promote summer preparedness, reminding them to check their generators and air conditioning systems and to report real or potential concerns and issues (see Appendix C of the MHD Power Outage and Facility Tracking Plan for a template email).

Public Information

- MDH and local jurisdictions will issue a press release by the first week of June or before the first day of the first forecasted extreme heat event, reminding Marylanders of ways to stay safe in extreme heat. This will include social media posts linking to the [MDH Extreme Heat Resources](#) website and other resources. Additionally, consider incorporating information about energy assistance programs and other community resources.

⁷ This dashboard is not publicly available.

⁸ SEAR stands for "Special Event Assessment Rating" and is determined by event features such as: attendance, location, type of venue (stadium, park, street parade, etc.), and more.

- MDH will issue a press release to announce the first heat-related death of the season. This will also include information on how to stay safe in extreme heat and prevent heat-related illnesses.
- MDH and LHDs will post locations of cooling centers on their websites.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

- Monitor the NWS for local temperature and relative humidity data.
- Review planning activities and maintain situational awareness.
- Ensure locations to be designated as cooling centers and shelters are prepared for use as needed.
- Conduct continuity of operations/tactical planning.

Enhanced Operations During a Heat Advisory or Extreme Heat Watch

Triggers

- NWS has issued a Heat Advisory or an Extreme Heat Watch.

Surveillance

- MDH will maintain passive situational awareness of Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations.
- MDH will continue to monitor syndromic surveillance systems and issue the weekly reports for the duration of the heat season.
- MDEM and MDH will continue to monitor NWS forecasts for any indication of extreme heat.
- MDEM will continue to monitor power outages and inform/notify MDH of issues.
- Local agencies will monitor any weather advisories and power outages that impact their jurisdictions.

MDH Actions

- Notify the jurisdictions expected to be impacted by the extreme heat event.
- Coordinate with MIEMSS and MDEM to issue alerts when appropriate.
- Maintain situational awareness and gauge the potential impact of the anticipated event.
- Recommend that agencies, such as the DHS and the MDoA, reach out to vulnerable populations through the facilities and programs that serve them.
- Recommend that MDH units, including BHA, DDA, and OHCQ, conduct outreach to vulnerable populations through facilities and programs that serve those populations.

Public Information

- MDH and/or LHDs may alert the public of the Heat Advisory via media outlets, websites, and social media.
- MDH will coordinate with jurisdiction(s) on extreme heat event communications.
- MDH and LHDs should employ consistent messaging that urges individuals to check on elderly neighbors, family members, and individuals with behavioral, developmental delays, emotional, and/or neurological health issues.
- MDH and LHDs should include emergency preparedness messaging to prevent heat-related illnesses in pets, including resources at Ready.gov for [Extreme Heat](#) and [Preparing Pets for Disasters](#).
- Local jurisdictions may utilize existing signage (such as outside firehouses, public buildings, or public buses) to display concise heat safety tips.
- Local jurisdictions may coordinate public messaging, including locations for cooling centers, shelters, and transportation options, with public access numbers such as non-emergency dispatch, 211 Maryland, 311, or reverse 911 systems.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

- Notify local extreme heat planning partners, including DSS, AAA, the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA), and Fire/EMS.
- Coordinate with OEMs to recommend heightening mitigation measures or discouraging outdoor public events.
- Coordinate with relevant organizations to provide outreach to vulnerable populations.
- Coordinate with existing volunteers and partners to respond to the extreme heat event
- Activate local cooling center/shelter plans as needed.
 - Local OEMs will post cooling center and shelter openings to WebEOC
 - Local OEMs, LHDs, and local DSSs will notify each other of cooling center and shelter openings.
 - LHDs will notify MDH with a press release or website of the cooling center and shelter locations.
 - Consider providing all locally used call centers (911, 211 Maryland, hospital, and private 'Ask a Nurse' lines) with locations of cooling centers, shelters, and information on transportation options.
- Activate transportation assistance programs for vulnerable populations, as available, to be transported to cooling centers/shelters as needed.
- Recommend that government and schools restrict outdoor activities.
- Monitor for power outages and report facility status through the [Facility Tracking Dashboard](#)⁹.

⁹ The Facility Tracking Dashboard is only accessible to MDH OP&R, OHCQ, and LHDs.

- Coordinate with other local agencies, such as the AAA, DSS, and LBHA, and partner organizations to provide outreach to vulnerable populations.
- Report information regarding local facilities with unmet needs to MDH.
- Review plans for extra staffing and emergency support services and consider staging potential resources.

Demobilization

- Actions related to the Heat Advisory or Extreme Heat Watch stop when the Heat Advisory or Extreme Heat Watch expires and revert back to Heat Season Operations.

Enhanced Operations During an Extreme Heat Warning

Triggers

- NWS has issued an Extreme Heat Warning.

Surveillance

- All surveillance actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch will be taken.

MDH Actions

MDH will take all actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch, as well as those noted below.

- Operate at an “Enhanced Readiness” level and coordinate with MDEM in preparation for a potential Complex Heat Emergency.
- May engage 211 Maryland as a public access number for heat-related questions and provide 211 Maryland with up-to-date public messaging materials.
- Coordinate with MDEM to conduct statewide emergency management (SWEM) call(s) to discuss the potential impact of the event with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - Internal MDH staff,
 - LHD/local OEM staff, and
 - State Coordinating Functions (SCFs) and other state agencies.

Public Information

- All public information actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch will be taken.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

Local jurisdictions will take all actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch, as well as those noted below.

- Provide and maintain updated information on local cooling centers and shelters via WebEOC.

- Local emergency services may report any healthcare facilities and independent living facilities (such as subsidized senior housing apartment buildings) with excessively hot interiors that may pose a danger to residents to local OEMs and LHDs.

Demobilization

- Actions related to the Extreme Heat Warning stop when the Extreme Heat Warning expires and revert back to Heat Season Operations.

Enhanced Operations During a Complex Heat Emergency

Triggers

- MDH and MDEM will use discretion in deciding what conditions constitute a Complex Heat Emergency. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Significant power or water outages, or
 - Extended heat waves lasting more than 3 days, or
 - Any other factors that would exacerbate a heat emergency.

Surveillance

All surveillance actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch, as well as those noted below, will be taken.

- MDEM will escalate the State Activation Level (SAL) as appropriate to facilitate interagency coordination.
- MDEM and MDH may request a State of Preparedness for a Complex Heat Emergency.
- MDH will conduct daily heat-related illness surveillance throughout the emergency.
 - Daily heat-related illness surveillance will conclude the day after the final heat emergency day and will include surveillance data from that day.
- MDH may increase the frequency of releasing death information, as approved by the Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services.
 - The distribution of death data will follow a prescribed flow of information due to the overwhelming number of requests for information during these events.
 - Current processes include, but are not limited to:
 - OCME death data will be routed internally to the MDH Office of Preparedness and Response.
 - MDH will notify local health officers or their designee(s) of the details of deaths occurring in their jurisdiction.
 - Reporting, which will include the jurisdiction where the death occurred, the decedent's age group, and gender, will be sent to planning partners and may be reported publicly, as approved by MDH. Details of death will not be included in any public report.

MDH Actions

MDH will take all actions outlined for an Extreme Heat Warning, as well as those noted below.

- Coordinate with MDEM to conduct SWEM call(s) to discuss the potential impact of the event with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - Internal MDH staff,
 - LHD/local OEM staff, and
 - SCFs and other state agencies.
- Activate the MDH Power Outage and Facility Tracking Plan to monitor Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations.
- Coordinate with MDEM, DHS, MDoA, DDA, BHA, OHCQ, local agencies, and other organizations, such as Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA) and treatment clinics, as necessary to determine if vulnerable populations need additional assistance.
- OHCQ will report on findings of facilities that are not in regulatory compliance due to temperature issues.
- Coordinate with MDEM to:
 - Obtain information from local OEMs on public events that may be affected by the Complex Heat Emergency.
 - Recommend that the Public Service Commission (PSC) and power companies activate their power outage response and mitigation plans as necessary.

Public Information

All public information actions outlined for a Heat Advisory/Extreme Heat Watch, as well as those noted below, will be taken.

- MDEM may activate a JIC/JIS to address public messaging.
- MDEM and MDH, through the JIC/JIS (if activated), may use 211 Maryland or public access numbers to distribute heat emergency information.
- MDH, through the JIC/JIS (if activated), will notify the public if the Maryland Insurance Administration waives existing pharmacy restrictions on prescription renewals due to the emergency.
- Local jurisdictions, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and the State Highway Administration (SHA) will utilize existing digital signage (such as outside firehouses, public buildings, or public buses) to display concise heat safety tips.
- Local jurisdictions with access to reverse-911 systems may use them to provide heat advisory warnings to vulnerable populations.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

Local jurisdictions will take all actions outlined for an Extreme Heat Warning, as well as those noted below.

- Local OEMs may notify each other of large-scale public events in their jurisdictions that could result in a mass-casualty incident.
- Local OEMs should notify MDEM of the above events; MDEM will notify MDH and MIEMSS.
- Locals may recommend greater mitigation measures or cancellation of outdoor public events.
- Locals may connect with energy assistance / other assistance programs, as well as community resources, including homeless services.
- Jurisdictions may expand capacity at cooling centers and shelters as necessary.

Water Shortages

- In the event of a widespread and/or prolonged water shortage, local jurisdictions should consider providing alternative potable water to affected residents or request resources through local OEMs, the Maryland Intrastate Emergency Management Assistance Compact (MIEMAC), or the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) if there is a state of emergency declaration.
- Local jurisdictions may request assistance from the private sector to provide and distribute water.

Power Outages

- During a widespread and/or prolonged power outage, MDH will coordinate with MDEM, the Public Service Commission, and appropriate power companies to ensure Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations are prioritized for power restoration due to the life-threatening nature of extreme heat in powerless facilities.
- LHDs, through the MDH OP&R, may submit a request to the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) for the secure and restricted HHS emPOWER Emergency Response Outreach Dataset. The dataset is used to conduct emergency response outreach to electricity-dependent Medicare beneficiaries who may be adversely impacted or at risk during a public health emergency or disaster.
- The Maryland Insurance Administration may consider waivers to pharmacy restrictions regarding prescription refills.

Demobilization

- MDEM will lower the SAL as appropriate.
- Actions related to the Complex Heat Emergency stop once the complicating factors have been resolved and revert back to one of the following:
 - Extreme Heat Warning Operations if an Extreme Heat Warning is in effect.
 - Heat Advisory Operations if a Heat Advisory is in effect.
 - Heat Season Operations if all advisories have expired.

Post-Heat Season Operations

Triggers

- Post-heat season activities at the end of September, unless public health experts recommend a different demobilization date based on extenuating circumstances.

Surveillance

- All surveillance activities for the heat season will cease on Saturday, October 3, 2026, unless public health experts recommend extending.

MDH Actions

- Collect After-Action Reports, when applicable, from affected local jurisdictions and determine best practices to be included in the following year's planning efforts.
- Collect, analyze, and release statewide surveillance data from the heat season for use in future heat planning.
- Review and update the MDH Extreme Heat Plan, including a comprehensive review of local plans and resources.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

- Cease heat event monitoring and return cooling centers and shelters to regular hours, as appropriate.
- Coordinate with MDH on an annual heat plan review.
- Identify organizations serving vulnerable populations to partner with for the following heat season.
- Develop or revise information for vulnerable individuals.
- Evaluate interventions and review evaluation tools to monitor effectiveness:
 - Cooling center and shelter usage,
 - Transportation program usage, if available, and
 - EMS system usage.

Appendix A - Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations

Public Health and Medical Facilities Serving Vulnerable Populations – facilities serving vulnerable populations include dialysis centers, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, long-term care facilities, hospice, group homes, and behavioral health facilities. A subset of these facilities, licensed by the MDH Office of Health Care Quality (hospitals, assisted living facilities, dialysis centers, hospice, and long-term care facilities), are monitored in the Facility Tracking Sheet.

Facilities on the Facility Tracking Sheet:

- Hospitals
- Assisted living
- Inpatient Hospice Centers
- Long-term care
- Dialysis centers

Residential Facilities not included on the Facility Tracking Sheet:

- MDH Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) residential facilities, including group homes serving medically fragile foster care youth
- MDH Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) residential treatment facilities
- Health and Human Services (HHS), state and local, group homes

Non-Residential Facilities that Serve Vulnerable Populations:

- Adult medical day care
- Hospitals
- Ambulatory care
- Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) centers
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Rehabilitation facilities
- Homeless shelters

Organizations that Serve Vulnerable Populations:

- Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA)
- Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC)
- Local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
- Local Departments of Social Services (DSS)
- Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA)
- Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA)
- Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Home hospice