



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, July 22, 2016
CPM 2016-07

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: BETH F. COBERT, ACTING 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) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to remind Federal agencies to be proactive in protecting the health and well-being of our employees. We should take all available steps to help protect our employees 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 protect 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 may also 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: <https://www.telework.gov/>
- Work Scheduling: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/work-schedules/>
- Leave: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/#url=Overview>

Finally, OPM wants to make the Federal community aware of the resources available from various Federal health authorities and local governments that 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:

- nws.noaa.gov/os/heat/ww.shtml - heat alerts on the website for the National Weather Service (NWS), which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.
- <https://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).
- <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.html> - “Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses” on the website for Emergency Preparedness and Response, which is part of the CDC.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html> - “Extreme Heat and Your Health” on the CDC website.
- [cdc.gov/extremeheat/materials.html](https://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/materials.html) - “Extreme Heat and Your Health” media toolkit containing a host of web-based information and printable flyers and educational materials.
- <https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/information-exchange/db/categories/8/Current-Issues---In-the-News/144/Extreme-Heat> - the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response’s (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) provides heat-related resources in its Information Exchange (requires free registration and login), including –
 - A municipal plan to limit adverse health effects from heat to which other jurisdictions can refer;
 - A [toolkit](#) to educate students, school staff, athletic coaches and parents about preventing heat-related illnesses;
 - Heat wave checklists for health care providers; and
 - A [hospital heat plan](#) which other hospitals can refer.
- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat> and <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-during> - on the NWS website.
- <https://www.weather.gov/lwx/> - forecast for the Washington/Baltimore area on the NWS website. Forecasts for other areas may also be accessed from this website.
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/index.html> - on the website for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).
- https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html - “Heat Safety Tool” on DOL’s OSHA website provides safety information through a smartphone app.
- <https://toolkit.climate.gov/tool/national-integrated-heat-health-information-system-nihhis> - The “National Integrated Heat Health Information System” (NIHHIS) portal integrates heat-health information, case studies, and tools from across the Federal Government to support on-the-ground efforts to reduce heat-related impacts on human health.
- <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/excessive-heat-events-guidebook> - “Excessive Heat Events Guidebook” on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s website helps community officials, emergency managers, meteorologists, and others plan for and respond to excessive heat events.
- <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap> - “Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program” (LIHEAP) helps keep families safe and healthy through initiatives that assist families with energy costs.

Additional Information

Agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact Pay and Leave at OPM at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov. Employees should contact their agency human resources or payroll office for further information on this memo.

cc: Human Resources Directors