



# Hamilton County Emergency Management Extreme Heat and Cold Temperature Plan – 2019



# Hamilton County Emergency Management Extreme Heat and Cold Temperature Plan

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# Hamilton County Emergency Management

## Extreme Heat and Cold Temperature Plan

### Executive Summary

Hamilton County established the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) as the basis for the county-wide emergency management program and includes all phases of emergency management (response, recovery, mitigation, and preparedness). The CEMP is approved by the county board of commissioners, mayors, town presidents, the sheriff, county auditor, and many others as indicated on the signature page of the plan. The CEMP establishes the foundation for emergency response to many different types of emergencies and disasters. The Extreme Heat and Cold Plan establishes how Hamilton County Emergency Management, Hamilton County municipalities, and township government, will coordinate efforts in providing the residents of Hamilton County with relief during extreme heat and cold temperatures.

### Purpose

Hamilton County will continue to face times of extreme heat and cold. Hamilton County Government's provide critical services to its citizens and this plan will establish how local, township, and county government, referred to as governments, will coordinate necessary relief. In order to ensure that residents understand the type of services to be provided throughout the county and to manage public expectation, it is important that all jurisdictions use common terminology. This will ensure that Hamilton County Emergency Management, in conjunction with the Hamilton County PIO working group, can provide accurate information to the public and support operations in a timely and efficient manner, while also assisting in coordination across multiple municipal jurisdictions. Key terms in need of standardization across the county are listed below:

1. Reception Center – Immediate need for temporary housing
2. Warming or Cooling Center – Established facility with set hours of operation offering only basic services in a climate-controlled facility.
3. Shelter – Established facilities open 24 hours a day with basic services of cots with blankets, pillow, and personal hygiene kits, three meals a day, and restroom/shower facilities.

Regardless for the type of facility, there is a need for all levels of government to coordinate public messaging to ensure a unified voice. By ensuring public information coordination and standard naming conventions, it will be easier for jurisdictions to manage public expectations. It will also allow residents to understand the different levels of service offered within the same jurisdiction or other areas in the county. By providing residents with the same messaging, they can make informed decisions regarding the type of facility that may best fit their needs.

### Scope

Dependent upon the severity of the situation, governments may determine the need for:

1. Emergency Reception Centers
  - a. Overview

Temporary or emergent facilities such as tents, or emergency reception centers that provides as an intermediate step prior to a short or long-term facility.
  - b. Process

Local government makes the determination and activates their facilities. The activation



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could be immediate for something as a major gas leak requiring the evacuation of an entire sub-division.

c. Information Management

Once a facility is open, the local government may consider issuing a press release and sharing information on social media. HCEM will support with social media information sharing.

d. Support

HCEM can assist with staffing some of the shifts for the center with CERT; however, HCEM cannot provide full-time coverage and an American Red Cross (ARC) representative must be present at all times. In addition, RACES may be utilized to establish communications and handle radio traffic between facilities and the Emergency Operations Center.

### 2. Warming/Cooling Centers

a. Overview

Short-term facilities such as libraries, public buildings, schools, or other facilities that provides power, climate-controlled facilities, and adequate restroom facilities.

b. Process

Local government makes the determination and activates their facilities, including the establishment of hours of operations. Local governments may want to consider partnering with Township Government to help provide resources or other information to those in need.

Information Management

Once a facility is open, the local government may consider issuing a press release and sharing information on social media. HCEM will support with social media information sharing. In addition, information should be shared with the Hamilton County PIO working group to support consistent information sharing across jurisdictional boundaries.

c. Support

HCEM can assist with staffing some of the shifts for the center with CERT; however, HCEM cannot provide full-time coverage. In addition, RACES may be utilized to establish communications and handle radio traffic between facilities and the Emergency Operations Center.

### 3. Shelters

a. Overview

Long-term facilities that provides power, climate-controlled facilities, sleeping and feeding areas, and adequate restroom facilities with showers. Shelter operations are typically managed by the American Red Cross (ARC) through a shelter agreement with the facility.

b. Process

HCEM and ARC are in constant communication regarding the potential or real needs for shelters. If a local government needs to open a shelter, the local government shall contact the County EOC to begin the coordination of volunteers, shelter managers, shelter resources, and the implementation of food contracts.

c. Information Management

Once a shelter is open, it is recommended the local government, HCEM, and ARC issue a joint press release regarding the shelters availability. The shelter will be available for the public to view on the ARC website and app.



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### d. Support

- a. Set up: There are many aspects to setting up a shelter. ARC is the lead and HCEM will provide support with delivering shelter resources, activating volunteers, and coordinating with the municipality.
- b. Operations: ARC will provide shelter managers and work with facility management regarding the operation of the building. HCEM RACES can provide communication support to ARC. CERT can provide support at the shelter but must be under the supervision of an ARC representative. It is recommended the local government have parks staff or others who can help with activities during the day. Local governments should consider routine visits by law enforcement to show support and security.

## Mitigation

Residents of the county are encouraged to take necessary precautions to reduce the threat of extreme heat and cold incidents, such as conducting an annual inspection of central air and heating units, maintaining household insulation, maintaining general home maintenance against the elements, and if possible, the installation of a domestic generator.

The public should take all preparedness messages, advisories, watches, and warnings seriously by taking proactive measures before extreme weather incidents start.

## Concept of Operations

### Extreme Heat

Two or more consecutive days of high heat and humidity with temperatures exceeding 95°F, or a heat index of greater than 105°F, during the day and maintaining above 72°F during the night. During this type of event, at risk populations without air conditioning do not have the opportunity for their bodies to effectively cool off at night. This results in additional strains on the body and is exacerbated for the elderly and those with poor health.

During times of high heat, cooling centers may be required. A cooling center should offer air conditioning around 72°F, plenty of free water, seating, and adequate restroom facilities. Ideally, community centers, libraries, and other facilities with different rooms, games, books, televisions, etc. are ideal facilities.

Should the need arise to open multiple cooling centers, the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center may activate to support coordination efforts by local and township governments.

In the event of long-term power outages during extreme heat, governments may need to consider and coordinate the opening of American Red Cross approved shelters. The Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center shall activate to coordinate the opening and management of shelters. See the Mass Care annex of the CEMP for additional information regarding shelter operations.

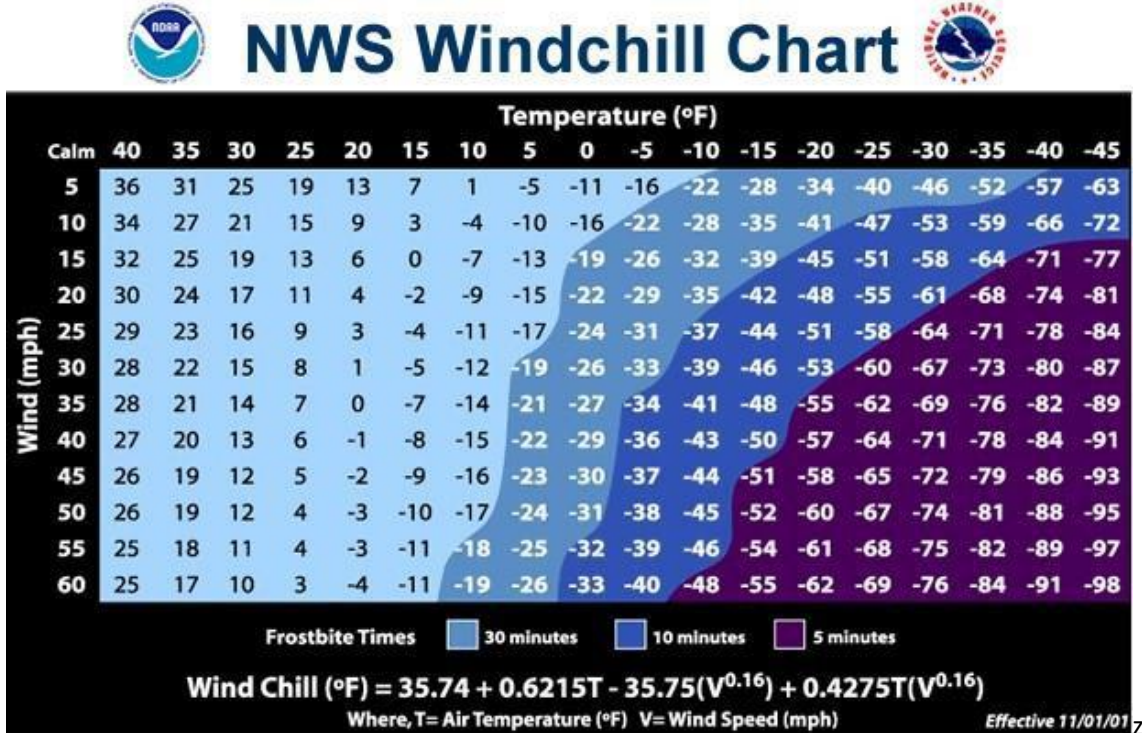


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## Extreme Cold

Two or more consecutive days of extreme cold temperatures near or below zero with windchills exceeding -25°F, at risk populations may require assistance with temporary warming centers. This situation is further exacerbated when there is a loss of electricity or natural gas to heat homes.

The table below outlines exposure times as it relates to temperature and windspeed (windchill).



A warming center should offer heating of at least 70°F and restroom facility. Other considerations include drinking water, hot beverages, and seating. Ideally, community centers, libraries, and other facilities with different rooms, games, books, televisions, etc. are ideal facilities.

Should the need arise to open multiple warming centers, the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center may activate to support coordination efforts by local and township governments.

In the event of long-term power outages during extreme cold, governments may need to consider and coordinate the opening of American Red Cross approved shelters. The Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center shall activate to coordinate the opening and management of shelters in conjunction with ARC. See the Mass Care annex of the CEMP for additional information regarding shelter operations.

## Information Coordination

Governments, non-governmental organizations, mass care facilities, health care facilities, and emergency support functions have a duty to release timely and effective information to the public. Effective communication will reduce confusion, show a unified level of coordination, and instill trust in the residents of Hamilton County. To prepare for such incidents, the Hamilton County Public Information Officer’s working group builds to establish relationships and enhance coordination amongst public information



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officers and communications offices.

Information regarding the establishment of cooling and warming centers should be:

1. Shared with all those supporting the mission
2. A predetermined time when the information will be released to the public
3. Coordination on how updates will be shared and across what platforms
  - a. The opportunity for the lead agency to publish the information first
  - b. Other agencies sharing the original social media releases
4. When press briefings will be held with consideration for joint briefings when multiple agencies are involved
5. Discussion of a public information officer's working group liaisons to monitor social media, handle media inquiries, and manage rumor control.

## Plan Maintenance

HCEM will review and update the plan every two years through coordination and support of local governments and non-governmental organizations including, but not limited to the Hamilton County Community Organizations Active in Disasters, the American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army