

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM Public Health Working Group

Near-Term Implementation Plan

Strategy 3: Improve Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response

CAT Working Group Overview: The Public Health Working Group of the Climate Action Team was established to address cross-cutting issues related to climate change and health. The purpose of the Working Group is to provide a forum for communication, coordination, and education across agencies and with stakeholders. The Working Group is responsible for providing public health input into the AB 32 implementation process, as well as other public health issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Climate change will significantly increase disease burden in California. Public health impacts will result from more severe extreme heat and other weather events, a decline in air quality, increases in allergenic plant pollen, more frequent wildfires, altered environmental conditions that foster the spread of communicable and vector-borne diseases, and impacts on food supply, water quality, shelter, and mental health. Public health has important roles in preventing the most catastrophic climate outcomes through engagement in climate change mitigation, in ensuring that climate change adaptation efforts address likely public health impacts, and in public health preparedness for response to climate-related emergencies.

Working Group Agencies: California Department of Public Health (designated lead), California Air Resources Board, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Conservation, California Energy Commission, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Local Health Departments, and Stakeholder Organizations.

Measure / Strategy

- A) **Description:** Through this Strategy, CDPH and other State and local agencies will refine existing emergency preparedness plans and develop plans for anticipated impacts. In the short-term, the focus will be on preparedness for extreme heat events. In the long-term, lessons learned from expanding preparedness for extreme heat events will be applied to other events likely to increase with climate change, such as floods and sea-level rise.
- B) **Agencies Involved:** CDPH, California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA), Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Local Health Departments, Stakeholder Organizations.
- C) **Scoping Plan/Adaptation Plan Reference:** This strategy is drawn from Public Health Strategy 5 (Improve Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response) in the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- D) **Metrics:** The metrics used to define success for this Strategy are process measures that vary with each Task (see enumerated Deliverables below).
- E) **Crosscutting Issues:** CDPH will coordinate with the Interagency Forestry Working Group regarding wildfires and heat.
- F) **Tasks and Deliverables:**

Task 3.1: Public Health, Climate Change, and Heat Appendix

1. Description: CDPH will collaborate with CalEMA and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory to develop a public health and climate change appendix to CalEMA’s Contingency Plan for Excessive Heat Emergencies. The appendix will incorporate a climate change perspective into traditional heat preparedness and response, accounting for the fact that extreme heat events are expected to become more frequent, more severe, and occur in geographic areas where they have previously been rare. The document will also discuss adaptation strategies that can reduce vulnerability to heat events, including strategies to reduce urban heat islands.
2. Deliverables:
 - a. Workshop on urban heat islands, conducted in April 2010 at the Public Health Work Group meeting, provided an overview of urban heat islands and available mitigation strategies, with CalEMA, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, US EPA, and CDPH presentations.
 - b. Outline of public health and climate change appendix to CalEMA’s Contingency Plan for Excessive Heat Emergencies.
3. Agency Roles: CDPH is the lead agency. CalEMA has the authority to update the Contingency Plan for Excessive Heat Emergencies and will be an important partner. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and US EPA will provide input on heat adaptation, including reducing urban heat islands. Local health departments will be invited to comment. CDPH will also engage other state agencies which may have roles in urban heat island mitigation (e.g. CalFire regarding urban forestry, CalTrans regarding cool pavement, etc)
4. Timeline: Workshop completed April 2010. Completed appendix outline by December 2010. Completion of full appendix anticipated in 2011.

G) SUMMARY TABLE:

Deliverable	Agencies	Deadline
Workshop on Urban Heat Islands	CDPH, CalEMA	Held in April 2010
Public Health, Climate Change, and Heat Appendix Outline	CDPH, CalEMA	Develop by December 2010