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The well-being of staff and offenders is a top priority for the agency and we remain committed to making sure that both are safe during the extreme heat.

TDCJ takes numerous precautions to help reduce heat – related illnesses such as providing water and ice to staff and offenders in work and housing areas, restricting offender activity during the hottest parts of the day, and training staff to identify those with heat related illnesses and refer them to medical staff for treatment.

There are 109 TDCJ facilities across the state, of those 30 have air conditioning in all offender housing areas. It should be noted that medical, psychiatric, and some geriatric units are air conditioned. All units have some areas that are air conditioned.

Many of TDCJ's facilities were built before the time that air conditioning was commonly installed. Prisons built in the eighties and nineties, which were specifically approved by the federal courts in the Ruiz case, didn't include air conditioning because of the added construction, maintenance and utility costs. Retrofitting facilities with air conditioning would be extremely expensive.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice contracted with PDG Architects and Trak Engineering to conduct a comprehensive study to examine the logistics and possible costs associated with installing and maintaining air conditioning in correctional facilities consistent with building and engineering codes.

4 facilities - Wallace Pack, Coffield, Michael and Hutchins were identified because their designs are representative of other facilities within the system. They do not have air conditioning in offender housing areas.

The study brings into focus the possible costs and logistical considerations that would need to be contemplated if an older facility is retrofitted air conditioning. Below are summarized costs contained in the study.

Pack Unit - \$22,095,393 to retrofit with air conditioning, annual operating costs \$477,678
Michael Unit - \$134,911,722 to retrofit with air conditioning, annual operating costs \$550,756
Hutchins Unit - \$79,113,899 to retrofit with air conditioning, annual operating costs \$428,241
Coffield Unit - \$111,767,492 to retrofit with air conditioning, annual operating costs \$7,623,788

Below are some system wide protocols that units utilize during extreme heat.

- Provide additional water; ice is provided if available in the work and housing areas
- Restrict outside activity (work hours) in accordance with agency policy
- Ensure all staff and offenders working in areas of extreme heat (e.g. field, maintenance, yard squad) are provided frequent water breaks
- Transport offenders during the coolest hours of the day
- Screen outgoing offenders to ensure the selected mode of transportation is appropriate
- Load and unload transfer vehicles as quickly as possible

- Offenders are able to access respite areas when needed
- Refill water coolers on buses at various times during the trip to maintain water at appropriate temperature
- When utilizing fans, air is drawn through the structure and exhausted outside, taking full advantage of the fresh air exchange system or prevailing winds to assist in the movement of air, as applicable
- Increase airflow by utilizing blowers, when appropriate, normally used to move hot air in the winter; attach ribbons to vents to ensure blowers are being used appropriately
- Allow additional showers for offenders
- Allow offenders to wear shorts in dayrooms and recreational areas
- Newly hired officers receive training so they're aware of the signs and treatment of heat – cold related illnesses
- All officers carry pocket cards that highlight symptoms of heat – cold related illnesses
- All custody levels are allowed fans.
- Train employees and offenders so they are aware of the signs and treatment for heat-related illnesses
- TDCJ staff and medical providers work closely together to identify offenders susceptible to heat related issues. A list of identified offenders is provided to housing officers who conduct frequent wellness checks on the offenders.

The agency strives to mitigate the impact of temperature extremes. Again, TDCJ is committed to making sure that offenders and staff are safe during the extreme heat.