



**Built to Lead**

**For Immediate Release: 8/12/2016**

**GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO**

**GOVERNOR CUOMO DIRECTS IMMEDIATE CUTS TO STATE ENERGY USAGE  
AMID THIS WEEKEND'S HEATWAVE**

***Governor Urges Public and Local Governments to Follow Suit, Protect New  
York's Energy Grid***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today directed state agencies to take immediate steps to lower electricity usage in New York State due persistent high temperatures and humidity expected today and through the weekend. All state agencies have been directed to immediately lower energy usage by turning off lights, raising air conditioning temperatures, closing window shades, and powering down unused computers, printers and other electrical devices; other regions were put on notice that they might have to do the same later in the day.

"This extreme heat has led to near-record electricity usage and has placed significant demands on our entire grid," **Governor Cuomo said**. "As temperatures remain high, I'm once again directing state agencies to take steps to conserve energy and reduce demands on the system. I encourage all New Yorkers to do the same."

During heat waves, increased usage of electric devices such as air conditioners place a considerable demand on the state's electricity system and instances of low voltage or isolated power outages can result. The record for such usage was set on July 19, 2013 when it reached 33,955 MWs (One megawatt of electricity is enough to power up 1,000 average-sized homes). As a result of yesterday's high temperatures, the state's peak load approached the record with 32,076 MWs. Today's peak load forecast is 32,800 MWs.

The Governor also strongly encouraged local public officials, municipalities and the public to follow suit. Consolidated Edison, the State's largest utility, implemented its commercial demand reduction program [at 12 PM](#). This Department of Public Service-approved program is put in place to reduce electricity demand when it begins to rise rapidly.

**Department of Public Service CEO Audrey Zibelman said**, "It's important for the public to lower their electricity use. It is also important for residents to stay cool and stay hydrated. By taking action now, we can lower electricity usage during this heat wave and stay healthy."

To reduce energy use, particularly during peak periods, the public is encouraged to take some of the following low- or no-cost energy saving measures:

- Close drapes, windows and doors on your home's sunny side to reduce solar heat buildup.
- Turn off air conditioners, lights and other appliances when not at home and use a timer to turn on your air conditioner about a half-hour before arriving home. Use advanced power strips to centrally “turn off” all appliances and save energy.
- If purchasing an air conditioner, look for an ENERGY STAR qualified model. ENERGY STAR air conditioners use up to 25 percent less energy than a standard model
- Fans can make rooms feel five to 10 degrees cooler and use 80 percent less energy than air conditioners.
- Set your air conditioner at 78 degrees or higher to save on your cooling costs.
- Place your air conditioner in a central window, rather than a corner window, to allow for better air movement.
- Consider placing the unit on the north, east or the best-shaded side of your home. Your air conditioner will have to work harder and use more energy if it is exposed to direct sunlight.
- Seal spaces around the air conditioner with caulking to prevent cool air from escaping.
- Clean the cooling and condenser fans plus the coils to keep your air conditioner operating efficiently and check the filter every month and replace as needed.
- Use appliances such as washing machines, dryers, dishwashers and ovens early in the morning or late at night. This will also help reduce humidity and heat in the home.
- Use energy-efficient, ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs instead of standard incandescent light bulbs, and you can use 75 percent less energy.
- Microwave food when possible. Microwaves use approximately 50 percent less energy than conventional ovens.
- Dry clothes on a clothes line. If using a clothes dryer, remember to clean the dryer’s lint trap before every load.
- Be mindful of the different ways you’re consuming water throughout your home. Instead of using 30 to 40 gallons of water to take a bath, install a low-flow showerhead, which uses less than 3 gallons a minute.

Additional tips on how to conserve energy can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

New Yorkers are also being urged to take precautions against heat related illnesses and limit strenuous outdoor physical activity especially young children, those who exercise outdoors, those involved in vigorous outdoor work and those who have respiratory disease (such as asthma).

Excessive heat is the leading cause of preventable, weather-related deaths each year, particularly among the elderly. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heat causes more than 650 preventable deaths in the United States yearly. In most years, excessive heat causes more deaths than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service statistics, there have been more than 80 deaths directly attributable to heat in New York State since 2006.

To help New Yorkers stay safe during excessive heat the Governor offered the following tips:

#### **PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE AWARE:**

- Elderly persons and small children are mostly affected.
- Persons with weight or alcohol problems are very susceptible to heat reactions.
- Persons on certain medications or drugs.

#### **BE PREPARED:**

- Slow down on strenuous activity and exercise, especially during the sun's peak hours of 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- Exercise should be done in the early morning between 4 A.M. and 7 A.M.
- Eat less protein and more fruits and vegetables. Protein produces and increases metabolic heat, which causes water loss. Eat small meals, but eat more often. Do not eat salty foods.
- Drink at least 2-4 glasses of water per hour during extreme heat, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- If possible, stay out of the sun and stay in air conditioning. The sun heats the inner core of your body, resulting in dehydration. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine, or go to a public building with air conditioning.
- If you must go outdoors, wear sunscreen with a high sun protector factor rating (at least SPF 15) and a hat to protect your face and head. When outdoors, wear

loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing. Cover as much skin as possible to avoid sunburn and over-warming effects of sunlight on your body.

- Do not leave children, pets or those who require special care in a parked car or vehicle during periods of intense summer heat. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach over 140 degrees Fahrenheit quickly. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill within a matter of minutes.
- Make an effort to check on your neighbors during a heat wave, especially if they are elderly, have young children or have special needs.
- Make sure there is enough food and water for pets.

The New York State Department of Health created an online list of cooling centers, where people can cool down on days of extreme temperatures. A list of addresses and phone numbers for cooling centers shared by local health departments and emergency management offices in each region is available [here](#).

For more information on how to stay safe during periods of excessive heat, click [here](#) and [here](#).

###