

To be completed by Policy Champion			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Directive		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised*	<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed (no changes) *	
*Replacing Serial Number:		*Date Last Verified (MM/DD/YY)	24/04/2019
Title/Subject:	Extreme Heat, Cold, and Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) & Operations		
Manual:	Occupational Health & Safety		
Section:	Occupational Health & Safety		
Sub-Section:	General		
Developed by:	Occupational Health and Safety		
Issued by:	Occupational Health and Safety		
Policy Champion:	Occupational Health and Safety		
Stakeholder & Review Committee Input (check applicable)		Date Reviewed (mm/dd/yy)	Comments/Feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Performance Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Performance Improvement Committee			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency Response Committee			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint Health & Safety Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Infection Prevention & Control Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical & Diagnostic Quality & Utilization Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Medication Practices Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing & Health Professions Advisory Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Standards & Issues Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Director/Service Managers -Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Research and Education Council Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Product Evaluation & Standards Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing Professional Standards and Issues Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Advisory Committee			
Other Programs/Departments/Disciplines as required			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Environmental Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Resource/Financial Implications considered (if applicable):			
Committee:		Date (mm/dd/yy):	
Approval Body (see Appendix III – Approval Algorithm)		Date Approved (mm/dd/yy)	
To be completed by Administrative Assistant/Secretary			
Name/Position:			
Date Posted (mm/dd/yy):		Email Sent Out (mm/dd/yy):	
New Serial Number:		Date of Next Review (mm/dd/yy):	
BACKGROUND AND POLICY STATEMENT:			

INTRODUCTION

West Park Healthcare Centre (the Centre) is committed to providing quality care and service in an innovative and environmentally sustainable manner. The organization is resilient to the emerging challenges of climate change. As a leading healthcare facility specializing in respiratory rehabilitation, the Centre has established additional precautions and corresponding procedures to ensure the respiratory safety and well-being of all staff and patients. The Centre will operate in accordance with the daily temperature as well as the Government of Canada's Air Quality Health Index report when coordinating any *outdoor activity or occupational assignment taking place on Centre grounds in an effort to reduce the detrimental health risks associated with extreme heat, extreme cold and poor air quality.

POLICY STATEMENT

For the purpose of this policy, staff member refers to employees, physicians, volunteers, students and independent contractors

Any staff member, organizing, involved in or becoming aware of an outdoor activity or occupational assignment within Centre grounds must refer to the [Environment Canada forecasted temperature](#) and the [Government of Canada Toronto Air Quality Health Index report](#) prior to promoting or engaging in outdoor physical activity.

Outdoor occupational assignments and recreational activities will be revised, moved indoors (where possible) or postponed during Extreme Weather Events including: Extreme Cold Weather Events, Extreme Heat Weather Events and when the Government of Canada Air Quality Index reaches or exceeds a level of 7 or greater.

DEFINITIONS

Air Quality Health Index (AQHI): The Air Quality Health Index or AQHI is an initiative between Environment Canada, Health Canada, and the Province of Ontario that uses a scale designed to inform Canadians of the levels of air pollution and the health risks associated with short term exposure.

Extreme Cold Weather Alert: In the City of Toronto, when Environment Canada forecasts a temperature that reaches or exceeds -15 degrees Celsius or a wind chill of -20 degrees Celsius Environment Canada will declare an Extreme Cold Weather Event.

Extreme Heat Weather Alert: In the City of Toronto, when Environment Canada forecasts (for two or more consecutive days) a daytime high temperature that reaches or exceeds 31 degrees Celsius, a nighttime or minimum temperature that reaches 20 degrees Celsius and/or if for two consecutive days a Humidex level that reaches or exceeds 40 degrees Environment Canada will declare an Extreme Heat Weather Event.

Frostbite: Frostbite is a cold-related illness that occurs when skin or soft tissues freeze. As a result of the freezing oxygen can no longer circulate and the tissue dies. Although frostbite can affect any area of the body, common areas include the cheeks, ears, nose, hands and feet.

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are painful and involuntary muscle spasms that can occur after strenuous activities in the heat.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion is a heat-related illness that often occurs after prolonged exposure to high temperatures and dehydration. Symptoms can include nausea and vomiting, excessive thirst, muscle cramps, and dizziness. Without appropriate treatment, Heat Exhaustion can progress to Heat Stroke.

Heat Stroke: Heat stroke is a heat-related illness in which the body's temperature is elevated drastically and is considered a medical emergency. Heat stroke is often accompanied with dehydration, confusion, agitation, disorientation, the absence of sweating and in severe cases coma or death.

Hypothermia: Hypothermia is a cold-related illness that occurs when the body's temperature drops below 35 degrees Celsius. Symptoms include: shivering, stumbling, confusion and in severe cases organ failure and death.

Respiratory Irritation: Is a physiological reaction caused by foreign irritants that could result in a reaction or state of inflammation within the respiratory system.

Strenuous Activity: Strenuous activity is a task that requires a large amount of energy or force for completion.

Outdoor Activities: For the purposes of this document outdoor activities and/or assignments include any recreational or occupational task completed outdoors within the Centre grounds.

PROCEDURE

1.0. Extreme Temperatures and Operations:

1.1. Any staff member organizing involved in or becoming aware of an outdoor activity or occupational assignment within Centre grounds must refer to the Environment of Canada forecasted temperature prior to promoting or engaging in outdoor physical activity.

1.2. Review the forecasted temperature and take appropriate action based on the corresponding instructions below in the event of an extreme heat or cold weather event:

2.0. Extreme Heat Weather Alert:

2.1. If for two consecutive days, the Environment of Canada forecasted daytime high temperature reaches or exceeds 31 degrees Celsius, if the nighttime or minimum temperature reaches or exceeds 20 degrees Celsius, if for two consecutive days the Humidex reaches or exceeds 40 and/ or if Environment Canada issues a 'Heat Alert' there is an increased risk associated with outdoor activity.

2.2. All outdoor assignments and recreational activities are moved indoors or rescheduled (if possible).

2.3. An 'All User' e-mail is sent by the Centre's Occupational Health Safety and Wellness Department (OHSWD) to advise all staff, of the Extreme Heat Alert.

2.4. An electronic post containing the weather alert information will be published on the Announcements page of the Corporate Intranet (The Hub) by the OHSWD to advise all staff of the Extreme Heat Alert.

2.5. Clinical teams should:

2.5.1. Review with patients the health-related risks associated with extreme heat, such as: heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat stroke.

2.5.2. Discourage outdoor activity.

2.5.3. Reiterate the importance of being aware of the potential onset symptoms of heat-related illness, such as: faintness, dizziness, fatigue, weak, rapid pulse, muscle cramps, nausea and headaches.

2.5.4. Clinical teams should ensure patients have access to cool fluids and are adequately hydrated.

2.6. Managers and Supervisors should:

2.6.1. Review with staff the health-related risks associated with extreme heat, such as: heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and/or heat stroke.

2.6.2. Discourage unnecessary outdoor activity (where possible).

2.6.3. When outdoor assignments are required, reiterate the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of heat-related illness, including: faintness, dizziness, fatigue, weak, rapid pulse, muscle

cramps, nausea and headache.

2.6.4. Leadership should assess the need for drinking water for staff. Frequent water breaks in cool areas should be endorsed utilizing available resources such as unit pantry water and ice machines.

2.6.5. Promote the use of loose, cool, dry clothing, a hat and sunscreen.

2.7. Staff are encouraged to:

2.7.1. Check the forecasted temperature prior to going outside.

2.7.2. Monitor electronic updates provided by OHSWD.

2.7.3. Be aware of the onset symptoms of heat-related illness.

3.0 Extreme Cold Weather Alert:

3.1. If the forecasted temperature reaches or exceeds -15 degrees Celsius or -20 Celsius including the wind chill, and/or if a 'Cold Alert' has been issued by Environment Canada, there is an increased risk associated with outdoor activity. All outdoor assignments and recreational activities are moved indoors (if possible) or rescheduled.

3.2. All outdoor assignments and recreational activities are moved indoors (if possible) or rescheduled.

3.3. An 'All User' e-mail is sent by the Centre OHSWD to advise all staff, physicians, students, and volunteers of the Extreme Cold Alert.

3.4. An electronic post containing the weather alert information will be published on the Announcements page of the Corporate Intranet (The Hub) by the OHSWD to advise all staff, physicians, students, and volunteers of the Extreme Cold Alert.

3.5. Clinical teams should:

3.5.1. Review with patients the health-related risks associated with extreme cold, such as: frostbite and hypothermia.

3.5.2. Discourage outdoor activity and reiterate the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of cold-related illness, including: shivering, dizziness, hunger, nausea, slight confusion, lack of coordination, fatigue, and increased heart rate.

3.6. Managers and Supervisors should:

3.6.1. Review with staff the health-related risks associated with extreme cold such as: frostbite and hypothermia.

3.6.2. Discourage unnecessary outdoor activity (where possible).

3.6.3. When outdoor assignments are required, reiterate the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of cold-related illness, including: shivering, dizziness, hunger, nausea, slight confusion, lack of coordination, fatigue, and increased heart rate.

3.6.4. Encourage frequent breaks to consume warm fluids in heated areas.

3.6.5. Promote the use of warm dry clothing, lined hats, gloves and boots and limited skin exposure.

3.7. Staff are encouraged to:

3.7.1. Review the forecasted temperature prior to going outside.

3.7.2. Monitor electronic updates provided by OHSWD.

3.7.3. Be aware of the onset symptoms of cold related illness.

4.0. Air Quality Health Index and Operations:

4.1. Any staff member involved in or becoming aware of an outdoor activity or occupational assignment within

Centre grounds must refer to the and the Government of Canada Toronto Air Quality Health Index daily report (https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/onaq-001_e.html) prior to promoting or engaging in outdoor physical activity.

4.2. Review the forecasted Air Quality Health Index and take appropriate action based on the corresponding instructions below:

5.0. Low Risk AQHI (1-3):

5.1. Ideal air quality for outdoor activities, operations resume as usual.

6.0. Moderate Risk AQHI (4-6):

6.1. Outdoor activities are only modified if physical respiratory irritation occurs, such as; coughing, difficulty breathing, or irritation of eyes, nose or throat (to be monitored on an individual basis).

6.2. Clinical teams should review with patients the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of potential respiratory irritation caused by air pollution, such as: coughing, difficulty breathing, irritated eyes, nose, or throat.

6.3. Managers should review with teams (especially staff who complete outdoor assignments) to be aware of onset symptoms of potential respiratory irritation caused by air pollution, such as: coughing, difficulty breathing, irritated eyes, nose or throat.

7.0. High Risk – Very High Risk AQHI (7-10+):

7.1. There is an increased risk associated with outdoor activity. All outdoor assignments and recreational activities are moved indoors (if possible) or rescheduled.

7.2. An 'All User' e-mail is sent by the Centre Occupational Health Department informing all staff, physicians, students, and volunteers of the High Risk Air Quality Health Index.

7.3. Clinical teams should review the AQHI with patients, discourage outdoor activity and reiterate the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of potential respiratory irritation caused by air pollution, such as: coughing, difficulty breathing, irritated eyes, nose or throat.

7.4. Managers should review the AQHI with staff, discourage outdoor activity and reiterate the importance of being aware of the onset symptoms of potential respiratory irritation caused by air pollution, such as: coughing, difficulty breathing, irritated eyes, nose or throat.

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