



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Press Release

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State Releases Plan to Deal with Extreme Heat Caused by Global Warming

Draft guidance document seeks to mitigate public health impacts of heat

SACRAMENTO – In the wake of the hottest July ever recorded in the United States, California state agencies today released a plan to deal with extreme heat caused by global warming. The draft “State of California Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document”, which seeks to provide guidance for incorporating extreme heat projections into planning and decision making in California, is now open for review and input by the general public and stakeholders.

Even though heat-related deaths and illnesses are largely preventable, heat ranks as the deadliest of all natural hazards. During a 10-day California heat wave in 2006, more than 650 people died due to heat-related conditions. According to models produced by scientists at Scripps Institute of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, California will see temperature increases on average of up to 5° F by the 2030s, and up to 10° F by the end of the century. The models also indicate that extreme temperature events will occur more frequently.

“Every year people in California succumb to extreme heat,” said California Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Matt Rodriguez, who chairs the state’s [Climate Action Team](#). “With average temperatures on the rise, and more extreme heat events predicted in our future, we as a state should do all we can to plan for these conditions, try to mitigate some of the impacts, and most importantly, protect Californians from heat-related illness and death. This is a great example of state agencies working together to potentially save lives.”

Using the most up-to-date climate change models, the draft Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document focuses on the human health aspects of increasing temperatures in California, including longer and more frequent extreme heat events which pose a substantial risk of illness and death, especially to vulnerable populations. According to those models, urban and rural population centers throughout California will experience an average of 40 to 53 extreme heat days by 2050 and an average of 40 to 99 days by 2099. This compares to a historical average of four extreme heat days per year.

The draft Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document provides recommendations for consideration by state agencies related to extreme heat preparedness and response, and for cooling buildings, roadways and other paved surfaces. While this document was prepared with state agencies in mind, it’s envisioned that local governments may also use it as a guide.

Proposed Recommendations

Some of the proposed recommendations in this draft document include: update California's Green Building Standards to include heat mitigation measures; expand the use of cool pavements and surfaces where possible; promote and expand urban greening; improve heat-health alert warnings; work with utilities and local health departments to ensure that senior housing and cooling centers can be made exempt from rolling blackouts whenever possible; augment training of employers and employees in industries with outdoor work; evaluate work conditions such as reducing physically demanding work during hot times of the day, and addressing the work/rest cycle during periods of high heat.

The draft Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document was developed by the Heat Adaptation Workgroup of the state Climate Action Team, or CAT. The CAT is made up of state agency secretaries and the heads of agency boards and departments, led by the secretary of Cal/EPA. The CAT works to coordinate statewide efforts to implement global warming [emission reduction programs](#) and the state's [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).

The Heat Adaptation Workgroup of the CAT was co-chaired by the California Department of Public Health and the California Environmental Protection Agency and includes staff from the following state entities: California Air Resources Board, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Industrial Relations, California Department of Public Health, California Department of Transportation, California Emergency Management Agency, California Energy Commission, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Natural Resources Agency, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

The Climate Action Team's Public Health Working Group will discuss the Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document at its next [meeting on September 10](#).

To read the draft Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document, [click here](#) or go to the "News and Events" section on the homepage of the state's [Climate Change Portal](#). Comments on the draft Extreme Heat Adaptation Guidance Document can be made online at: climatechange@calepa.ca.gov

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