



## **Heat Relief Network Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: What is the Heat Relief Network?**

A: The Heat Relief Network (HRN) was formed as a response to a heat wave in 2005 that resulted in about 30 deaths in the homeless community in the Maricopa County region. The HRN is a voluntary partnership comprised of service providers, faith-based groups, municipalities, businesses, and nonprofit agencies that mobilize to provide free water and heat refuge to anyone needing help in the region. Network participants can also serve as collection points for cash, bottled water, sun block, lip balm, hats, and other toiletries to combat the heat. The Network is open to any agency or organization wanting to join.

### **Q: What is the role of the Maricopa Association of Governments in the HRN?**

A: The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) coordinates with new and returning partners to compile and update their location, contact information, and hours of operation. This information is used to create printable directories and an interactive map, which are available on the [MAG website](#). Maps are updated as new partners sign up throughout the season, which runs May 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>.

The printable and interactive maps display:

- Collection sites (cash, bottled water, hats, sunscreen, lip balm, and other toiletries to combat the heat can be donated here)
- Heat refuge locations (providing water and shade)
- Hydration sites (providing bottled water)
- Emergency Heat Relief Stations (offering water and refuge from the heat. Open during excessive heat warnings issued by the National Weather Service. Pets are welcome, but must be leashed.)

Throughout the heat season, MAG also forwards excessive heat warnings as declared by the National Weather Service to its distribution list, which includes over 500 listings of organizations wishing to receive updates from the HRN.

### **Q: What is the role of the Heat Relief Network partner?**

A: Agencies wishing to become Heat Relief Network partners must first complete the [submission form](#) to map their location. The partnering agency is responsible for coordinating with other organizations to obtain, distribute, transport, or store water and/or other donations.

Donation sites are responsible for collecting donations, identifying a hydration/refuge location to give the donations to, and for transporting the donations to the hydration or refuge location.

Hydration only stations locations are responsible for providing water at the location identified. Refuge locations are responsible for providing a cool place for people to take refuge from the heat. Hydration stations/refuge locations may contact donation sites in search of water and coordinate directly with donation site to get water to their location.

**Q: What is the goal of the Heat Relief Network?**

A: The goal of the HRN is to expand the network so that vulnerable populations are never far from seeking free water or refuge from the heat in the region. The Heat Relief Network aims to:

- create a network of regional collaborative partners providing heat relief;
- provide resources and assistance to people experiencing homelessness, older adults, homebound persons, and other vulnerable populations;
- educate the public on the dangers of heat; and
- help prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses.

**Q: Why is the Heat Relief Network important?**

A: The ultimate goal of the Heat Relief Network is to help prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses. Heat-related deaths tragically underscore the importance of recognizing the dangers of extreme heat.

July is typically the most deadly month in Arizona when it comes to heat-caused deaths. The high daytime temperatures, coupled with the high nighttime temperatures, makes this time of year very dangerous. The high night temperatures do not allow for the body to cool down, and can result in more people being at risk.

According to the National Weather Service, the Phoenix area averages 110 days of temperatures above 100 degrees. It is important to be protected from the dangers of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Prolonged exposed to heat can affect anyone. Even healthy people should take precautions during extremely high temperatures. Vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, people who are experiencing homelessness, and those who work outdoors need to take extra precautions.

**Q: How often are maps updated?**

A: Once submission forms are received and the information is confirmed, interactive maps are updated within 24 hours. Printable directories are updated and distributed to HRN partners and the HRN distribution list the first Friday of each month until September.

**Q: Where are the maps available?**

A: Heat Relief maps are available on the MAG website at [www.azmag.gov/heatrelief](http://www.azmag.gov/heatrelief). Agencies may share the link to the MAG website, or reference the map link on their own websites.

**Q: What are some important tips to avoid heat-related illness?**

A: Some tips to avoid heat-related illness are:

- ✓ Increase fluid intake, regardless of activity level. Staying hydrated is extremely important.
- ✓ Limit exercise or outdoor activity between the hours of 11 am and 3 pm.
- ✓ When outdoors, wear a sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15, and re-apply often. Wear a hat, lightweight clothing, and sunglasses.
- ✓ Rest frequently in shady or cool areas to give the body's temperature a chance to recover and cool down.
- ✓ Never leave children, disabled adults, or pets inside a parked vehicle.
- ✓ Respectfully check on elderly neighbors to ensure their air conditioning is working and in use. Take advantage of free air-conditioning by visiting locations like shopping malls, the library, or other heat refuge locations provided on the HRN map.
- ✓ For other tips to stay safe and hydrated in the summer heat, go to the MAG Website at [www.azmag.gov](http://www.azmag.gov)

**Q: What can people do if they want to help?**

A: Recognize the signs of heat dangers.

Call 9-1-1 if you encounter an emergency.

Donate cash, bottled water, or toiletries to any of the regional collection sites listed on the interactive map.

Help to educate your friends and neighbors on the dangers of extreme heat. Check on your elderly neighbors to ensure they are staying cool.

**Q: How do I become a Heat Relief Network partner site?**

A: Complete the submission form. Once you complete the form, your location will be added to the interactive map and printable directory.

For additional information on regional heat relief efforts, please contact Brande Mead at [bmead@azmag.gov](mailto:bmead@azmag.gov) or by calling 602 254-6300.