

EXTREME HEAT PLAYBOOK  
FOR  
**SPLATSIN**

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# PREFACE

Community Partners who interact with vulnerable populations play a vital role during community emergencies caused by extreme heat weather events. Collaborative efforts are needed to raise awareness, educate the public, amplify key messaging, conduct community outreach, and understand the current extreme heat challenges to enhance overall community well-being and resilience.

This extreme heat playbook was created to help Community Partners navigate extreme heat planning and preparedness activities as well as provide guidance during extreme heat weather events. It contains the following information:



Extreme Heat Background Information



Stakeholder Extreme Heat Checklists



Extreme Heat Roles and Responsibilities



Extreme Heat Community Stakeholder Engagement Strategy



Stakeholder Extreme Heat Coordination Call Preparedness Checklist



Heat Health Reference Information

- Vancouver Coastal Health NGO – Check-in Guide
- NCCEH Extreme Heat In-Person Health Checks
- PreparedBC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide

This document is not intended to replace an extreme heat plan or operate as a stand-alone resource.

# 1.0 BACKGROUND

Climate projection models predict the average number of hot days (+30° C) will increase if current greenhouse gas emission rates continue. These events can become particularly dangerous when they last an extended period of time or occur early in the season when people are not acclimatized to the heat.

In June 2021, British Columbia experienced a “heat dome” weather event; a type of extreme heat event (EHE) that resulted in unprecedented high temperatures. Records were broken across BC and in some areas, temperatures soared as much as 20° C above seasonal norms. High overnight temperatures and the early summer timing made it even more challenging for residents to adapt to the extreme heat. While the EHE lasted only one week, a total of 619 deaths were reported by the BC Coroners Service. This event is now the deadliest extreme heat event recorded in Canada, followed by 280 deaths in Quebec in 2010 and 156 deaths in BC in 2009.

In the weeks following the heat dome event, the BC Chief Coroner assembled a multi-disciplinary panel of experts to review the 619 deaths with the purpose of preventing a similar tragedy from occurring again. Findings from the 2021 extreme heat panel review concluded most of the heat-related deaths took place indoors and decedents were 65 years of age or older, lived alone, lived in urban areas without adequate cooling resources, or had chronic health conditions such as physical or cognitive challenges, hypertension, schizophrenia, depression, and substance use disorders. (BC Coroners Report, 2022, p.5).

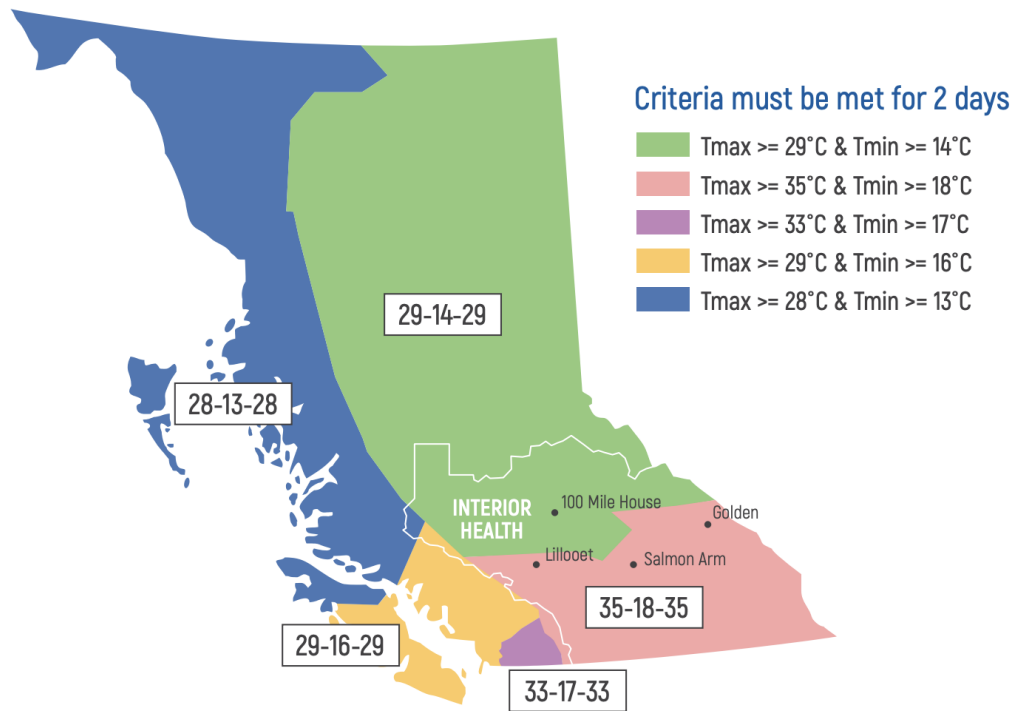
## 1.1 BC HEAT ALERT SYSTEM (HARS)

A BC heat alert system (HARS) was developed and implemented in 2022 following the BC Coroner inquest into the 619 heat-related deaths. The BC HARS uses a two-level alert system for warning the public of extreme heat events (EHEs). This system incorporates the Environment Canada and Climate Change (ECCC) pre-existing heat warning system as well as newly developed extreme heat emergency criteria. The purpose of the extreme heat emergency alert is to increase public awareness of the heightened health risks associated with consecutive days of rising temperatures. (BC HEAT committee, 2022).

$$\text{BC HARS} = \text{ECCC Heat Warning System} + \text{Extreme Heat Emergency Criteria (new)}$$

2 Level Alert System

The ECCC heat warning system uses region specific temperature alerting criteria. BC is divided into five heat alert warning regions. It is important to note these regions do not necessarily coincide with health authority boundaries. The City of Armstrong is located in the Southeast geographic heat region and falls within the Interior Health Authority region as show in Figure 1-1.



**Figure 1-1** Map of the ECCC Heat Alert Warning Regions and Regional Health Authority Boundaries  
Source: BC HARS 2022

### 1.1.1 Level 1 Heat Warning



## Level 1 HEAT WARNING

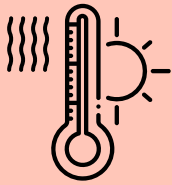
≥2 days in which forecasted daytime maximum temperatures are ≥35 °C **AND** overnight minimum temperature are ≥18 °C

- A Moderate risk to public health (5% increase in mortality)
- Can expect approximately 1 – 3 events per summer season

ECCC will issue a heat warning when daytime and overnight temperatures are higher than usual, but are NOT getting hotter every day. ECCC defines a heat warning as two or more consecutive days in which daytime maximum temperatures reach or exceed 35° C **AND** overnight minimum temperatures do not drop below 18° C. If deemed necessary, the City of Armstrong may choose to:

- » Activate their EOC to monitor the weather forecast
- » Activate the heat warning communications
- » Prepare for an extreme heat event if necessary
- » Encourage people to take the usual steps to stay cool

### 1.1.2 Level 2 Extreme Heat Emergency



## Level 2 EXTREME HEAT EMERGENCY

Heat warning criteria has been met (see above) **AND** forecast indicates that daily highs will substantially increase day over day for  $\geq 2$  days

- A **Very High** risk to public health ( $\geq 20\%$  increase in mortality)
- Can expect approximately 1 – 2 events per decade

An extreme heat emergency is when daytime and overnight temperatures are well above seasonal norms AND are getting hotter every day. ECCC defines an extreme heat emergency when heat warning criteria has been met and the forecast indicates a substantial increase in daily highs for more than two consecutive days. The City of Armstrong may choose to:

- » Activate their EOC to engage in extreme heat response activities
- » Activate their extreme heat emergency communications
- » Encourage people to check on their heat buddy

## 1.2 KNOWN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by EHEs and a disruption to the support services they rely on can put them at even greater risk.

VULNERABLE CATEGORY	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VULNERABILITY	EXAMPLES
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physiological characteristics (e.g., less able to thermoregulate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors aged 65 years or older</li> <li>• Infants and young children</li> </ul>
Housing / Living Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or no access to cooling resources</li> <li>• People living alone may not be able to recognize when they are overheating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• People who do not have access to adequate housing</li> <li>• People without access to air conditioning</li> <li>• People who live alone or are socially isolated</li> <li>• People who depend on a caregiver</li> </ul>
Health Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain medications can interfere with body's ability to cool itself</li> <li>• Inability to recognize overheating and/or protect oneself from overheating</li> <li>• Certain health conditions may reduce the body's ability to adapt to heat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are pregnant</li> <li>• People with mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, anxiety)</li> <li>• People with chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, or respiratory disease)</li> <li>• People with communication, sensory, and cognitive impairment</li> <li>• People who take certain medications (e.g., some antidepressants, antihistamines, some blood</li> </ul>

		<p>pressure medicines, some sedative medicines, and thyroid medicine)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who drink alcohol or take illegal drugs (e.g., methamphetamines amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, PCP (phencyclidine hydrochloride), and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide)**</li> </ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or no knowledge of cooling resources and services available</li> <li>• Limited or no ability to access cooling resources and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People experiencing literacy barriers</li> <li>• People experiencing language barriers</li> <li>• People experiencing systemic barriers</li> <li>• People experiencing mobility challenges</li> <li>• People without vehicles</li> </ul>
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher exposure to heat risks</li> <li>• Increased physical strain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who work in hot environments (e.g., kitchens or outdoors)</li> </ul>
Personal Behavior	Lower perception of heat risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who exercise or are physically active in the heat</li> </ul>
Socioeconomic Disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced access to cooling resources and services</li> <li>• Limited financial resources to take adequate protective measures</li> <li>• Limited access to health care and social services</li> <li>• Higher rates of social isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with a low income</li> <li>• People with few to no social connections</li> </ul>
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited local knowledge</li> <li>• Cultural differences</li> <li>• Language and literacy barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are new to Canada</li> <li>• People who have recently moved to the area or are visiting</li> </ul>

Sources: Health Canada, 2011 and BC HARS, 2022

\* For a list of some medications that increase health risks from extreme heat see the [Government of Canada Acute Care During Extreme Heat pdf](#), call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse, and/or contact your physician

\*\* Certain substances such as amphetamines or cocaine can create hyperthermic responses in the body under normal conditions and can increase the risk of heat related illnesses

## 2.0 EXTREME HEAT CHECKLISTS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



# STAKEHOLDER EXTREME HEAT PRE-SEASON CHECKLIST

**TRIGGER:** Every March 1<sup>st</sup>

- Create or review and update your heat response plan and any other relevant heat plans including business continuity plans in consultation with key partners
  - Consider assessing your facilities for vulnerabilities during a heat event
  - Identify clear triggers and heat risk reduction strategies
  - Create/check contingency planning for air-conditioning and power supply in your buildings
- Organize / participate in exercises and forums to discuss and improve individual and collective responses to extreme heat
- Create or review and update your heat outreach plans and communication strategies geared towards any susceptible and high-risk populations that you support
- Ensure that all relevant staff are subscribed to receive relevant alerts (subscribe to the [WeatherCAN App](#))
- As required, participate in coordination calls for situational updates and awareness
- Build heat health awareness for staff and clients
  - Identify relevant information sources for your clients who may be at risk of extreme heat and prepare any additional messaging, as needed
  - Order and display heat health communication material in venues, and distribute to strategic teams or employees who interface with the high-risk or susceptible populations identified
  - Encourage clients to identify a heat buddy to check-in with each other during heat events
  - Encourage clients to create [personal heat preparedness plans](#)
- Compile information regarding and assess locations of cooling centres (for accessibility, hours, and appropriate spaces for high-risk or susceptible populations)
- Consider long-term planning opportunities to reduce the impacts of extreme heat, for example, greening of property and building design considerations
- Engage staff to identify opportunities to promote heat health and enhance activities to respond to extreme heat
- Identify established and informal networks to connect and engage with indigenous and culturally diverse communities
- Identify established and informal networks to connect and engage with those that may be socially isolated or not connected within the community
- Consider what channels and networks you can establish now with local authority or regional coordination and communication during a heat event
- If your organization serves susceptible clients, look for opportunities to share targeted information
- If your organization anticipates having outreach capacity during heat events,
  - Develop partnerships with health authorities or other agency partners to collaborate on information sharing for targeting of outreach activities during the events
  - Consider learning about wellness checks (and how to do them) and integrating this into your outreach
- If your organization would like to welcome the public into your facility to cool down, consider creating a “Come inside and cool down” sign to post in a visible location during the heat season



# PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

Housing and shelter service providers play an important role to keep people safe during extreme heat.

## Is your organization ready?

Here are some ideas to help you support people.

## Before a heatwave

### Prepare before the first heatwave of the season

- Make an action plan to communicate and mobilize the Provincial Health Alert Response System, a public heat warning and extreme heat emergency alerting system.

### Gather supplies to make extreme heat kits

- Bottled water
- Cups
- Large basins or water jugs
- Ice packs and ice
- Plastic bags
- Towels
- Misting bottles
- Fruit and vegetables
- Taxi vouchers
- Tin foil
- Take Home Naloxone kits
- First aid supplies
- Lightweight clothing
- Sunscreen
- Indoor and body thermometers

### Identify people at higher risk

- Make a list of people at higher risk and plan to check-in with them regularly:
  - People who use substances
  - People with chronic conditions and/or mental illness
  - People who are isolated
  - Elderly

### Learn how to recognize heat-related illness

- Symptoms include: dizziness, thirst, heavy sweating, nausea, weakness, confusion, or loss of consciousness.
- Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if it is not treated.

## During a heatwave

### Use air conditioning units to cool communal areas

### Check on people at higher risk at least twice a day

### Give out extreme heat kits and other supplies

### Measure indoor temperatures, especially at night

- If indoor temperatures are 31°C or more, move people to cooler areas.

## Additional notes:

- People who use substances are at higher risk of heat-related illness.
- Some medications can make it hard for the body to regulate temperature. Talk with a pharmacist or doctor to learn more.
- When extreme heat lasts for several days, people's mental health may be affected. Look for signs of increased:
  - Irritability
  - Psychological distress
  - Aggression or violence
  - Suicidal thoughts

## Important heat resources

- Fraser Health: [Extreme Heat and People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- Health Canada: [Infographic: Staying Healthy in the Heat](#)
- [Toward the Heart](#)
- [Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide](#)

## STAKEHOLDER LEVEL 1 HEAT WARNING CHECKLIST

**TRIGGER:** The ECCC will issue a heat warning through the [weather alerts webpage](#) or the [WeatherCAN app](#) when the following criterion is met:

**Daytime maximum temperatures are Forecasted to reach or exceed 35°C for 2 consecutive days AND the overnight minimum temperature is ≥18°C**

- Monitor local weather conditions on the ECCC website, through the [WeatherCAN app](#), or [Twitter](#)
- Monitor the City of Armstrong official sources of information ([Armstrong website](#) and [Facebook](#) page)
- Review Extreme Heat Pre-Season checklist and implement action items as necessary**
- Release heat warning key messaging via applicable websites, social media, email lists, or mailing lists
- Consider adjusting schedules to cooler parts of the day as appropriate and necessary
- Consider rescheduling major events (particularly outdoor events or venues without air conditioning) to cooler times of the day
- Distribute heat health communication materials and restock as necessary
  - Distribute [Health Canada's Staying Healthy in the Heat Poster](#)
  - Distribute [HealthLink BC Heat-related Illness pdf](#)
- Act in accordance with internal heat response plans for a Heat Warning event
- Seek out opportunities to participate in coordination calls for situational updates and awareness
- Conduct community outreach, focusing on identified susceptible and high-risk populations that your organization or group supports
  - Be mindful of cultural safety
  - Raise awareness about the risks of heat
  - Gather information on outstanding needs
  - Share information about available resources
- Determine if any outstanding needs can be met internally. If not, reach out to the EOC to communicate extenuating needs
- Connect with the City of Armstrong to inform of community needs for establishing cooling centres/shelters that are culturally and socially appropriate for the most susceptible and high-risk individuals you are in contact with
- Share local cooling centre and available resource information through all available communication channels. Consider:
  - Posters, flyers, pamphlets
  - Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter)
  - Phone trees / neighbour check in
  - Websites
  - In person / phone call visits or appointments
- If feasible, inform on potential options for coordinating free transportation for accessing cooling centres
- Provide consistent heat health messages during in person visits and phone calls
- Restock heat health communication materials as needed
- If within scope and capacity, consider establishing temporary cooling spaces
- If your organization would like to welcome the public into your facility to cool down, consider posting a "Come inside and cool down" sign in a visible location

## STAKEHOLDER LEVEL 2 EXTREME HEAT EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

**TRIGGER:** The ECCC will issue a heat warning through the [weather alerts webpage](#) or the [WeatherCAN app](#) when the following criterion is met:

**Heat Warning criteria has been met AND forecast indicates that daily highs will substantially increase day over day for ≥3 consecutive days**

- Monitor local weather conditions on the ECCC website, through the [WeatherCAN app](#), or [Twitter](#)
- Monitor the City of Armstrong official sources of information ([Armstrong website](#) and [Facebook](#) page)
- Review Extreme Heat Warning checklist and implement action items as necessary**
- Act in accordance with internal heat response plans for an Extreme Heat Emergency event
- Participate in coordination calls for situational awareness and to answer or ask questions directly
- If applicable and appropriate, conduct wellness checks for those individuals in your networks that are high risk of severe outcomes
  - Consider multiple times a day, especially in the evening
- As feasible, increase messaging about the dangers of an Extreme Heat Emergency through all available communication channels. Consider:
  - Posters, flyers, pamphlets
  - Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and twitter)
  - Phone trees / neighbour check in
  - Websites
  - In person / phone call / visits or appointments
- Cancel or reschedule major events to cooler times of the day or to a venue with air conditioning
- If within scope and capacity, consider expanding hours of temporary cooler spaces into the evening and / or overnight
- If your organization would like to welcome the public into your facility to cool down, consider posting a “Come inside and cool down” sign in a visible location
- After determining any outstanding needs that cannot be met internally, reach out to the EOC to communicate extenuating needs

# Prepare for Extreme Heat

## Prepare an Extreme Heat Kit

### Drinking fluids



- Bottled water
- Rehydration solution
  - 2½ cups water
  - 1½ cups unsweetened orange juice
  - ½ teaspoon salt
- Ice cubes

### Containers



- Drinking cups
- Water basins or jugs
- Ice packs
- Containers or bags for ice

### Supplies for the body



- Misting bottles
- Sunscreen- SPF 15 or higher
- Towels
  - Keep wet towels in the fridge or freezer
- Clothing
  - light-coloured, lightweight and breathable
  - Wide-brimmed hat
  - Sunglasses

### Supplies for the home



- Thermometers
  - Body and indoor thermometer
- Tin Foil
  - Place on the windows to reflect heat away

### Medical supplies



- First aid supplies
- Take home naloxone kit

### Resources



[Prepare BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide](#)  
[BCCDC Preparing for Heat Events](#)

### References

- [Extreme Heat Events Guidelines: Technical Guide for Health Care Workers](#)
- [A framework for disaster resilience education with homeless communities](#)

For more information visit: [www.towardtheheart.com](http://www.towardtheheart.com)

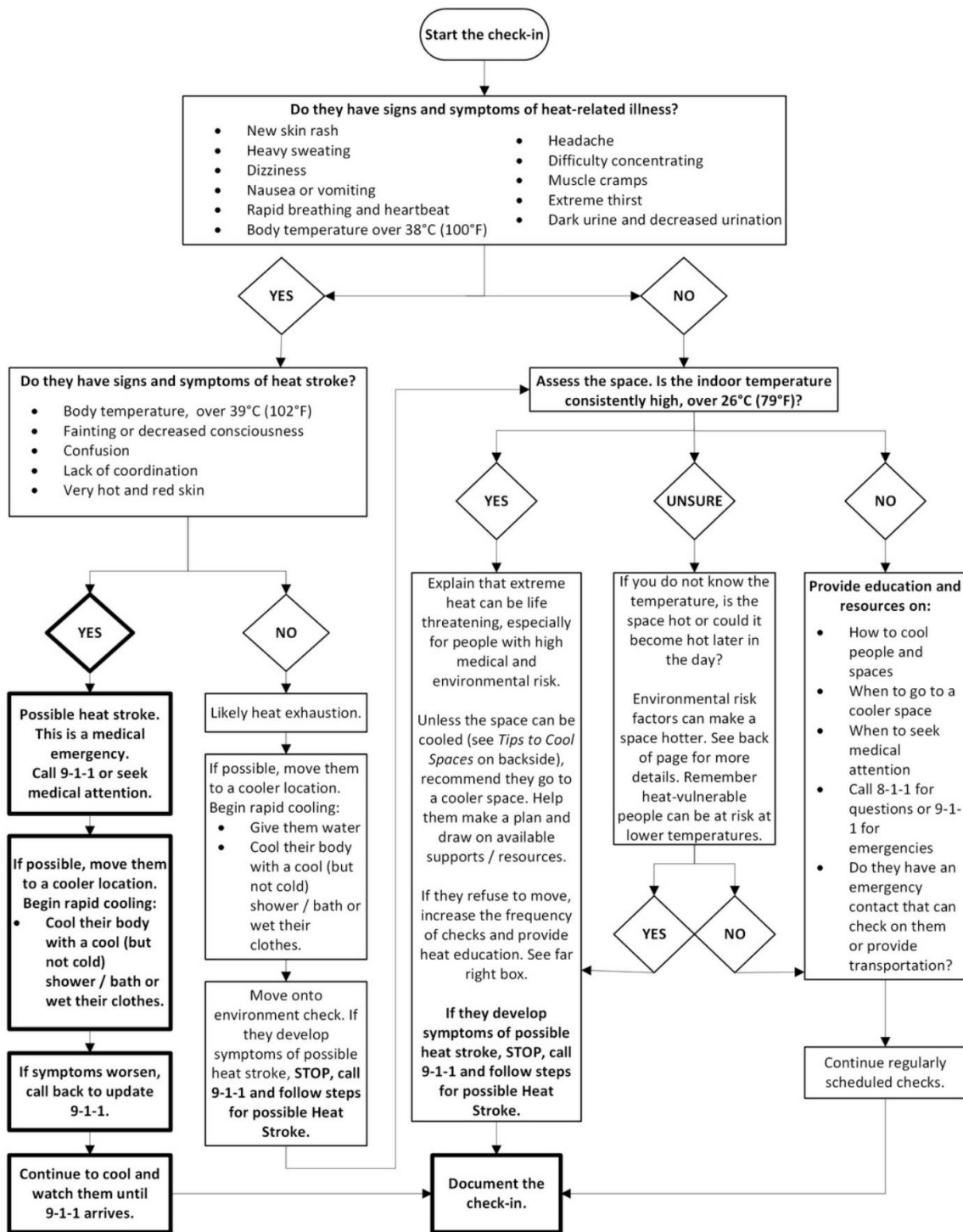
Last updated: 11-May-2023

## **STAKEHOLDER POST – SEASON REVIEW CHECKLIST**

**TRIGGER:** Mid-September to October, when scheduling enables


- Conduct a debrief with staff and volunteers
- If applicable, consider undertaking local recovery activities, as required
- Consider scheduling an After-Action Review to document lessons learned / observed
- Create a plan to implement any learnings into internal heat response plans / practices
- Connect with community members within your organization’s networks about how they are recovering from the heat
- Identify and respond (as feasible) to any new or emerging needs within your organization’s networks
- Build on momentum of post-season activities to continue creating a more resilient community with heightened awareness about heat health, community resources and support available during extreme heat events
- Share any insights / learnings / observations with the community EOC

## 3.0 HEAT CHECK-IN FLOW CHART



If you are unsure or have non-emergency medical questions, call 8-1-1 HealthLink BC. Available 24/7. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.





# Health checks during extreme heat events

A guide for doing in-person or remote health checks

**Extreme heat events can lead to dangerous indoor temperatures in homes without functioning air conditioning.** Health checks are used to assess how people at high risk of heat-related illness are doing during extreme events. In-person health-checks are best, but a remote health check is better than no health check.



## Rapid risk assessment checklist

**This guide has five pages with important information for doing health checks during extreme heat events.**

PAGE 1  
Rapid risk assessment checklist

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PAGE 2  
Recognizing and responding to heat-related illness

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PAGE 3  
In-person health checks

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PAGE 4  
Remote health checks

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PAGE 5  
Measuring body and room temperature

To assess whether someone is at risk, check all the personal factors that apply on the following list. **The more boxes checked, the higher the potential risk.**

- Older adult (60 years+)**      The body's ability to cool itself is impaired as people age.

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- Mental illness or cognitive impairment**      Conditions such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, and dementia can reduce awareness of heat-related risks.

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- Chronic disease**      Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, and cancer can limit the body's ability to cool.

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- Living alone or socially isolated**      People who live alone or do not have strong social connections are at higher risk because they have fewer people looking out for them.

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- Substance dependency or use**      The ability to sense and respond to heat can be affected by use of drugs or alcohol, especially for those who are dependent.

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- Impaired or decreased mobility**      People with impaired or reduced mobility might be less able to take protective measures during extreme heat events.

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- Medication use**      Some prescription medications for common conditions can cause dehydration and affect the body's ability to cool itself.

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- Poor physical fitness**      People who are not engaged in regular physical activity are less able to keep cool in the heat.



[www.ncceh.ca](http://www.ncceh.ca)



## Recognizing and responding to heat-related illness

**Heat-related illness occurs when the body overheats.** It is caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures, and can be made worse by high humidity. The signs and symptoms of heat-related illness can range from mild to severe and can progress rapidly. If you are unsure, treat it like a life-threatening emergency and start cooling measures.

### Severe heat-related illness

**Severe heat-related illness is a life-threatening emergency.** Act immediately to get help and start emergency cooling measures.

#### Signs and symptoms

Any of the following can be signs of **severe** heat-related illness:

- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Unusual confusion or disorientation
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Difficulty speaking
- Unusual coordination problems
- Hot, flushed skin or very pale skin
- Not sweating
- Rapid breathing and faint, rapid heart rate
- Body temperature >39°C (102°F)
- Very low, dark urine output

### Moderate heat-related illness

Moderate heat-related illness can rapidly become severe heat-related illness. Immediate cooling is important to prevent progression.

#### Signs and symptoms

Any of the following can be signs of **moderate** heat-related illness:

- Nausea
- Light-headedness
- Weakness
- Extreme fatigue, malaise
- Very thirsty or dry mouth
- Difficulty swallowing
- Heat rash, unusual swelling, or cramps
- Rapid heart rate
- Body temperature >38°C (100°F)
- Reduced, dark urine output

### Mild heat-related illness

Mild heat-related illness can rapidly become severe heat-related illness. Immediate cooling is important to prevent progression.

#### Signs and symptoms

Any of the following can be signs of **mild** heat-related illness:

- Feeling unwell
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Thirst
- Skin feels very warm and sweaty
- Increase in resting heart rate
- Reduced urine output



### Emergency measures

If someone is experiencing severe heat-related illness, **take all the following actions:**

- Call 911 immediately
- Stay with the individual until emergency services arrive
- Move to a cooler area, if possible
- Remove excess clothing
- Have the individual rest comfortably flat on their back facing up or in a semi-upright position and offer water
- Apply cool, wet towels or ice packs around the body, especially to the neck, armpits, and groin, until emergency services arrive

### Immediate measures for mild to moderate heat-related illness

If someone is experiencing mild to moderate heat-related illness, **take as many of the following cooling actions as possible:**

- Relocate individual to a cooler area
- Remove excess clothing and provide low-level fanning
- Activate air conditioning or open windows in different areas to create a cross-breeze
- Keep the individual resting comfortably flat on their back facing up or in a semi-upright position.
- Encourage sitting upright and drinking water
- Apply cool, wet towels or ice packs around the body, especially to the neck, armpits, and groin
- Call 911 if symptoms persist or get worse





## In-person health checks



Before doing a health check, read page 2 on **Recognizing and responding to heat-related illness**

### What you should have for an IN-PERSON HEALTH CHECK

- This 5-page document, either printed or digital
- Fully charged cell phone for emergency calls
- Information about others to contact if the individual is at risk
- Ear or mouth thermometer for taking body temperature
- Environmental thermometer for taking room temperature
- Wash cloths or towels for soaking in cool water
- Spray bottle
- Bottled water
- Ice packs and extra ziplock bags

### Guidance for in-person health checks

- ▶ Do health checks at least twice daily, because heat-related illness can come on fast. Do one check during the evening hours when it is hottest indoors.
- ▶ When you enter the home, make sure the person is not in immediate distress and can communicate with you. **If someone is in immediate distress or cannot communicate with you, follow emergency measures** (page 2).
- ▶ Assess the situation with your own senses. Does the individual look or seem unwell? Does the environment feel hot? **If someone seems unwell and the environment is hot, take immediate measures to start cooling** (page 2) and alert others to the situation. Ask the individual for emergency contacts if you do not have this information.
- ▶ If you see no immediate risk, consider the rapid risk assessment checklist (page 1). If you do not know the individual well, ask them some questions to help with your risk assessment.
- ▶ Ask the individual about whether they have had any signs and symptoms of heat-related illness (page 2) since their last health check.
- ▶ If possible, use personal and environmental thermometers to help you understand the situation. See table on page 5 for information on measuring temperatures and cooling strategies.
- ▶ If you feel that the situation could become risky, alert others. Ask the individual for emergency contacts if you do not have this information.
- ▶ If you feel confident that the situation is safe, let the individual know when to expect the next health check, if possible.



## Remote health checks



### In-person health checks are best

It is much more difficult to assess how someone is coping with extreme heat during a health check by phone or digital media. However, remote health checks are better than no health checks. **If you cannot get through to the individual for a remote health check, take action.** Call someone who can help to arrange an in-person health check, such as a relative, a neighbour, a friend, or 911.



Before doing a health check, read page 2 on **Recognizing and responding to heat-related illness**

### What you should have for a REMOTE HEALTH CHECK

- This 5-page document, either printed or digital
- Residential address of the individual in case you need to call 911
- Information about others to contact if the individual is at risk
- Some personal information about the individual such as age and general health

### Guidance for remote health checks

- ▶ Do health checks at least twice daily, because heat-related illness can come on fast. Do one check during the evening hours when it is hottest indoors.
- ▶ Start by asking the individual simple questions about themselves and their general wellbeing. Listen carefully to how they respond, considering the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness (page 2).
- ▶ Ask the individual about the general temperature of their home. If they have a thermostat or thermometer, ask them to tell you the current temperature. See table on page 5 for information on indoor temperatures.
- ▶ Ask about how much water or other fluids they have been drinking. Recommend that the individual drink water regularly through all hours of the day.
- ▶ Ask about how they have been sleeping in the heat and what they have been doing to stay cool overnight.
- ▶ Make suggestions for keeping themselves and their home cool. See table on page 5 for information on cooling strategies.
- ▶ If you feel that the situation could become risky, alert others. Ask the individual for emergency contacts if you do not have this information.
- ▶ If you feel confident that the situation is safe, let the individual know when to expect the next health check, if possible.



## Measuring body and room temperature

If you can get information on body temperature or room temperature, it may help you to assess the situation during health checks. Use the following tables to guide you.

### Body temperature



- A normal body temperature is 36.5-37.0°C (97.7-98.6°F).
- A resting body temperature over 38°C (100.4°F) may indicate moderate heat-related illness.
- **A resting body temperature over 39°C (102.2°F) requires immediate emergency attention.**

### Indoor temperature



- Indoor temperatures of 26°C (78.8°F) and below are usually safe.
- Risk of heat-related illness starts to increase at indoor temperatures over 26°C (78.8°F) for susceptible people.
- **Risk of heat-related illness increases significantly at sustained indoor temperatures over 31°C (87.8°F) for susceptible people (page 1).**

### Reducing body temperature

- Take off extra layers of clothing to expose as much skin as possible.
- Have access to cool drinking water and drink regularly, even when not feeling thirsty.
- Prepare damp towels in a plastic bag and put them in the fridge to apply on the body regularly.
- Take cool showers or baths or sit with feet in cool water.
- Fill a spray bottle with cool water for misting.
- Limit physical activity and exposure to the outdoors during the hottest hours.

### Reducing indoor temperatures

- Turn on an air conditioner, if available.
- Turn on fans if the room temperature is below 35°C.
- Move to a cooler space within the home, if safe to do so.
- Draw curtains, shades, or shutters to help block direct sunlight.
- Cover windows with a blanket or cardboard if there are no curtains or shades.
- Close windows during the heat of the day to trap cooler air indoors.
- Open windows overnight or whenever there is a cool breeze, keeping safety in mind.
- Turn off heat-generating devices such as appliances, electronics, lights, etc.



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## 5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

POSITION	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Local Community Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May develop and activate a heat response plan to help protect employees, volunteers, members, and clients</li> <li>• May work with the local community Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) to help disseminate extreme heat information</li> <li>• May contact the local EOC during heat warning and extreme heat emergency events to communicate challenges and needs that may be beyond the scope of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>City of Armstrong Emergency Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages Community Partners to develop and implement heat response strategies, but is <b>NOT</b> responsible for stakeholder extreme heat planning, preparedness, and response activities</li> <li>• Works with the health authority to support communication regarding alerts and actions to mitigate heat risk</li> <li>• Responsible for activating community heat response strategies to help protect public health during EHEs</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathers situational awareness (e.g., monitors local weather conditions, and heat-health vulnerabilities)</li> <li>• Encourages Community Partners to activate their heat response plans and conduct outreach to members within their organizational mandates</li> <li>• Connects local partners</li> <li>• Activates heat risk reduction strategies as needed</li> <li>• Disseminates updates and key messaging to municipal staff, Community Partners, and residents/public</li> </ul>
<b>ECCC</b> Environment and Climate Change Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Is the lead federal ministry responsible for issuing heat warnings, extreme heat emergencies, and de-escalation alerts when criteria levels are met</b></li> <li>• Works closely with the Meteorological Service of Canada and provides 24/7 monitoring and forecasting of hot weather effects for BC</li> <li>• Notifies public via the ECCC <a href="#">weather alerts webpage</a> and the <a href="#">WeatherCAN app</a></li> </ul>
<b>EMCR</b> Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (formerly EMBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Is the lead coordinating agency for provincial government response to the non-health related impacts of EHEs</b></li> <li>• Follows recommended actions as listed in the BC HARS document</li> <li>• Supports communities by issuing task numbers and reimburses communities through preauthorization expenditure processes</li> </ul>
<b>MoH</b> BC Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Is the lead provincial response agency for the public health impacts of an EHE</b></li> <li>• Provides heat health communication resources</li> <li>• Provides emergency management preparedness and response guidance to health care providers</li> </ul>

## 6.0 COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The City of Armstrong has identified the following best practices for engaging Community Partners with respect to extreme heat planning, preparedness, and response.

TIME OF YEAR	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
Pre-season Meeting <i>(March 1<sup>st</sup>)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet face-to-face or online if necessary</li><li>• Update stakeholder contact information</li><li>• Update stakeholder EHE services and resources offered</li><li>• Confirm everyone's roles and responsibilities</li><li>• Review the plan for the upcoming season <i>(e.g., what Community Partners expect; alert protocols, training opportunities, and communications)</i></li></ul>
EHE Coordination Call* <i>(during a long heat warning event and/or an extreme heat emergency)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirm the frequency of stakeholder check-ins required</li><li>• Understand what is working well</li><li>• Identify any challenges and potential solutions</li><li>• Encourage Community Partners to reach out to their members and establish a regular check-in schedule if necessary</li></ul>
Post-Season Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the extreme heat event(s)</li><li>• Identify successes, any new challenges, and potential solutions for next season</li></ul>

## 7.0 EXTREME HEAT COORDINATION CALL CHECKLIST

- *The objective of the coordination call is to bring Community Partners together to collaborate, share information in an efficient and effective manner, and to help facilitate a collective community response to an extreme heat event*
- *This checklist aims to assist you in preparing for a stakeholder coordination call, facilitating a more efficient and effective meeting*

The coordination typically follows an a standard agenda such as the one below:

1. Welcome/introduction
2. Information from the ECCC, type of notification (e.g., heat warning or extreme heat emergency)
3. Current information from EMCR, a regional/provincial context, municipal actions, and any other information that may be relevant)
4. Each stakeholder is requested to provide an update (see checklist below)
5. Final key messaging from the municipality
6. Closing Remarks

Consider preparing the following information in advance of the coordination call:

- Identify extreme heat services and resources being offered by your organization
- Identify what is working well
- Identify any organization or community challenges and potential solutions
- Identify any unmet needs (e.g., existing or potential challenges or concerns from known vulnerable populations)
- Consider any other comments, concerns, or questions



## **8.0 HEAT HEALTH REFERENCE INFORMATION**

### **8.1 PREPARED BC EXTREME HEAT PREPAREDNESS GUIDE**

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/preparedbc/preparedbc-guides/preparedbc\\_extreme\\_heat\\_guide.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/preparedbc/preparedbc-guides/preparedbc_extreme_heat_guide.pdf)

### **8.2 VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH – NGO HEAT CHECK-IN GUIDE**

<https://www.vch.ca/sites/default/files/import/documents/Heat-check-in-support-framework.pdf>

### **8.3 TOWARDS THE HEART – PREPARE AN EXTREME HEAT KIT**

<https://towardtheheart.com/assets/uploads/1683835881CA6RRw5IzM57TBa3JEHv8NZ7KRI7knneqWWW9M.pdf>

### **8.4 BC HYDRO & FORTISBC ENERGY CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECAP)**

<https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/energy-conservation-assistance-program/>