



Occupational Health and Safety  
Standard Operating Procedures

**HOT WEATHER**

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### REVISION LOG

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
01	November 1, 2016	Updated to reflect the new provincial harmonized heat alert system and to incorporate existing TCDSB classroom and facility procedures and best practices, thereby reducing the impact of hot weather on students and staff
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## 1.0 PURPOSE

All School Boards have a general duty to protect students and workers from hazards in schools and other Board workplaces, including weather-related hazards that may impact school operations such as heat stress, particularly during the hot summer months.

The TCDSB Hot Weather Procedure increases the awareness level of all TCDSB workers to heat-related illness during heat warnings issued by Toronto Public Health and outlines a series of practical measures that schools and Board departments can take to help prevent discomfort and heat-related illness for students and staff.

The TCDSB Hot Weather Procedure also helps the Facilities Department support their workers involved in custodial operations, maintenance, and repairs during the summer months.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

### 2.1 Background

The majority of TCDSB facilities, especially schools, are open year-round. Many buildings accommodate programs in the summer months such as daycares, focus on youth camps, and summer school classes.

The summer is also an extremely busy period for TCDSB Facilities custodial and maintenance staff involved in cleaning, repairs, renewal and capital work, much of which can only be done in the short window when students and other regular building occupants are not present.

In the October 18, 2006 meeting of the Committee of the Whole Board, the Board approved a document titled "TCDSB Heat Protocol in Schools". This document outlined a series of responses and strategies to heat alerts and extreme heat alerts declared by the City of Toronto Medical Officer of Health (Appendix A).

In May 2016, the City of Toronto Hot Weather Response Plan (HWRP) was updated to reflect a provincial harmonized heat alert system (Appendix B). The City of Toronto HWRP was created to protect vulnerable people from the health impacts of extreme heat, such as young children, seniors, the homeless and people with pre-existing illnesses or chronic diseases (Appendix C).

Toronto Public Health (TPH) receives weather forecasts from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) in advance of issuing a Heat Warning. Extended Heat Warnings are issued if conditions are forecasted to continue for **3 or more days**.

Under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), there is no maximum regulated temperature in the workplace; however, Employers are legally required to take all precautions reasonable to protect



workers. Under the Education Act, School Boards are legally required to give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of its students.

Occupations that are commonly at risk of heat stress include firefighters, miners, welders, steel workers, kitchen staff and outdoor workers that work in construction, roofing, landscaping and farming. **Heat stress measures are not meant to stop work altogether, but to allow workers to continue to work safely.**

While high physical exertion is a primary risk factor for heat stress, other factors such as humidity, temperature, clothing (including personal protective equipment), and the body's ability to cool itself also contribute to whether or not a person will suffer heat stress, and to what degree.

The Ministry of Labor enforces the OHS Act and has created heat stress guidelines (Appendix E). The Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO) also has a reference document on heat stress awareness (Appendix F)

## 2.2 Scope

The TCDSB Hot Weather Procedure applies to all TCDSB students, workers, visitors and building occupants.

The following TCDSB employee groups have been identified as having an elevated risk of suffering heat stress due to the nature of their job duties (Appendix G):

- Custodial staff conducting summer clean-up
- Maintenance staff working outdoors or on school roofs during the summer
- Supervisory Staff / Project Coordinators (when working in the field during the summer)
- Print Shop Staff during the summer
- Teaching staff, particularly during physical education activities, outdoor field trips, and yard duty during heat warnings

The TCDSB Hot Weather Procedure identifies a series of hazard controls that lowers the likelihood of heat-related illness for vulnerable students, particularly young children and employee groups at risk.

## 3.0 APPLICABLE LEGISLATION, STANDARDS, DOCUMENTS

The following legislation, standards, documents and information apply to the Hot Weather Procedure and were referenced during its creation:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990
- *Heat Protocol in Schools*, TCDSB, 2006
- *Heat Stress Awareness Guide*, Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario, 2009



- *Heat Warnings and Extended Heat Warnings*, City of Toronto  
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=faf1ebfc2bb31410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>
- *Hot Weather Response Plan*, City of Toronto, 2016

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

Definitions from the Occupational Health and Safety Act

Supervisor: a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker

Worker: means any other the following but does not include an inmate of a correctional institution or like institution or facility who participates inside the institution or facility in a work project or rehabilitation program:

- A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.
- A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled.
- A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university or other post-secondary institution.
- A person who receives training from an employer, but who, under the Employment Standards Act, 2000, is not an employee for the purposes of that Act because the conditions set out in subsection 1 (2) of that Act have been met.
- Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation;

Workplace: means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works

## 5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safety is a shared responsibility. The successful implementation of the TCDSB's Hot Weather Procedure requires participation and commitment from all staff. The roles and responsibilities of each party are outlined below:

### 5.1 Communications Department

- Forward all communications from the City of Toronto regarding Heat Warnings and Extended Heat Warnings to all Board employees and other stakeholders (with a TCDSB email address) via email



## 5.2 School Administrators (Principals / Vice-Principals)

- Take all reasonable precautions when notices of Heat Warnings and / or Extended Heat Warnings are received
- Make frequent announcements to staff and students to drink plenty of water
- Adjust school operations and activities as needed
- Provide Heat Stress Awareness information and instruction to all teaching and non-teaching school staff at least annually (preferably in May)

## 5.3 Facilities Custodial Operations and Maintenance Department Supervisors

- Provide on-going resources, information and reminders, especially during warm weather months (i.e. May - September) of best practices to prevent heat stress;
- Provide guidance and support to custodial and maintenance workers to reschedule and / or re-organize work where required (e.g. when a Heat Warning or Extended Heat Warning has been issued);
- Proactively check the City of Toronto website for Heat Warnings to ensure Warnings are communicated to workers in a timely manner (as alerts from the Communications Department may not be sent until after Custodial and Maintenance staff have begun their workday).

## 5.4 Workers

- Participate in and / or receive any training, instruction or information provided by the Employer and Supervisors regarding heat stress awareness;
- Be familiar with signs of heat stress and heat stroke (in oneself and others);
- Stop work immediately and report to their Supervisor for assistance if they experience any symptoms of heat stress.
- Follow any school or work operation adjustments during hot weather as directed by their Supervisor

## 5.5 Occupational Health and Safety Department

- Update the Hot Weather Procedure as new information becomes available;
- Provide consultation and guidance to Supervisors conducting accident investigations for heat stress related injuries and illness.

## 6.0 PROCEDURE

### 6.1 Heat Protocol for School Administrators

School Administrators will implement the following control measures and strategies when a Heat Warning or Extended Heat Warning (respectively) has been issued by Toronto Public Health:

<b>CITY OF TORONTO MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH HEAT WARNING DECLARATION</b>	
✓	TCDSB Communications Department will forward all communications from Toronto Public Health, via e-mail to workers and other TCDSB stakeholders with active TCDSB email addresses, that a Heat Warning has been declared.
✓	Principals will make frequent announcements reminding staff and students to drink plenty of water.
✓	Personal water bottles will be allowed at student desks and outside if necessary.
✓	Staff will be asked to close south-facing window coverings during the day.
✓	The use of fans will be encouraged throughout the school.
✓	Natural ventilation through operable windows can be helpful for cooling. Natural ventilation can be improved by using fans near the open windows.
✓	If feasible, computers and lights will be turned off.
✓	If computers must be turned on, computer use will be limited to the earliest hours of the school day.
✓	If possible, students and staff will be moved from the top floor to the main floor.
✓	If possible, students and staff will be moved to cooler sections of the building: rooms on lower floors, gymnasiums, multiple program room, library and atriums.
✓	Schools will limit outdoor physical education activities to the early morning. Staff and students will take frequent rest and water breaks.
✓	Since the gym tends to be cooler, some outdoor physical education activities will be scheduled in the gym.
✓	Where there are cooling centers in the school such as an air-conditioned library or classroom(s), students and staff will access these cooling centers on a rotation basis throughout the day.
✓	If feasible, identify outdoor cooling places that have shading (large trees or a roofed shade structure). Staff and students will access these cooling places on a rotation basis throughout the day. Please refer to the City of Toronto Shade Policy Guidelines for further information (Appendix D).

**CITY OF TORONTO MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
EXTENDED HEAT WARNING DECLARATION**

✓	Same steps as outlined under Heat Warning Declaration, plus
✓	All outdoor physical activity will be cancelled. Track and Field days will be rescheduled to rain days.
✓	If the school has mechanical ventilation with no operable windows and the mechanical ventilation malfunctions, school closure under <b><i>TCDSB Policy A.16 Emergency School Closure</i></b> , will be considered.

**CITY OF TORONTO DECLARES AN EMERGENCY  
SEVERE AND PROLONGED HEAT WAVE  
THAT LEADS TO POWER OR WATER SHORTAGES  
INCREASED MORTALITY RATES, STRAINS ON HEALTHCARE SERVICES**

✓	TCDSB will activate the School Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Operation Center (EOC)
✓	Schools will be closed under <b><i>TCDSB Policy A.16 Emergency School Closure</i></b> , in consultation with TDSB, Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health.

## 7.0 COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

The Hot Weather Standard Operating Procedure will be communicated to the following staff:

- All Principals, Vice-Principals and Facilities Management (including Capitol and Renewal departments)
- All Principals and Facilities Supervisors shall use the information provided in Section 6.0 and the Appendices of this SOP as training / instruction / information for their workers. At a minimum, workers shall be made aware of the following:
  - The definition of heat stress and other heat-related maladies (i.e. heat rash, heat stroke)
  - Signs and symptoms of heat stress
  - Heat stress treatment and prevention tips
  - The Provincial Harmonized Heat Warning and Information System



- Principals shall provide heat stress awareness information to all school staff at least annually. Facilities management shall provide heat stress awareness information to unionized facilities staff periodically, such as during Head Caretaker meetings, Maintenance Meetings, March Break training, and via on-going meetings between workers and their Service Quality Supervisors, and non-unionized facilities staff (who visit school sites) at least annually.

## 8.0 EVALUATION

The Hot Weather SOP will be reviewed at least annually by the Occupational Health and Safety Department. Any revisions will be done in consultation with the respective TCDSB Joint Health and Safety Committees.

## 9.0 APPENDICES

*Appendix A: TCDSB Heat Protocol in Schools, 2006*

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