

Policy Subject:	Applicable To:	Effective Date:
Code Red	All Directly-Operated or Contracted Adult Services and Street Homeless Solutions Facilities/Programs Serving Homeless Individuals, DSS and DHS Staff, and Collaborating Agencies	July 14, 2017

■ INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that vulnerable sheltered adults and street homeless populations are properly served during extremely hot weather. It provides instruction concerning Street Homeless Solutions Outreach, Drop-in Centers, and Adult Services’ shelter emergency operations.

■ POLICY

Declaration of Code Red

NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) has established a Citywide Heat Emergency Plan that is activated during periods of extreme heat and humidity, as defined by the National Weather Service (NWS). This policy is consistent with NYCEM’s Citywide Heat Plan Activation Triggers which include:

DSS and DHS Code Red Level 1: a Level 1 declaration occurs when the NYCEM Citywide Heat Emergency Plan Criteria are met (primarily issued as a Heat Advisory). This occurs when forecasted high temperatures reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher for one day or more or are forecasted to reach 95 degrees Fahrenheit or higher at any point for two consecutive days or more.

Important Note: Code Red Level 1 is in effect from 12:00 PM (noon) to 8:00 PM of the day for which it is to be implemented.

DSS and DHS Code Red Level 2: a Level 2 declaration occurs when the NYCEM Citywide Heat Emergency Plan Excessive Heat Considerations Criteria are met (primarily issued as an Excessive Heat Watch or an Excessive Heat Warning). This occurs when forecasted high temperatures reach 105 degrees or more Fahrenheit for any duration or are forecasted to reach 95 degrees Fahrenheit for four days or more.

Important Note: Code Red Level 2 is continually in effect (day and night) from the time that it is declared through the duration of the Heat Advisory, Excessive Heat Watch, or Excessive Heat Warning. DSS EM will send a notice when the Code Red Level 2 ends.

■ BACKGROUND

This policy and program is maintained by DHS Adult Services and Street Homeless Solutions divisions with support and advisement from DSS Emergency Management and other agency executive stakeholders. Minimum annual review of this policy and any changes will be completed in collaboration among Adult Services, Street Homeless Solutions, DSS Emergency Management, and as needed with additional stakeholders.

SHS will meet with OR teams to review and plan for the season in the spring. OR teams will submit lists of vulnerable clients using Street Smart and identify locations or subways stations that may be particularly hot and require checking during an activation.

■ AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

Activation & Coordination of Code Red

DSS and DHS' Code Red policy is activated by DSS EM when the above criteria are met. DSS and DHS will take the following steps for activating and coordinating Code Red:

- DSS EM will send an e-mail notification to the DHS Operations Desk with the appropriate Code Red Level.
- Code Red Alerts are to be issued by the DHS Operations Desk to the Code Alert Distribution List as soon as it issued, but not later than 4 PM on the day prior to the onset of Code Red activation.
- The Distribution Lists for Adult Services and SHS supporting teams will coordinate the following sub-tasks:
 - Ensure that staffing levels are sufficient and deploy them to the field.
 - Identify and regularly monitor clients who may be at risk for heat-related injuries during hot weather.
 - Assist at-risk clients to voluntarily come indoors to facilities/locations that are adequately cooled and well-ventilated.
 - Arrange for voluntary (or involuntary, as indicated) transport of individuals suffering from heat illness to a hospital emergency department.
 - Assist and engage at-risk clients in accessing citywide heat-related interventions, such as cooling centers, open hydrants, public pools, cool public spaces, etc.

- All Outreach (OR) teams will submit their reports to the Street Homeless Solutions (SHS) unit by 8:00 AM of the day following a Code Red. Reporting schedules may be altered if overnight operations are implemented.

Code Red Operations – Outreach and Shelter

For Outreach and Shelters, DSS and DHS will take the following steps for activating and coordinating Code Red:

DSS and DHS Code Red Level 1: SHS teams will contact clients on the priority list at least once during the Code Red period. In addition:

- SHS subway teams will check on their priority stations at least once during the Code Red period.
- When necessary, OR teams should call the NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit (HOU) and/or Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) for assistance when entering secluded or dangerous areas to check on at-risk clients.
- To reduce the risk of heat-related injury for clients who are not at imminent risk but who refuse to go indoors/access a cool space, OR teams will distribute supplies, such as water and sunscreen. OR will encourage all clients to be transported to a safe, cool place.

Code Red Level 2: SHS teams will contact clients on the priority lists not less than two times per shift during the Code Red Level 2. They will also be expected to continue to monitor clients throughout the duration of the Code Red Level 2. In addition:

- SHS subway teams will check on their priority stations not less than two times per shift during a Code Red Level 2. They will also be expected to continue to monitor these stations throughout the duration of the Code Red Level 2.
- All OR teams are required to submit a 24-hour coverage plan that ensures adequate staff coverage during Heat Emergencies with the most intensive coverage during daytime hours.
- All SHS OR teams will submit the Code Red Report to DHS Emergency Management, Street Homeless Solutions, Adult Services, and Families with Children, and when needed, other stakeholders by 8:00 AM of the day following a Code Red Level 2.
- SHS OR teams will be informed of NYCEM resources available during a Heat Emergency, such as cooling centers, and offer these to clients they encounter.

Drop-In Centers and Shelters

During a Heat Emergency, DHS conducts additional outreach to unsheltered New Yorkers and DHS drop-in centers with a cool space will be open to serve as many clients as possible. Homeless individuals experiencing heat-related discomfort are also able to access the designated cooling area at any shelter. During a Code Red Emergency:

- During a Code Red Level 2, shelters cannot suspend from shelter any individuals currently in shelter.
- During a Code Red level 2, clients can access any shelter, not only the client's "official shelter". The shelter will confirm with Vacancy Control to determine if a vacancy exists and, if so, the client will be given a bed. If no bed is available, the client will be given the option to sleep in a chair or be transferred to another shelter where an overnight bed exists.
- Shelters will make available any beds within the system to accommodate all clients brought in by outreach or those who walk-in during a Code Red Level 2 Emergency. All clients brought to shelter by SHS OR teams during a Code Red will be engaged by shelter staff the following morning to encourage them to remain indoors using the available cool space and to access various services.
- Shelters will store clients' belongings overnight during a Code Red level 2.

Collaboration Among City Agencies & Supporting Community Organizations

During a Citywide Heat Emergency activation, the following City agencies assist with identifying and reporting on homeless clients who are potentially at-risk for exposure (and involuntary removals, if appropriate):

- MTA-NYC Transit
- NYC Parks Department-Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP)
- NYPD-Crisis Outreach Support Unit (COSU)
- NYC Department of Sanitation (for encampment cleaning)
- NYC Department of Transportation

As needed, the following City agencies and other organizations may be requested to assist with the identification and reporting on homeless clients who are potentially at-risk for exposure (and involuntary removals, if appropriate):

- NYC Department of Education-Division of School Facilities (DSF)
- NYC Health + Hospitals (H + H)
- Greater New York Hospitals Association (GNYHA)
- NYC Emergency Management: Public-Private Initiatives (for private sector building and property issues)
- New York Public Library Security & Emergency Management

- Brooklyn Public Library
- Queens Public Library

Hospital Emergency Departments

During a Citywide Heat Emergency, hospital emergency departments throughout the city will accommodate street homeless individuals who walk-in or are brought by SHS OR teams. These individuals will be permitted to remain in emergency department waiting areas (or other spaces designated by the individual facility) for as long as possible and without being registered.

The DHS Medical Director's Office will release an annual letter to H + H and GNYHA affirming their cooperation with this policy throughout the summer season.

■ ACRONYMS

- DSF-The Department of Education's Division of School Facilities; management of school buildings that should be contacted if there are homeless encamped on school premises
- GNYHA-The Greater New York Hospitals Association
- HOU-The NYPD's Homeless Outreach Unit
- OR-Outreach
- PEP-Parks Department's Parks Enforcement Patrol peace officers
- SHS-Street Homeless Solutions

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