



# Categorizing Extreme Heat as 'Major Disaster' Under FEMA

September 16, 2024

Presented by: LaTricea D. Adams, MAT, EdS

NEADA Annual Meeting

Memphis, TN

# Case Studies

**Extreme Heat is an intersectional environmental justice crisis.**

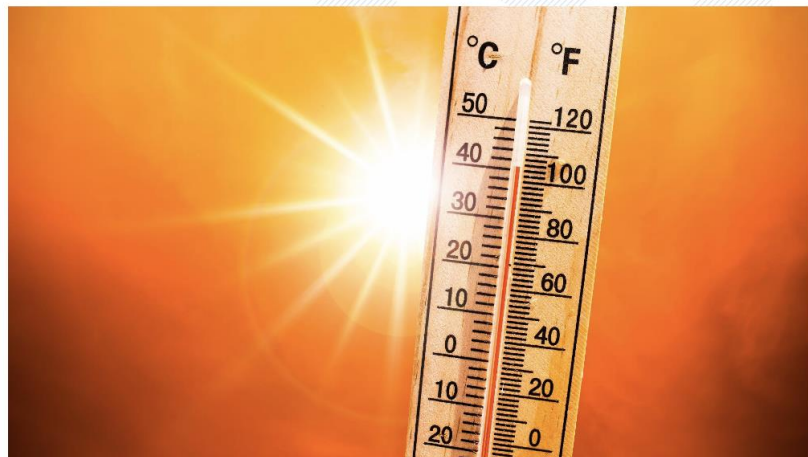
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# Limitations with Cooling Centers

COMMUNITY

## City of Memphis cooling center opens at Hospitality Hub on Tuesday

Openings are available at local shelters for anyone who is in need of food or overnight sleeping accommodations.



- Cooling centers may not be accessible to everyone, especially those who are confined to (a) bed or have other physical and mental health challenges.
- Traveling to a cooling center can also increase core body temperature, especially if there is no air conditioning on public transportation or if the person has to walk in the heat.
  - **NOTE: *Due to budget cuts, MATA (Memphis' Public Transportation) has cut routes and temporarily suspended trolley services as of August 2024.***
- With the increased housing crisis, people who are unhoused are the most at-risk and as cooling centers rely on certain temperature levels, the lack of access to reliant housing still poses great risk for this vulnerable population.

Credit: Günter Albers - stock.adobe.com

# Strain on Healthcare Providers

## Emergency rooms brace for heat-related illnesses as heat dome blankets Mid-South

Mandy Hrach Aug 28, 2024



YOUR HEALTH

HEAT WAVE HEALTH RISKS

SAM COOPER BLVD WB FROM I-240 LOOP TO E PARKWAY  
48 MPH / 7 MINUTES

FOX  
13  
8:45 86°

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*Already this summer, Dr. Michelini said they've had about 20 patients come in with symptoms of heat-related illness. He says people in the Mid-South are at a heightened risk. "In this area of the country, we have very high humidity," he said. "The body's not able to cool itself down like it normally does through sweating."*

**Post-partum care is also more difficult during extreme heat waves.**

# Strain on K-12 Schools

## Memphis school leaders grapple with school safety, air conditioning issues

By Marta W. Aldrich | August 20, 2024, 10:07pm CDT




Superintendent Marie Feagins, who was hired to lead Tennessee's largest district this spring, is dealing with a myriad of challenges as a new academic year begins for Memphis-Shelby County Schools. | (Ariel J. Cobbett for Chalkbeat)

- **Health Risks for Students:** Extreme heat can lead to heat-related illnesses, affecting students' health and well-being, particularly those with pre-existing conditions.
- **Disruption of Learning:** High temperatures can impair concentration and cognitive function, resulting in decreased academic performance and engagement in the classroom.
- **Increased Energy Costs:** Schools may face higher energy expenses due to the need for air conditioning and cooling systems, straining budgets and diverting funds from educational resources.

# Increased Energy Burden



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PRESS RELEASE | JULY 11, 2024

## Nearly half of Memphis families face high energy burdens, according to new report

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A [new study shows](#) that more than 48 percent of Memphians face high energy burdens, meaning a larger percent of their income goes to paying their power bill.

- The **national average** for energy burden is **below four percent**, but in **Memphis**, the median energy burden is **5.6 percent**.
  - In some areas, including predominantly Black communities, the energy burdens are even higher.
  - South Memphis, for example, faces a median energy burden of seven percent.
- The report also showed that **30,000 Shelby County families** are experiencing staggeringly severe energy burdens of **more than 20 percent**, meaning a fifth of their income goes to their energy bills.



# Heat Related Power Outages

## Power restored to most MLGW customers after outages in South Memphis

FOX13 Memphis News Staff Jul 5, 2024



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MEMPHIS, Tenn. - About 4,000 Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) customers were without power Friday morning as the Mid-South is in the midst of a heatwave.



According to the MLGW, 4,293 customers were in the dark due to 72 outages as of 8:30 a.m.

- **Increased Energy Demand:** During heatwaves, the demand for air conditioning and cooling systems surges, straining the electrical grid and leading to outages.
- **Equipment Overload:** High temperatures can cause electrical equipment to overheat, resulting in failures or damage to transformers, power lines, and substations.
- **Environmental Factors:** Extreme heat can exacerbate issues like storms that damage power infrastructure, further contributing to outages.

# Exacerbation of Poor Indoor Air Quality



- **Airborne Pollutants:** Window unit air conditioners can circulate dust, allergens, and pollutants trapped in the unit or surrounding areas, leading to poor indoor air quality.
- **Humidity Issues:** These units may not effectively remove humidity, creating a damp environment that fosters mold growth and increases the presence of airborne allergens.
- **Inadequate Ventilation:** Window units often lack proper ventilation systems, which can lead to a buildup of indoor air contaminants and reduce the flow of fresh outdoor air.