



Extreme Heat Preparedness for Healthcare Facilities

Extreme heat can disrupt healthcare operations, strain infrastructure, and endanger staff and patients. Use this checklist to prepare your facility for extreme heat events.

Facility Readiness Priorities

The most immediate actions hospital leaders should take ahead of an extreme heat event:

- Conduct daily walkthroughs to monitor temps and cooling in patient care areas.
- Test backup generators and portable units; confirm fuel supplies.
- Use windows, shades, and blinds to reduce heat gain.
- Confirm water, cooling supplies, and other emergency resources.
- Plug essential devices into red outlets to ensure priority power during outages.
- Prepare to implement downtime procedures for computer or network disruptions.
- Ensure providers know heat illness protocols and contingency plans if cooling fails.

Planning

- Update your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with extreme heat protocols and considerations.
- Define triggers for activating heat response (e.g., heat advisories, excessive heat warnings, prolonged high heat index).
- Prioritize continuity plans for critical services if cooling systems are strained or fail
- Identify areas of facility most vulnerable to heat

Facilities

- Inspect HVAC systems and verify cooling capacity.
- Prepare contingency plans for HVAC failures
- Identify areas of the facility that may become excessively hot.

Staffing

- Identify essential staff and backup coverage.
- Review staff hydration, rest break, and cooling for employees working in hot environments.

Communication

- Establish multichannel communication protocols (text, email, radio).
- Maintain hotlines for patient inquiries and staff coordination.
- Share heat advisories and operational updates with staff as conditions evolve.
- Use centralized command structure for internal updates and decisions.

Supplies

- Stock IV fluids and cooling supplies.
- Ensure enough drinking water for staff & patients.
- Protect temperature-sensitive medications and equipment.
- Verify refrigeration capacity for medications and critical supplies.

Practice

- Conduct extreme heat drills simulating HVAC disruption or increased patient volume.
- Test shelter-in-place and evacuation procedures.
- Evaluate communication systems and backups
- Debrief and revise plans based on drill outcomes

Stay Informed:

1. Check for Weather Updates: <https://www.weather.gov/lot/>
2. Join NWS Listserv: Email nws.chicago@noaa.gov
 - To receive alerts, preparedness webinars, and coordination calls ahead of major storms.
3. City of Chicago Resources: [City of Chicago :: Extreme Weather Resources](#)