

Climate and Health Resources: RHODE ISLAND



Climate change poses risks to human health. [Already in the United States](#), we are seeing rising temperatures, increased frequency and intensity of some types of extreme weather, sea level rise, and other changes in weather and climate patterns. We are all vulnerable to the health impacts associated with climate change. However, these climate and health risks vary across the country.

Rhode Island has warmed about 3°F since the year 1900 and heavy rainstorms are more frequent. These, and other climate impacts, mean increasing risks to health. Examples of risks and actions for Rhode Island residents include:

- **Higher temperatures and other weather changes will increase levels of ozone pollution** (a component of smog), increasing health risks like asthma-related hospital visits. [Learn how you can take action to protect against poor air quality](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Check news or airnow.gov for the local air quality index.
 - **Respond:** Reduce outdoor activity when pollution levels are high.

- **Intense hurricanes are becoming more common.** Flooding associated with hurricanes, like Superstorm Sandy, increases the risk of injury, disease, stress, anxiety, and emotional trauma. [Learn how you can take action to cope with post-disaster mental health impacts](#), such as:
 - **Respond:** Be aware of signs of withdrawal, depression, or other indications that someone needs help. Contact the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) for crisis support.
 - **Respond:** Communicate openly to keep relationships healthy. Help children discuss their feelings after a traumatic event.

- **More intense rain can overwhelm combined sewer systems** (where storm water and sewage share pipes). This can contaminate recreational water and sources of drinking water and lead to disease outbreaks. [Learn how you can take action to ensure drinking water safety](#), such as:
 - **Prepare:** Have an emergency water supply ready for your family (1 gallon per person/pet per day).
 - **Respond:** Check the news for tap water safety notices, such as boiling water before use.

Learn more in the [USGCRP Climate and Health Assessment](#).

The examples of risks and actions provided in this document are not a comprehensive list. They provide users with illustrative impacts and resources for further information. Examples were selected based on relevance to the state or region and representation of a diversity of health threats. Selection does not imply ranking of severity of impacts nor prioritization of actions. The examples of impacts are based on "The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment," available at <https://health2016.globalchange.gov>, as well as the National Climate Assessment at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>

RESOURCES FOR RHODE ISLAND RESIDENTS

| Resource Topic | Information | Source |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Climate Change Impacts | Learn More: What Climate Change Means for Rhode Island | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| | Learn More: National Climate Assessment: Northeast | U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2014. |
| | Explore Actions: A Resilient Rhode Island: Being Practical About Climate Change, 2014 <i>Includes Health Concerns for:</i> Coastal Flooding, Inland Flooding, Extreme Heat | Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Council. 2014. |
| | Explore Actions: Rhode Island Climate Change Commission 2012 Progress Report - Adapting to Climate Change in the Ocean State: A Starting Point | Rhode Island Climate Change Commission. November 2012. |
| | Find Resources: EPA Region 1 (New England) | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| Public Health Information | Find Resources: Rhode Island Department of Health | State of Rhode Island |
| | Find Resources: Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency | State of Rhode Island |