



Heat Response Unified Teams

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Presentation Abstract: Phoenix, Arizona, known for its scorching summers, has developed a robust response to extreme heat by establishing a respite/cooling center plan. These centers provide a crucial sanctuary for residents, especially the vulnerable populations such as the homeless, elderly, and those without access to adequate cooling at home. As temperatures soar, often exceeding 110°F (43°C), the city's efforts are a lifeline for many. After a record high of 645 heat-related deaths recorded in 2023, leadership knew we needed a better plan. Five respite/cooling centers are strategically located across Phoenix, easily accessible by public transportation. They offer air-conditioned spaces, cold water, and essential services throughout the day and night when temperatures are dangerously high. These centers are a part of the city's larger Heat Relief Network, which includes cooling centers open during the day, hydration stations, and educational campaigns about heat safety. 2 of the 5 are open, staffed and offer services 24 hours a day. This operation is supported by an Incident Management Team and the program is run through the full planning process supporting a weekly operation period. The initiative to keep respite centers open all night emerged from the recognition that the risk of heat-related illnesses doesn't disappear with the setting sun. Nighttime temperatures in Phoenix can remain excessively high, posing significant health risks, particularly for those sleeping outdoors or in inadequately cooled environments. By providing a safe, cool place to rest, the city aims to reduce the incidence of heat-related illnesses and deaths, and beyond immediate relief, navigational services connect individuals with longer-term services such as housing assistance, medical care, and social services. Phoenix's all-night respite centers represent a proactive and compassionate response to the challenges posed by extreme heat. By providing safe, cool spaces and essential services, the city not only addresses immediate health risks but also fosters a supportive community network. As

climate change continues to intensify heatwaves, Phoenix's approach serves as a model for other cities facing similar challenges. Through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to public health and safety, Phoenix is rising to meet the heat head-on.

Learning Objectives:

1. Organizing an ICS like organization around heat management
2. Organizing heat response through a whole community approach
3. Organizing training for ICS operations as a heat response unified team

Speaker Bio: Judah has a diverse background in business, military and government. He worked as an Operations Supervisor at Maricopa County Department of Public Health during Covid and was responsible for logistics and planning responses to mitigate spread, setting up and overseeing multiple vaccine PODs. He also responded to Measles, Monkeypox, and a Dengue Fever (first ever) outbreak. Judah has been part of multiple high visibility events in the Phoenix area representing ESF 8. Since 2023, he has worked for the City of Phoenix's Office of Emergency Management as an Emergency Planner. Judah also serves as a Logistical Officer (prior enlisted) in the United States Navy Reserve, where he has served on two overseas deployments. He is currently assigned with Commander, Navy Region Southwest, San Diego, CA, Regional Operation Center.