



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, June 21, 2012
CPM 2012-03

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: John Berry, Director

Subject: Coping with Severe Heat and Humidity

As we experience severe heat and humidity this summer, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reminds Federal agencies to be proactive in protecting the health and well-being of our employees. We should take all available steps to ensure our employees are protected during potentially dangerous heat waves.

Federal agencies are encouraged to remind their employees of the need to remain adequately hydrated during severe heat. Providing immediate and ready access to potable drinking water will help to ensure the health and well-being of Federal employees during severe heat and humidity.

During days with severe heat and humidity, agencies are reminded of OPM's workplace flexibilities that may be used to reduce health risks. With supervisory approval and to prevent work disruptions, a telework-ready employee may telework from home on a day when air quality conditions are poor. Additionally, if permitted by agency policy, an employee working a flexible work schedule may choose to adjust arrival and departure times to avoid commuting during the hottest periods of the day. Employees also may request annual leave, earned compensatory time off, or credit hours on a day when severe heat and humidity are threatening to the employee's health and welfare. The following links provide additional information on workplace flexibilities:

- Telework: www.telework.gov.
- Work Scheduling: www.opm.gov/oca/worksch/index.asp.
- Leave: opm.gov/oca/leave.

Finally, various Federal health authorities and local governments provide information and advice on the best ways to cope with severe heat and dangerous weather conditions to protect ourselves and our families. The following links to official Federal Government information dealing with heat-related risks may be helpful:

- www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress - on the website for National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services.

- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/> - "Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses" on the website for Emergency Preparedness and Response, which is part Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Health Services.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/extremeheat/index.html> - "Extreme Heat Media Tool Kit" on the website for National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), which is part of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Health Services.
- www.weather.gov/om/heat/ and www.weather.gov/om/heat/heat_wave.shtml - on the website for National Weather Service (NWS), which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.
- <http://www.weather.gov/washington> - forecast for the Washington/Baltimore area on the website for the National Weather Service. Forecasts for other areas may also be accessed from this site.
- www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html - on the website for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Department of Labor.

Additional Information

Employees should contact their agency human resources office for further information on the workplace flexibilities available during severe heat and humidity. Agency field offices should contact their appropriate headquarters-level agency human resources office. Agency headquarters-level may contact Pay and Leave at OPM at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov. Requests from individual employees will be returned or forwarded to the appropriate agency human resources office.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers, and Human Resources Directors