

Policy Adoption Fact Sheet: Heat Emergency Plan

2020 Comprehensive Plan Review | David Chernack, Joint Environmental Committee Intern

Why is this action important? With extreme weather events becoming more common and severe due to climate change, municipalities must be prepared to protect their residents from their worst effects. Extreme heat events—wherein temperatures crest 90 degrees—can be dangerous to Rhinebeck’s seniors, youth, and outdoor workers.

How is this action implemented? To implement such a Heat Emergency Plan (HEP), Rhinebeck would need to convene both policymakers and stakeholders to discuss current heat emergency management systems and review the resiliency materials already made available through the Resiliency Planning Tool project with Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County. Following this, the key elements of the plan include determining appropriate heat and humidity triggers for the plan, identifying and vulnerable populations, and specifically outlining what community officials will do in the case of a heat wave.

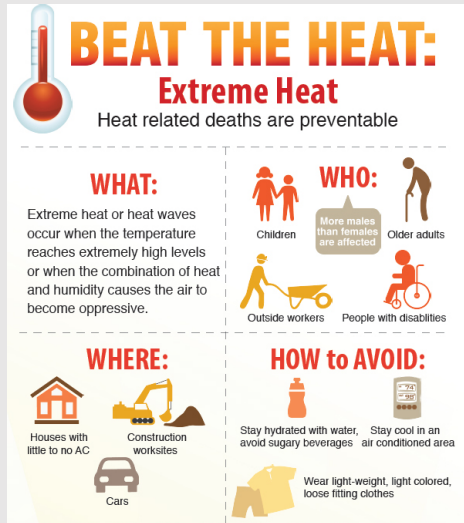
Following this, establishing cooling areas—such as public buildings or parks—is the next key step to implementing an HEP, along with establishing a system by which municipal officials can communicate the threat to the public.

What does the Comprehensive Plan say about it?

While the Town’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan does not say anything specific about a HEP, it does mention that safety precautions should be taken against extreme weather events. Furthermore, protecting seniors and differently abled residents—those who would be the most negatively affected by extreme heat events—is a large focus of many sections of the plan.

What departments will it involve? The Town or Village Boards would be tasked with writing the plan in coordination with the fire and police departments. Contact would likely need to be made with County and State officials. Additionally, Rhinebeck is an autism supportive community and could its coordinate with the Anderson Center for Autism as part of the project, as well as groups working with those who are aging in place.

What will it cost? Relatively little. Setting up a system to coordinate with citizens during an extreme heat event will likely be the costliest aspect of this action, and grants are available from the state as well.



BEAT THE HEAT: Extreme Heat
Heat related deaths are preventable

WHAT: Extreme heat or heat waves occur when the temperature reaches extremely high levels or when the combination of heat and humidity causes the air to become oppressive.

WHO: Children, More males than females are affected, Older adults, Outside workers, People with disabilities

WHERE: Houses with little to no AC, Construction work sites, Cars

HOW TO AVOID: Stay hydrated with water. Stay cool in an avoid sugary beverages. air conditioned area. Wear light-weight, light colored, loose fitting clothes.

Heat Emergency Plan quick facts

CSC points: 6 points (PE7: Heat Emergency Plan; competitive funding available)

Benefits to Rhinebeck: a plan and system of contact during extreme heat emergencies

Cost: low

Relevant agencies: Town/Village boards of trustees, police and fire departments