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**July 7, 2016**

## **Be Prepared for Extreme Heat**

*By Kathleen Votava, Office of Regional Operations, Administration for Community Living*

As summer is upon us, this is an important reminder regarding planning for and responding to periods of extreme heat. It is a time to prepare yourself and those in your care. Whether you are an older adult, an individual with a disability, or a family member caring for a loved one with functional needs, each person's requirements and abilities are unique. During periods of extreme heat, every individual can take important steps to put plans in place and prepare for potential risks, such as power outages. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

A Commitment to planning today will help you prepare for extreme heat situations. Take actions to include:

- Consider how periods of extreme heat, including risk for potential power outages, might affect your individual needs.
- Plan to help yourself at least for a period of time. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or a pharmacy.
- Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available. For example, make provisions for medications that require refrigeration or plan arrangements for any assistance to get to a cooling center if needed.
- **Build A Kit** with your unique considerations in mind. What do you need to maintain your health, safety, and independence during periods of extreme heat? For example, include any specialized items in your kit that you may need such as extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food and water for service animals, and any other items that you might need.
- Plan to check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- Plan to check on service animals more frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

Resources and tools are available for community-based organizations including the

[Extreme Heat Social Media Toolkit](#), [Extreme Heat Public Service Announcements](#), and the [Extreme Heat Infograph](#). The [HHS emPOWER Map](#) features the monthly total of Medicare beneficiaries with electricity-dependent equipment claims at the U.S. state, territory, county, and zip code level to identify the areas and populations that may be impacted and at risk for power outages.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) works with agencies such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and others to help spread the word about extreme heat.

Information about extreme heat preparedness and response can be found at [ready.gov/heat](https://www.ready.gov/heat) for seniors, individuals with access and functional needs, and others.

Join us in being prepared for extreme heat: Be Informed, Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Get Involved.

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