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**NOAA'S NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DEBUTS HEAT/HEALTH WATCH
WARNING SYSTEM IN PARTS OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

NOAA's National Weather Service today announced the implementation of a new Heat/Health Watch Warning System in the cities of San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose, as well as surrounding Bay communities of Redwood City, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Gilroy, Fremont, Alameda, Berkeley, Richmond, and El Cerrito. They join 18 other metropolitan areas in the United States using this system as guidance for issuing excessive heat watches, excessive heat warnings and heat advisories.

The Heat Health Watch/Warning System is a collaborative tool that measures oppressive air affecting health. It is part of a national focus addressing the impact of this special hazard on urban centers. When unseasonably hot conditions occur, NOAA's San Francisco Bay Area weather forecast office will issue a Heat/Health Watch Warning System message, alerting people in the region to take precautions against the hot weather.

"Excessive heat is the top weather-related killer, causing more fatalities per year than floods, lightning, tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storms or extreme cold," said Mary Glackin, acting director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "The excessive heat program that started in Philadelphia in 1995 is proving to be a model for the rest of the country."

"After the record heat of July 2006, the city of San Jose became concerned about the impact of oppressive hot weather on the health and well being of our residents," said Kimberly Shunk, director of the office of emergency services for the city of San Jose. "We are delighted that the National Weather Service now has an improved forecast tool that will help us better prepare for a heat emergency. This is real science making a real difference in our lives."

"Heat can be a health hazard in the Bay Area and this new system provides heat information tailored specifically to our area," said David Soroka, warning coordination meteorologist at NOAA's San Francisco Bay Area weather forecast office. "People here are accustomed to a more temperate climate. When it gets unseasonably hot many people suffer, especially since many residences do not have air conditioning."

San Francisco, San Jose and surrounding communities join the list of cities with the Heat Health Watch/Warning System, which includes Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Cincinnati/Davton. Houston. Jackson/Meridian (Miss.). Lake Charles/Alexandria (La.).

Little Rock/Pine Bluff, Memphis/Tupelo, Minneapolis, New Orleans/Baton Rouge, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Seattle, St. Louis, Shreveport/Monroe (La.), Washington/Baltimore and Yuma (Ariz.).

“The Heat Health Watch/Warning System is the first only meteorological tool that identifies oppressive air masses that historically diminish people’s health,” said Laurence Kalkstein, Ph.D., senior research fellow for the University of Delaware Center for Climatic Research and developer of the warning system. “A custom system is developed for each urban area, based on specific meteorology for each locale as well as urban structure and demographics.”

The San Francisco Bay Area weather forecast office is collaborating with the offices of emergency services and health departments in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties, as well as the city of San Jose. This partnership will educate the community about the warning system and the risks of heat and safety measures to take during a hot spell.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA National Weather Service in Monterey: <http://www.weather.gov/sanfrancisco>

National Weather Service Heat Safety: <http://www.weather.gov/om/heat/index.shtml>