

	DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS POLICY <i>TITLE: Extreme Heat Plan Guidelines</i>	No: 611.1
		Director: John R. Byrd
		Hearing Date:
		Initial Release: 6/27/13
		REVISED: Implemented:

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for staff and facilities when the National Weather Service announces a Heat Advisory or a Heat Warning.

SUBTITLE

PROCEDURES

Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks recognizes the importance of taking precautions in extreme heat situations. The department will prepare and place into effect precautionary measures when the National Weather Service announces a Heat Advisory or Heat Warning. In the following guidelines, “Activity” means programs, classes, leagues, daycare, concerts, and all types of recreation activities; and “Facilities” means indoor and outdoor facilities. This plan will be reviewed annually.

Standard Procedures & Protocols

- In situations with advance notice of advisories and/or warnings during normal business hours, the department will assess activities known to be scheduled in county facilities as well as those teams and programs representing the department with games or activities scheduled outside the county.
- The Director has the option to cancel all activities in County facilities on the advice of Emergency and Health Officials if they determine it is in the best interest of individuals and/or staff participating in activities. The Public Information Office (PIO) and our department’s marketing staff would be notified and all public media would be notified and closure implemented.
- Divisions are to implement program specific adjustments as precautionary methods such as alerting key program coordinators of their on-call status, alerting those involved to contact the status lines, arrangements for water, ice buckets, cooling areas, cooling devices, options for activity – specific rule modifications, temporary postponements, curfew extensions, and if deemed feasible – arranging of staffed medical tents, etc.
 - Some programs (example - Community Sports with the additional resources), have more specific procedures and protocols in place for HI (heat indices) of 105 to 115 degrees.

- Participants of Howard County sponsored activities that are involved in a program not under department jurisdiction have the authority to accept a forfeit if they feel it is in the best interest of their players from a health perspective.
- On-site staff for activities that take place on artificial turf need to consider the additional impact of added heat on artificial turf. Clouds, breezes, and moisture can minimize the additional heat; but on-site staff should monitor activity closely if they find the conditions are significantly hotter at waist level.
- Program Coordinators in consultation with onsite program resources have the authority to make program-wide modifications, postponements or cancel activities if they feel precautionary measures in place aren't satisfactory or if the participants desire to end the activity.
- On location, unless otherwise determined via pre-advisory/warning instructions, Event Directors, Field Marshals, Leaders, and Officials have the authority to modify, postpone or stop any activity if they feel precautionary measures in place aren't satisfactory or if the participants desire to end the contest, event or activity. Program Coordinators must be notified of such action at first opportunity. Except for typical league games or practices, some activities (camps, tournament games, etc.) must obtain the approval of the program coordinator for final cancellation of activity.
- Some organizations (internal or external) may prefer to cancel their activity in the event of an extreme heat episode. An option to accommodate individuals displaced by the cancellation of an activity may be to offer program credits (i.e., pavilion picnic users) or an alternate date and time if feasible. This accommodation would also include league teams working out scenarios with a sports manager.
- Alerts to Howard County Fire & Rescue Department as to significant activities scheduled that could benefit from an increased presence are made as practical.
- Department forced cancelation of any non-sponsored activity (SAC tournament, Pavilion rental, etc.) due to heat concerns requires the approval of the Director of Recreation & Parks or designee as the appointing authority. Park Rangers and specific Park Operations staff shall be notified of such instances.

Communications / Public Relations:

Similar to other weather and emergency incidents, the standard Status Lines are utilized. The opening statement on such recordings for outdoor activities is as follows:

The following activity cancelations or adjustments have been determined as of xxx pm. Please consult this line one hour before your activity or at intervals indicated in this recording for updates. All participation today in outdoor activities is voluntary and those with specific health conditions should refrain from participation today. Now for the schedule adjustments...

The standard response options to the media questions include the following:

Standard Response

At this time, Parks are open for activities and services. Coordinators of Department activities are assessing precautionary heat measures in place. Participants are directed to the appropriate Status

line for the latest decisions on activity modifications. These decisions may change with conditions. During this Heat Advisory Warning, personnel directing activities reserve the right to change rules of play and make other modifications to mitigate heat conditions. All participation is voluntary and those with specific health conditions should refrain from participation today.

Extreme Measure Response

At this time, the County has deemed a health emergency until x pm. Howard County Recreation & Parks outdoor events and activities have been canceled and sports fields are closed. Participants should contact the appropriate status line for re-start information on activities.

Summary of Heat Advisory / Warning

Below are key markers that kick in the Extreme Heat Plan preparation and discussions.

Forecast	Summary Plan
105° +	Mobilizes the Community Sport plan utilizing Field Marshals and others equipped with cell phone applications. Alert reminder to program staff of on-call expectations. 115 degree heat index is the maximum temperature for cancellation per the Health Department.
94° +	Automatically kicks in the discussion phase of Extreme Heat Plan Guidelines and begins preparation for additional activity specific pre-cautionary measures as well as provides flexibility to onsite personnel and officials to institute activity or rule modifications. Reminder: Individual participants who choose not to participate in these conditions will not be penalized.
84° – 93°	Coaches, leaders, event directors, officials observe participants carefully for signs of heat injuries or exhaustion. Assure and schedule participants for water breaks. Water is to be available at all times. Individual participants are not required to participate in these conditions.