

"Buddy System" for Heat Waves

WHAT'S A BUDDY?

Anyone can be a Buddy. A Buddy can be a friend, relative, neighbor, or landlord. A Buddy should be someone an elderly person who lives alone can trust in his or her home.

WHAT DOES A BUDDY DO?

A Buddy makes a daily personal visit or telephone call to his or her elderly Buddy during a heat wave. A Buddy encourages the elderly person to rest, stay cool, and drink plenty of fluids. If there are any errands that must be done, the Buddy does them, or makes sure they get done.

HOW TO HELP AN ELDERLY PERSON STAY COOL:

Air conditioning is the best safeguard, but many elderly persons do not have air conditioning. If there is no air conditioning, all elderly persons should at least have open windows and an electric fan. Buddies make sure the elderly are wearing lightweight clothes appropriate for the heat, that they have water to drink, and that windows are open to provide ventilation. [CAUTION: If windows are kept closed and the room is very hot, using a fan can make the danger worse.]

If the temperature is very high, the elderly person should be taken, even if only for a few hours, to an air conditioned environment, such as a neighbor or relative's air conditioned home, a movie theater, shopping mall, supermarket, air conditioned library, or call 211 for information on City-sponsored heat relief centers that may be open during periods of unusual heat. Cool baths and showers are helpful.

How to get help: For medical emergencies call 9-1-1

If it is not an emergency, but you are concerned about the elderly person's well being, call his or her doctor. Participate and be a "Buddy". You can save lives.

La Linea de Salud Health Line- 1-888-532-1792 Toll-free local call for FREE advice and information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when you have questions about your health. A registered nurse and other health workers are standing by to help you.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS FOR SERVICES:

RSVP's Calling All Seniors Program- Provides friendly telephone calls from senior citizen volunteers to isolated seniors, establishing a link to the community and by providing referral information. 541-4025

Adult Protective Services- Elderly (over 65) and disabled adults (18-64) who are neglected or abused. Will take donations of fans to distribute to clients: 521-3882. 24-hour hotline:1-800-252-5400

El Paso County General Assistance- Emergency Assistance to the elderly in the form of rent, mortgage, utilities, food, medication and other basic living necessities. Furniture, fans and air conditioners provided on a case-by-case basis. 532-8850

El Paso Electric Company- Payment Arrangement Plan, Budget Billing Plan, Energy Saver Program and Project Care Bill Payment Program to assist persons on fixed incomes and limited budgets. 543-5970.

Sun Metro- Senior Link are five neighborhood circulator routes to help seniors get around to do shopping, visit the doctor or just get out the door. 533-3333.

American Red Cross- Provides preparedness and prevention information and education in the areas of disasters and personal/family health and safety. Provides emergency needs to families affected by disasters. 592-0208

Area Agency on Aging- Provides benefits counseling, information and assistance through care coordination, Caregivers Support Program and Nursing Home Ombudsman. 533-0998

Project Bravo- Provides assistance with utility bills, minor home repairs, home weatherizing and air conditioners. 562-4100

Salvation Army- Emergency shelter and food pantry. 544-9811