



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

CPM 2019-17

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: MARGARET M. WEICHERT
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: 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/>

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:

- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat/>- "Heat Safety Tips and Resources" on the National Weather Service (NWS) website, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

- 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).
- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/> - “Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses” on the website for Emergency Preparedness and Response, which is part of the CDC.
- <http://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/heat/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/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.
- <http://www.epa.gov/heat-islands/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.
- <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/liheap>- “Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program” (LIHEAP) helps keep families safe and healthy through initiatives that assist families with energy costs.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/pets.html>- Tips on protecting pets from heat on the CDC website.

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: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers, Human Resources Directors, Telework Coordinators