

# **Township of Russell**

## **Severe Heat Situation**

### **Cooling Centre Policies and Procedures**

## **POLICY**

The Township of Russell has developed a plan to respond to the needs of residents who cannot escape extreme heat conditions.

### **Goal**

The goal of this document is to provide employees with guidelines for procedures for putting this plan into effect and the opening and operation of cooling centres.

The plan calls for the opening of certain air-conditioned municipal buildings to these residents so that they may gain respite from the heat. This procedure may require the use of municipal staff beyond their normal work hours and the acquisition of certain consumable supplies such as paper cups and ice cubes.

### **Summary**

The Township has a Heat Action Plan. That plan includes monitoring the weather forecasts for heat and smog, notifying service providers and media when heat thresholds are met, and offering protective and proactive advice on how to deal with these summer conditions. A heat warning is automatically declared when Environment Canada forecasts a humidex of 40 or more for at least two consecutive days. Extreme heat can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and even death.

This policy and the related procedures is not a static program or document; it will be monitored, evaluated, and updated on a regular basis to ensure continued effectiveness. Ongoing evaluation of procedures WILL occur to ensure compliance with current emergency management practices and health and safety standards. Employees are encouraged to bring any suggestions or any issues to the Community Emergency Information Officer (CEMC) as soon as practically possible.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Heat Advisories**

Heat Advisories are based on three extreme heat thresholds:

#### Level 1 - Heat Alert

- 36° C or humidex for at least two consecutive days with no SMOG alert

Residents are "reminded" to take steps to avoid heat. Air conditioned public locations and establishments are promoted for heat relief.

#### Level 2 - Heat Warning

- 36° C or humidex for at least two consecutive days with SMOG alert or
- 40° C or humidex for at least two consecutive days with no SMOG alert

At this time the Township would open cooling centres for residents.

**Surveillance:**

The CEMC or Recreation Department Director will monitor Environment Canada forecasts and warnings. Based on the above criteria, they will open cooling centres and staff them as required.

**Communication**

The CEMC will issue a press release to local media and to service providers such as nursing homes and residences using a standard format, advising residents of the opening of the cooling centres. Employees will be notified at the same time.

**Who is at Risk**

- Seniors, and young children
- Due to lack of the body's ability to regulate temperature
- People who are not acclimatized (when your body has not adapted to the climate)
- First heat wave is the hardest
- Takes 3- 12 days to adjust
- People taking certain medications such as anti-Parkinson medication and antidepressants.
- People with chronic illness including cardiac and respiratory conditions, dementia or mental illness

Heat becomes especially difficult for people at risk when there is a "lack of protective factors". These include:

- No access to air conditioning
- Poor fluid intake (need a minimum of 6-8 glasses, 250 ml = 1 glass)
- Use of caffeine-containing drinks (including coffee, tea, colas)
- Drinking alcohol (as it is dehydrating)
- Living on the third floor or higher
- Social isolation

**Cooling Centre Locations**

The following buildings or building areas may be used as cooling centers:

- Embrun Recreation Centre, 8 Blais St.
- Russell Youth Centre
- Marionville Community Centre

Cooling centres will be open from 10am to 8pm.

**Staffing**

On duty staff could be augmented by volunteers. We will need to find these volunteers.

**Setup Requirements**

- Air Conditioning to be set at 24°C
- Chairs and tables to be setup in sufficient quantities
- Water from the tap will be offered and recommended to visitors.
- Paper cups and ice cubes will need to be stocked in adequate quantities

**Notification**

The following are groups or agencies that should be notified when the Township opens cooling centres:

Nursing homes

Day care centres

# SAMPLE OF A HEAT WARNING

## For Immediate Release

### DATE :

The Township of Russell is issuing a **Heat Warning** for (date). A heat warning is automatically declared when Environment Canada forecasts a humidex of 40 or more for at least two consecutive days. Today's forecast is for a high of xx with a humidex reading of xx. The Township is following this situation closely. Extreme heat can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and even death.

As part of the Heat Action Plan, the Township of Russell is monitoring the weather forecasts for heat and smog, notifying service providers and media when heat thresholds are met, and offering protective and proactive advice on how to deal with these summer conditions.

The smog and heat thresholds are:

- Smog Advisory (based on air quality index (AQI) of > 50)
- Heat Alert (the first one only) (humidex of 36 or more for a least two consecutive days)
- Heat Warning (humidex of 40 or more for at least two consecutive days)
- Heat Emergency (humidex of 45 or more or situational factors)

The very young, the old and the chronically ill are at greatest risk. However, anyone can suffer from heat-related illnesses especially in the summer when people have not yet acclimatized.

Protection from the heat includes drinking plenty of fluids, having access to air-conditioning at least two hours a day, wearing light coloured clothing, including a hat and cooling down in the shade or in a pool.

Risk factors for heat-related illness include living on the third floor or higher, not having air conditioning, not drinking enough or drinking fluids that promote dehydration, such as coffee, caffeinated soft drinks, and alcohol. Medications like anti-Parkinsons and antidepressants can also make one more vulnerable to heat.

The Township of Russell is encouraging people to check on those who may need help accessing air conditioning, such as the elderly and chronically ill, especially those who live in high rise buildings.

If you or someone you know is at risk and has nowhere to shelter from the heat they may go to one of the following cooling centres operated by the Township of Russell:

- Embrun Community Centre, 222 Notre Dame St, Embrun from 0900am to 0900pm
- Russell Youth Centre 1818 County Rd 3, Russell from 1000am to 0900pm
- Marionville Community Centre 11 Main St Marionville 12noon to 0900pm

Tables chairs and water will be available.

Everyone is encouraged to drink plenty of water, stay out of the sun and find a cool place to spend the day. Information is available by calling the Township of Russell at (613) 443-3066 or on the Web at [www.russell.ca](http://www.russell.ca).