

# LONG TERM CARE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

## LTC Emergency Preparedness Digest

Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2021

This quarterly e-newsletter is designed to provide certified long term care facilities with information on facility-level hazards and threats, emergency preparedness programs, recent events, conferences, and upcoming training opportunities in Georgia.

*Georgia's Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness Educational Program is funded through*



We have a new **LTCEPEP web page!** Click the button below to view our course descriptions, year four schedule, educational videos, previous newsletters, and more. Feel free to share this resource with your colleagues.

[Click Here for LTCEPEP Web Page](#)

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## Summer Focus Area: Heat Emergencies

This year, North America experienced the hottest month of June ever recorded. Extreme heat can be deadly, especially for older populations including nursing home residents.

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## CMS Appendix Z Related Requirements

## **E-0015: Policies and Procedures**

Facilities must develop and implement emergency preparedness policies and procedures based on the emergency plan, risk assessment, and communication plan. The **policies and procedures must be reviewed and updated annually** for LTC facilities.

Facilities must establish policies and procedures that determine how required heating and cooling of their facility will be maintained during an emergency situation, as necessary, if there were a loss of the primary power source. Facilities are **not required to heat and cool the entire building evenly, but must ensure safe temperatures are maintained** in those areas deemed necessary to protect people (residents, staff, volunteers) and provisions stored in the facility.

LTC facilities who were initially **certified after October 1, 1990 must maintain a temperature range of 71°F (minimum) to 81°F (maximum).**

### **Survey Procedures for E-0004:**

- Verify the emergency plan includes policies and procedures for the provision of subsistence needs including, but not limited to: food, water, and pharmaceutical supplies for patients and staff.
  - Verify the emergency plan includes policies and procedures to ensure adequate alternate energy sources, including emergency power necessary to maintain:
    - **Temperatures to protect patient health and safety and for the safe and sanitary storage of provisions;**
    - Emergency lighting; and,
    - Fire detection, extinguishing, and alarm systems.
  - Verify the emergency plan includes policies and procedures to provide for sewage and waste disposal.
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# Heat Emergencies

Heat is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States and should be taken seriously. As humans age, the body becomes less effective at managing body temperature. Increased age combined with chronic medical conditions and medications, means older adults are much more likely to experience heat-related illnesses than younger adults.

On warm days, pay close attention to not only the temperature but also the heat index. The heat index is how hot it feels, measuring temperature and humidity. The more humid it is, the longer it takes for sweat to evaporate and cool down the body.

*heat index = temperature + humidity*

## Heat-Related Illnesses

There are multiple types of heat-related illnesses which range from sunburn to heat stroke. Each illness has different symptoms and requires different levels of medical care. See the following flyer for a list of symptoms and responses. Download the flyer [here](#), print it, and post it at your nurses' station for a summertime reminder to look out for the signs of heat-related illnesses.

# HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## WHAT TO DO

### HEAT STROKE

- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
  - Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
  - Fast, strong pulse
  - Headache
  - Dizziness
  - Nausea
  - Confusion
  - Losing consciousness (passing out)
- Call 911 right away—heat stroke is a medical emergency
  - Move the person to a cooler place
  - Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath
  - Do not give the person anything to drink

### HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Heavy sweating
  - Cold, pale, and clammy skin
  - Fast, weak pulse
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Muscle cramps
  - Tiredness or weakness
  - Dizziness
  - Headache
  - Fainting (passing out)
- Move to a cool place
  - Loosen your clothes
  - Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath
  - Sip water
- Get medical help right away if:**
- You are throwing up
  - Your symptoms get worse
  - Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour

### HEAT CRAMPS

- Heavy sweating during intense exercise
  - Muscle pain or spasms
- Stop physical activity and move to a cool place
  - Drink water or a sports drink
  - Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity
- Get medical help right away if:**
- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
  - You're on a low-sodium diet
  - You have heart problems

### SUNBURN

- Painful, red, and warm skin
  - Blisters on the skin
- Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals
  - Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath
  - Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas
  - Do not break blisters

### HEAT RASH

- Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)
- Stay in a cool, dry place
  - Keep the rash dry
  - Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash



12/2010/2011

# Summer Safety Tips

## Resident Safety

Read below for safety tips for residents in warmer weather:

- Review resident medications and identify those which may cause residents to be more susceptible to heat and sunlight.
- Discourage strenuous physical activity as appropriate, especially outdoor activities.
- Remind residents to dress in light, loose clothing. Overdressing can increase the risk of a heat related illness.
- Encourage residents to stay out of direct sunlight, both indoors and outdoors.
- Do not rely on residents to tell you they are overheated!
  - Often, the increase in body temperature is so gradual it can't be recognized by the individual.
- Set up hydration stations throughout the facility
- Stock up on fluids and cold snacks, such as popsicles
- Ask dietary staff to incorporate cold plate options like salads

## Staff Safety

Read below for safety tips for staff members in warmer weather:

- Discourage strenuous physical activity as appropriate, especially outdoor activities.
  - Encourage staff to complete outdoor maintenance activities early in the morning to avoid higher temperatures later in the day.
- Remind staff to drink more water than usual and don't wait until they are thirsty to drink
- Increase the frequency of clinical assessments for residents, particularly body temperature.
  - Checking skin temperature by touch can be a quick, helpful way to assess a resident.
- For more safety tips on working outdoors, view this flyer [here](#).

## Facility Safety

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Read below for safety tips for your facility in warmer weather:

- Regular maintenance checks and servicing of your facility's HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems should be performed by qualified individuals and documented.
- Know what to do if your facility's air conditioning stops working for any reason and make sure your staff knows also!
- Keep the account numbers and emergency phone numbers of your facility's utilities providers and HVAC service providers on hand in the facility for immediate use during an outage.
- Do you know who can order an evacuation of your facility due to a total loss of air conditioning?
  - If that person was not at work that day, do they have a backup person who could order an evacuation? If so, who is it?

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## Healthcare News



### **Expecting more heat waves, Seattle's long term care facilities weigh need for air conditioning**

"With no central air conditioning and a nearly 100-year-old building, Providence Mount St. Vincent in West Seattle and its 300 senior residents relied on portable AC units, fans, and large-scale cooling

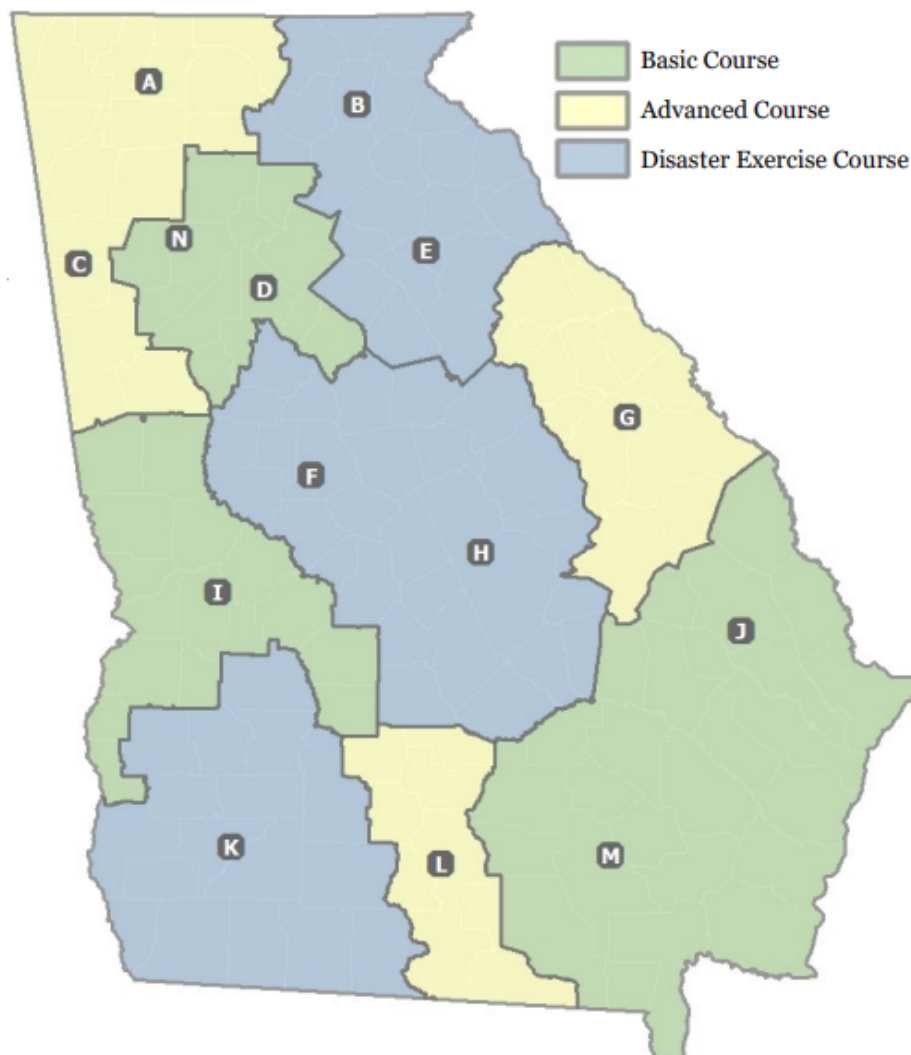
units borrowed from hospitals to get through the recent heat wave."  
(Danny Gadowski, The Seattle Times)

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## Upcoming Courses

Year 4 includes three (3) offerings each of the Basic Course, Advanced Course, and a new Disaster Exercise Course. All courses are currently scheduled for in-person attendance, subject to change due to COVID-19. Refer to the map below to see what courses are offered in your area and click the button to register for courses.

[Register for Courses Here](#)





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# Resources

## General Resources

**Family/Home Preparedness:** [www.ready.gov/georgia](http://www.ready.gov/georgia)

**Find your Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA):**  
[www.gema.georgia.gov/locations](http://www.gema.georgia.gov/locations)

**Find your Healthcare Coalition (HCC):** [www.gha911.org](http://www.gha911.org)

**Georgia Health Care Association (GHCA):** [www.ghca.info/](http://www.ghca.info/)

**Regional Calendar for upcoming events and trainings:**  
[www.gha911.org/coalition-information/](http://www.gha911.org/coalition-information/)

## Heat Emergency Resources

**Hot Weather Safety - National Institute on Aging:** <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>

**Preparing for Extreme Heat:** <https://www.ready.gov/heat>

**National Weather Service Heat Safety:** <https://www.weather.gov/grb/heat>

**CDC Information on Extreme Heat:** <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/toolkits/extremeheat/default.html>

**OSHA Worker Safety - Heat:** <https://www.osha.gov/heat>

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# Contact Us



**Institute for Disaster Management**  
*College of Public Health*  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

If you have any questions about the e-newsletter, upcoming events, or course registration, please contact us at [georgialtc@uga.edu](mailto:georgialtc@uga.edu)



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