

Gov. Schwarzenegger Directs State Agencies to Activate Heat Wave Response, Urges Californians to Prepare for High Temperatures

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger directed the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and numerous other state agencies to prepare for extreme high temperatures across Southern California and the Santa Clara Valley over the weekend.

"I have directed my Office of Emergency Services to coordinate with state and local agencies and do everything we can to ensure personal safety for all Californians during high temperatures today through the weekend. Every Californian who will be in a part of the state experiencing 90 to 100-plus degree heat needs to prepare and take extra precautions in their activities. We also need to look out for our friends and family and vulnerable citizens who live by themselves to help protect them from the heat," Governor Schwarzenegger said.

The National Weather Service has informed OES that temperatures will reach above 100 degrees during the day throughout many areas of southern California and temperatures at night will remain in the upper 60s to 70s.

"Today is the first official day of summer and the hot temperatures are already upon us. We stand ready to mobilize whatever additional resources are necessary to ensure local officials get the help and support they need in protecting their residents from the severe heat," said OES Director Henry Renteria.

A list of current cooling centers opened by local authorities along with heat illness prevention tips is available on the front page of the OES website – www.oes.ca.gov.

"Summer heat waves can be extremely dangerous. Everyone should be on alert—it's important to pay attention to signs of heat-related illness, and especially to monitor infants, young children, seniors and people with underlying health problems," said CDPH Director Mark Horton.

All Californians living in or planning to visit areas where daytime temperatures are expected to surpass the 90- and 100-degree marks during the day and remain in the 70s overnight should prepare for the hot weather and use caution in their activities.

State emergency management and health officials also caution that if a person has difficulty, due to a disability or medical condition, regulating their body temperature that they should take necessary precautions to protect themselves.

To avoid heat exhaustion, heat stroke and other heat-related complications, state officials recommended that Californians:

- Create a cooler environment by making sure that window air conditioners are installed snugly, making sure that window air conditioners and air conditioning ducts are properly insulated, weather stripping doors and sills, and placing window reflectors made of cardboard covered with aluminum foil between windows and drapes.
- Drink plenty of water, especially when taking medication.
- Wear lightweight and light-colored clothing.
- Avoid physical activities during periods of peak temperatures.
- Check-on neighbors and family members to ensure they are not being harmed by the heat.
- Watch for signs of heat-related illness, including fatigue, nausea, headache and vomiting.
- Visit malls, theaters and other public places that are air-conditioned if they don't have their own air conditioning.

State agencies are also involved in a number of activities to protect the public and help local officials plan and prepare for the severe heat. This includes:

OES and CDPH are increasing efforts to inform the public of the forecasted high temperatures and steps individuals can take to protect themselves. More information can be found at www.oes.ca.gov or www.cdph.ca.gov.

CDPH, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Mental Health are working with their licensed facilities to ensure they are prepared for hot temperatures and able to respond to any facility emergencies.

OES will also be coordinating daily meetings between the National Weather Service and state agencies to coordinate response to the high temperatures.

OES is prepared to activate its Regional Emergency Operations Centers and State Operations Centers in the event of any heat-related emergencies.

Cal/OSHA is actively enforcing the heat illness prevention regulations making sure employers are complying. Cal/OSHA is also actively working to inform employees and employer groups about ways to prevent heat illness and be safe in their outdoor work environments during times of extreme heat. For more information, please visit www.dir.ca.gov/heatillness.

CDPH has been disseminating information specific to the health alert event via a California Health Alert Network alert to local health departments directing them to activate their local plans.