

## ACTIONABLE PREPAREDNESS

# From Early Warning to Early Action – Building Capacity Among Transportation Workers in Small Towns

By AIDMI, India

The experience from Ahmedabad and other small towns shows that early warning systems are only as effective as citizen’s ability to understand and act on them. For transportation workers—who remain among the most exposed to extreme heat—capacity building is essential to translate forecasts into practical, life-saving actions.

Through tailor-made training sessions, 348 transportation workers learned to interpret India Meteorological Department (IMD)’s early warning messages and respond proactively. The approach focused on linking alerts with everyday decisions rather than treating them as abstract information. Transportation workers were guided to connect heat warnings with simple, actionable measures such as increasing hydration, carrying ORS, planning short rest breaks, and recognising early symptoms like fatigue, dizziness, and dehydration through self-observation and peer observations.



*“Early warning messages are useful, but we need to act on them to stay safe during duty.” – Hameed Bhai, Driver, Ahmedabad, India.*

A key shift observed was behavioural. Transportation workers began to view early warning messages not as distant advisories, but as immediate signals for action—helping them anticipate difficult working conditions, protect their health, and “keeping cool” while on duty. This shift also extended beyond individuals to collective practices. Peer support emerged as critical, with transportation workers checking on each other during extreme heat conditions and responding early to signs of stress. Situation of stress became opportunity for solidarity.

The sessions were made possible through the active support of Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Services (AMTS) and the strong participation of transportation workers, whose engagement turned the training into a shared learning process grounded in real experiences in Ahmedabad.

Aligned with the International Awareness Day for Avoidable Deaths (IAD4AD) March 12, this initiative demonstrated how awareness can be translated into practical action to reduce avoidable extreme heat risks.

Ahmedabad’s citizens and the leadership of AMC continue to remain pioneers in shaping and advancing initiatives for extreme heat planning, preparedness, and protection across transportation workers. More demands are pouring in.

There is a need for repeated, seasonal engagement and for stronger integration of early warning into daily transport operations and workplace systems, and AIDMI has developed a programme for 2026.

The lesson is clear: early warning becomes effective only when combined with sustained capacity building, practical guidance, and worker ownership—turning information into timely action and protection. ■