



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

1493 CAMBRIDGE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 • TEL. 498-1590

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

David B. O'Connor
Director

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: David B. O'Connor, Director

Date: August 4, 1995

Subject: Council Order #37, dated 7/31/95
Report on Plan to deal with Heat Wave

As you may recall, the summer of 1988 was quite hot with prolonged periods of extreme heat. During that summer a joint effort of the Emergency Management Department, The Human Services Department, the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, the Council on Aging, the Visiting Nurses Association and the Committee of Elders developed an informal, ad hoc, plan to deal with the problems the heat wave created for the elderly and infirm. This informal plan worked fairly well.

As a result of the events of the summer of 1988, during March and April of 1989, the Assistant City Manager for Human Services convened a series of meetings with the public and private agencies involved. The result was a formal heat emergency protocol which was implemented during the summer of 1990.

Each year, the heat emergency protocol is reviewed and updated. I am enclosing a copy of the current heat emergency protocol which has been implemented during the period from July 27th until August 4th. It seems to have worked well over the past week.

As an example of the sort of changes in the protocol that are made, I am enclosing copy of a generous proposal received on July 31 from Lawrence Stone, the president of Professional Ambulance, Inc. Mr. Stone offers a number of suggestions as to how his company can work with the City of Cambridge on a voluntary basis to provide outreach, transportation and medical screening services. Parts of Mr. Stones proposal have already been implemented and I expect that all of the services he offered will soon be incorporated in an updated heat emergency protocol.

If you need further information on our plans for heat emergencies, please let me know.



City of Cambridge

Department of Human Service Programs

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
(617) 349-6200, Fax (617) 349-6248

HEAT EMERGENCIES AND THE ELDERLY

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROTOCOL-1995

INTRODUCTION

This protocol is the result of planning by the Cambridge Council on Aging in collaboration with the following organizations: Cambridge Housing Authority; Cambridge Visiting Nurse Association; Cambridge Department of Health and Hospitals; the Cambridge Public Health Nurses; Cambridge Emergency Management Department; and Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services.

The Cambridge Heat Emergency Protocol is a coordinated response to assist the elderly who may be vulnerable in a heat emergency. This written protocol is for distribution to staff of community agencies to inform them of the plan and educate them about accessing resources for their clients in a heat emergency.

WHEN DOES A HEAT EMERGENCY EXIST?

In the city of Cambridge a formal heat emergency is declared by the City Manager acting on the advice of the Cambridge Department of Emergency Management. The Department of Emergency Management will, during summer months, monitor the weather conditions through mass media and from the Cambridge Council on Aging concerning the volume of calls received from elders with heat related problems.

If severe heat conditions occur, the Department of Emergency Management will alert the City Manager, the Council on Aging and the Commissioner for Health and Hospitals, the Police and Fire Departments that a heat emergency exists. The Department of Emergency Management will notify the media, including Cambridge Cable that a heat emergency exists, and an alert will be broadcast on cable TV. Community agencies may call the Cambridge Council on Aging (349-6220) or the Department of Emergency Management (498-1590) to find out if a formal heat emergency has been declared in Cambridge.

DIVISIONS:

Childcare
349-6200

Community Learning Center
349-6363

Community & Youth
349-6231

Council on Aging/Elderly Services
349-6220

Low Income Fuel Assistance
349-6247

Planning & Development
349-6200

Recreation
349-6230

MultiService Center/Homeless Services
349-6340

The designation of a formal heat emergency will mean that:

- 1) community agencies will more closely monitor at risk elders;
- 2) increased publicity about the prevention of heat related illness will occur.
- 3) elders may use the North Cambridge Senior Center as a cool shelter during its regular hours of operation. (Please note that the North Cambridge Senior Center will not remain open beyond its regular hours of operation.)

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services plans to activate their heat emergency response whenever the temperature exceeds 90 degrees.

Much of the planning detailed in this protocol will occur before a formal heat emergency is declared-either as prevention, or in response to calls and requests from the older population.

CENTRAL INFORMATION NUMBER

The Cambridge Council on Aging will serve as the key agency for elders to call for information/assistance in the event of a heat emergency (349-6220). The Council on Aging will maintain a comprehensive listing of all potential resources for dealing with a heat crisis including contact people, addresses and phone numbers of agencies involved. This central phone number will be publicized in community education to the elderly about heat emergencies. Agencies should alert the Cambridge Council on Aging to any new information and/or resources which become available.

The Council on Aging will respond to calls Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After those hours, the Council on Aging answering machine message will give the caller basic information about resources, ideas about keeping cool, and advice about what to do if the caller is having a medical problem.

During hours that the Council on Aging is open, all calls will be screened regarding their primary needs. If the person's immediate health or safety is endangered, the Information and Referral Specialist will take steps to arrange for that person to be seen by emergency medical personnel. If there is a concern about the person's health, the Intake, Information and Referral Specialist will call a nurse at the Health Department with the presenting situation. If a Health Department Nurse is unavailable, the Cambridge Visiting Nurse Association will be contacted for assistance. A nurse from one of these two organizations will call the client back

to obtain more detailed medical information and provide consultation. If the older person needs medical attention immediately, the nurse will assist the client to make arrangements to be taken to a medical emergency room. If the medical situation and direction of action is not clear from telephone assessment and if the client has no other medical provider who can be asked to do an assessment, the nurse will do a home visit to assess the client's situation.

COOL SHELTER

Elders may go to the North Cambridge Senior Center, 2050 Massachusetts Ave. or to the Pearl Street Senior Center, 15 Pearl St. during regular hours. The North Cambridge Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 - 5:00. The Pearl Street Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 - 4:00, and Saturday, Sunday and Holidays from 8:00 - 1:00.

If an elder has no means of transportation, transportation to the cool shelter will be arranged by the Executive Director of the Council on Aging.

Food and drinks will be available for those using the Center as a cool shelter during the day.

MONITORING AT-RISK ELDERS

The agencies listed below plan to review their caseloads prior to the hot weather and to identify older people who are at potential risk in the event of a heat emergency (respiratory problems, heart and circulatory problems, kidney problems, obesity, substandard housing, risk of dehydration). When a heat emergency occurs, staff from these agencies will call clients, ask how they are doing and give a brief synopsis of what help is available should they need it.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services will insure that their identified at-risk clients will have daily contact throughout the heat emergency. This contact may be daily calls, visits by the home delivered meals driver or informal supports.

The Cambridge Council on Aging and Cambridge Visiting Nurses will also contact their at-risk elders.

ELDERLY PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING

Elders in public housing should be monitored in the same way as other Cambridge elders. The Building Manager may be contacted, and if possible will check on the tenant. All of the buildings except 45 Linnaean St. have an air conditioned common room and the older tenant may be encouraged to spend time there.

If any Cambridge Housing Authority residents are medically evaluated for heat related problems, where possible notify the Cambridge Housing Authority staff prior to discharge in order to assist in evaluating the conditions in the older person's apartment.

Tenants in CHA apartments may purchase air conditioners for their units at their own cost. Tenants are advised to contact their building manager to discuss requirements (such as size of unit that will fit in windows). Tenants with air conditioners will be charged a surcharge on their rent for the months of June, July and August. If the unit is not removed in September an additional surcharge will be added.

HEAT RELATED MEDICAL PROBLEMS IN HOMEBOUND ELDERLY

All service providers will receive information detailing the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. In general, older people who are not feeling well and may be suffering from the heat should be strongly encouraged to call their doctor. The service provider can then contact the elder person again to learn the outcome of this medical consultation. If sufficiently concerned that the client will not call his/her doctor, the service provider can ask the client's permission to contact his/her doctor directly.

If the client has no medical provider, and the agency has a nurse on staff, the service provider should consult with this nurse to help evaluate the situation and decide the best course of action. The nurse may decide the older person should be sent by ambulance to a medical emergency room. If the symptoms and situation are ambiguous, on her discretion, the nurse should do a home visit herself to evaluate the situation.

In agencies where no nurse is on staff, the Cambridge Public Health Nurses and Cambridge Visiting Nurse Association can be contacted for consultation about how to proceed with the situation.

FANS

The Council on Aging will provide limited assistance to elders who are in need of fans. Elders who are unable to afford a fan will be given fans as available. Elders who are able to afford a fan, but unable to get to the store or carry a fan will be assisted in making these arrangements. The Council on Aging will request the donation of fans from individuals and stores. Elders who need a fan may be directed to the Information & Referral Specialist at the Council on Aging. Elders with fans to donate may also be directed to the Information & Referral Specialist. Fan pickup and storage will be arranged by the Council on Aging.

PREVENTION ACTIVITIES CONCERNING POSSIBLE BLACKOUTS

Because of the energy drain during heat emergencies the risk of power blackouts increases. The key issue for the elderly is to have the household prepared for this emergency including a flashlight readily available with fresh batteries. Candles should not be used. Education in this area can reduce the risk of fires, falls, and other household accidents for the elderly.

All public education about heat emergencies will include information about safe preparation for power blackouts. In addition, service providers are strongly encouraged to discuss this issue with their clients before the summer and assist them with appropriate planning.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Cambridge Housing Authority will publicize information about heat stress and related resources in the Housing Authority newsletter.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services will distribute flyers through their home delivered meals, and by Case Managers during their home visits. Information will also be published in the Elder Advocate.

The Council on Aging will distribute flyers to their at-risk clients, at the North Cambridge and Pearl Street Senior Centers, to community school coordinators, and at other sites in Cambridge.

The VNA will distribute flyers to their at-risk clients during home visits.

Several heat emergency workshops for the elderly will be held at the North Cambridge and Pearl Street Senior Centers and at other sites where elders meet.

Information will be distributed by the Council on Aging to the Tab, Chronicle, and Cable TV alerting elders to call the Council on Aging for more information or assistance.

HEAT EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

Amy Bernstein & Susan Pacheco
Council on Aging
349-6220

Jan Hudson
Pearl Street Senior Center
15 Pearl St.
868-0800

Terry Romanoff
North Cambridge Senior Center
2050 Mass. Ave.
349-6320

David O'Connor
Dept. of Emergency Management
498-1590

Jane Taylor
Public Health Nurses
498-1479

Cambridge Visiting Nurses
Patricia O'Brien or Nursing Supervisors
547-2620

SCES
Barbara Levine, Una Murphy
628-2601

Maggie Dionne, John Keane or Building Manager
Cambridge Housing Authority
864-3020

Cambridge Hospital Emergency Room
498-1430

Nanette Glenny
Dept of Health and Hospitals
498-1281

CHA Elderly/Disabled Developments

John F. Kennedy Apartments

55 Essex Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

Managers: Billye Thomas

Roxanne Davies

499-7147

Harry S. Truman Apartments

25 Eighth Street

Cambridge, MA 02141

Manager: Caroline Sarchioni

499-7137

Daniel F. Burns Apartments

30-50 Churchill Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

Manager: Frank Burns

499-7152

Millers River Apartments

15 Lambert Street

Cambridge, MA 02141

Manager: Sal Rana

499-7191

Robert C. Weaver Apartments

81 Clifton Street

Cambridge, MA 02140

Manager: Frank Burns

868-8764

Linnaean Street

45 Linnaean Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Manager: Frank Burns

492-0548

Frank J. Manning Apartments

237 Franklin Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

Manager: Dorothy Hudson

864-3388

Putnam School Apartments

86 Otis Street

Cambridge, MA 02141

Manager: Joe Green

868-3125

Leonard J. Russell Apartments

2050 Mass. Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

Manager: Judy Johnson

499-7179

Norfolk Street

116 Norfolk Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

Manager: Roberta Campbell

547-3543

Lyndon B. Johnson Apartments

150 Erie Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

Manager: Billye Thomas

499-7162



PROFESSIONAL AMBULANCE

& Oxygen Service, Inc.

Lawrence W. Stone

President

P.O. Box 410326

320 Rindge Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02141-0003

Tel: (617) 492-2700

(800) 653-3640

Fax: (617) 492-0806

PROFESSIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE

H.E.A.T. PROGRAM

(HEAT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE & TRANSPORTATION)

It is our desire to implement this new program to assist residents and the existing programs that currently serve elders in the city of Cambridge. It is our desire to work in conjunction with the Council on Aging, Cambridge Hospital Housecalls Program, Cambridge Hospital Elder Service Plan, Cambridge-Somerville Elder Services, Cambridge VNA, Cambridge Hospice, Cambridge Fire Department, Cambridge Police Department, Cambridge Department of Emergency Management, the Mayor's Office, and the City Manager's Office. Clearly, this is a long list but an important one in ensuring the success of this program. It is our hope to coordinate with the above agencies and departments to utilize this plan to its maximum potential.

H.E.A.T. PROGRAM OUTLINE

*** ASSIST ABOVE AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS IN PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM "COOL SHELTERS" UTILIZING OUR 7 PASSENGER WHEELCHAIR VAN (7 AMBULATORY or 3 WHEELCHAIRS)**

*** CHECK AT-RISK ELDERS AND RESIDENTS DESIGNATED BY THE ABOVE AGENCIES BY VISITING THEIR RESIDENCES DURING "H.E.A.T. DAYS", CHECKING ON ELDER'S WELL BEING AND NEEDS, REFERRING ELDERS TO VARIOUS SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST THEM, AND CHECKING BLOOD PRESSURES AND DOING BRIEF PHYSICAL ASSESSMENTS AS DESIRED AND NECESSARY.**

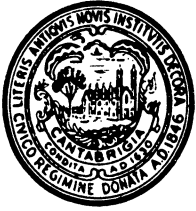
*** PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, STANDBY DUTY, BRIEF MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS AT "COOL SHELTERS" AS NECESSARY AND REQUESTED. (CITY AMBULANCES COULD REMAIN IN SERVICE AND RESPOND FROM COOL SHELTERS)**

*** IN ORDER TO FACILITATE PROGRAM, WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH ABOVE AGENCIES TO DEVELOP A DATABASE OF AT-RISK ELDERS WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM VISITS DURING "H.E.A.T. DAYS". CLEARLY, NO ONE PROGRAM COULD HANDLE ALL CASES IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES. OUR PROGRAM COULD BE UTILIZED BY THE ABOVE AGENCIES TO VISIT THOSE ELDERS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS ON THESE "H.E.A.T. DAYS".**

*** A "H.E.A.T. DAY" WOULD BE ANY DAY WITH A HEAT INDEX OF OVER 90 DEGREES**

*** A "H.E.A.T. DAY" WOULD BE ANY DECLARED HEAT EMERGENCY IN CAMBRIDGE**

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS PROGRAM PLEASE CONTACT EITHER LARRY STONE OR BILL MERGENDAHL AT PROFESSIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE AT 492-2700 OR 349-3267.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300

Fax. 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

September 11, 1995

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 59, regarding a report on the emergency plan to deal with the prolonged heat wave, received from David B. O'Connor, Director of the Emergency Management Department.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda Item # 13 5-271

Response to Awaiting Report Item Number
Fifty-Nine regarding a report on the
emergency plan to deal with the prolonged
heat wave.

*per original per 1995
City Manager Requests
316.*

In City Council,

Sept. 11, 1995

Placed on file