



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell: 90-Plus ‘Cooling Centers’ Open Statewide Amid Scorching Heat

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that more than 90 “cooling centers” have been opened in cities and towns across Connecticut as municipalities respond to the Governor’s request to ensure adequate relief from a ferocious summer heat wave.

The National Weather Service has placed portions of Connecticut under a high-heat advisory and temperatures in the mid- and upper-90s are expected statewide. Information about the cooling centers (list attached) is being provided to the state’s 211 “InfoLine” and other social service networks so that anyone needing a break from the record- and near-record temperatures can easily locate a refuge.

“There’s no way around it – this combination of heat and humidity is miserable,” Governor Rell said. “The best advice is to stay cool any way possible, preferably in an air-conditioned location, and to stay hydrated. One of our main concerns right now is to make sure that people who don’t have air conditioning at home or are otherwise at risk from the heat have a cool, safe place to be. That is why the cooling centers are so vital.

“I appreciate the swift response by so many cities and towns to the request I made during our planning meetings over the weekend,” the Governor said. “We also continue to monitor the situation at ISO-New England, which operates the region’s electric power grid, and to keep an eye on issues such as the risk of grass fires or forest fires. We are looking for a break in the heat by the end of the week – and in the meantime we will all need to watch out for each other.”

Governor Rell said the state Department of Public Health is offering the following safety tips:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him/her how much you should drink while the weather is hot.

- Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar – these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the movies, shopping mall, public library, or a friend's house/apartment with air conditioning – even a few hours spent in an air conditioned environment can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on: infants and young children, people aged 65 or older, people who have a mental illness, and those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure. Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children need much more frequent watching.
- If you must be out in the heat, limit your outdoor activity to early morning and evening hours. Cut down on exercise. If you must exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. Warning: If you are on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage.
- Try to rest often in shady areas.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say “UVA/UVB protection” on their labels).