



# 2024 Extreme Heat & Wildfire Smoke Response Planning for Non-Profit Housing & Service Providers

May 8, 2024

# Agenda

## Topic

Welcome / Overview (Jackie Kanyuk, BCNPHA)

Health Impacts & Research (Dr. Michael Schwandt, VCH)

Non-Profit Resources / Emergency Services (Dexter Charlebois-Holmes, BCH)

Emergency Response Planning (Lisa Benini, BCSTH)

Lived Experiences of Heat in Indigenous households (Shahed Shafazand, AHMA)

Preparing & Responding to Extreme Heat, Wildfire Smoke and Evacuations (Kelly Fehr, Turning Points Collaborative)

# Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke in BC: Health Effects, Preparation and Response

**BCNPHA Webinar: Extreme Heat & Wildfire Smoke Response Planning**

Dr. Michael Schwandt, Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health

**May 8, 2024**

With acknowledgements to:

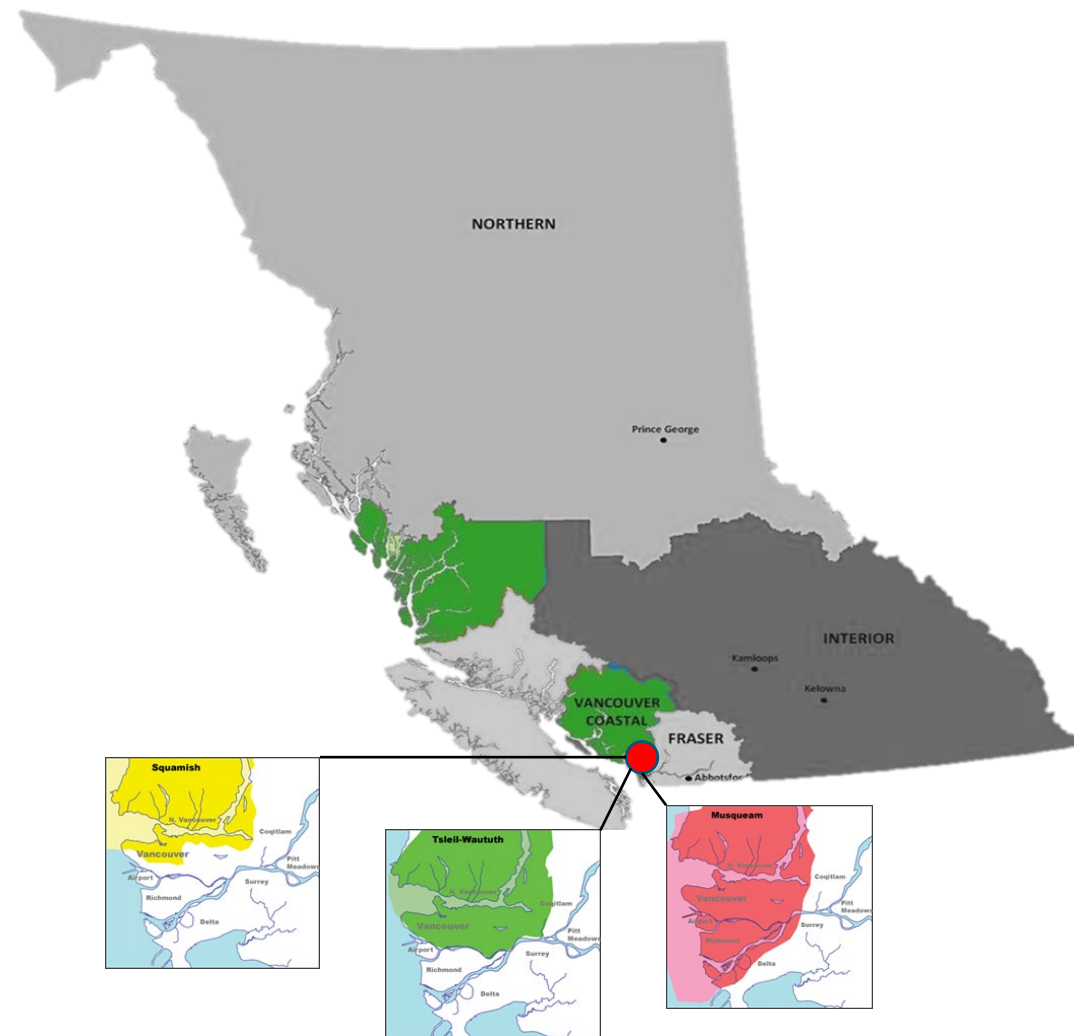
Craig Brown, Iris Chan, Emily Peterson, Tyler Semler, Meghan Straight



# Territorial Acknowledgement

**We wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.**

Vancouver Coastal Health is committed to delivering exceptional care to 1.25 million people, including the First Nations, Métis and Inuit, within the traditional territories of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Lil'wat, Musqueam, N'Quatqua, Nuxalk, Samahquam, shíshálh, Skatin, Squamish, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Wuikinuxv, and Xa'xtsa.



# Outline

- Heat/wildfire smoke events and related illness
- Risks for health effects of heat and wildfire smoke
- Planning and action for extreme heat and wildfire smoke
- Resources

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# Climate change: Local projections



## Extreme heat

2050s projections [SSP585]

**warmer  
temperatures**

**2.4°C**

Warmer temperatures year-round, with an average temperature increase of 2.4C



The hottest days will be hotter

**9x** as many days over 30°C

**3x** as many days over 25°C

**more frequent  
& intense heatwaves**



**Heatwaves will be  
4x more frequent**

On average, heatwaves will last

**3-6 days**

and involve warmer day and nighttime temperatures

# Climate change: Local projections



## Poor air quality

Climate change-related poor air quality has two main causes:

### wildfire smoke



Longer fire seasons cause more exposure to smoke

Increasing wildfire frequency and intensity

### ground-level ozone



The main cause of this harmful gas is vehicle exhaust

Warmer and drier summers can lead to elevated levels



# Looking ahead to summer 2024 ...

ENVIRONMENT

## 'Concerning': B.C.'s snowpack lowest in 50 years at 63% of normal

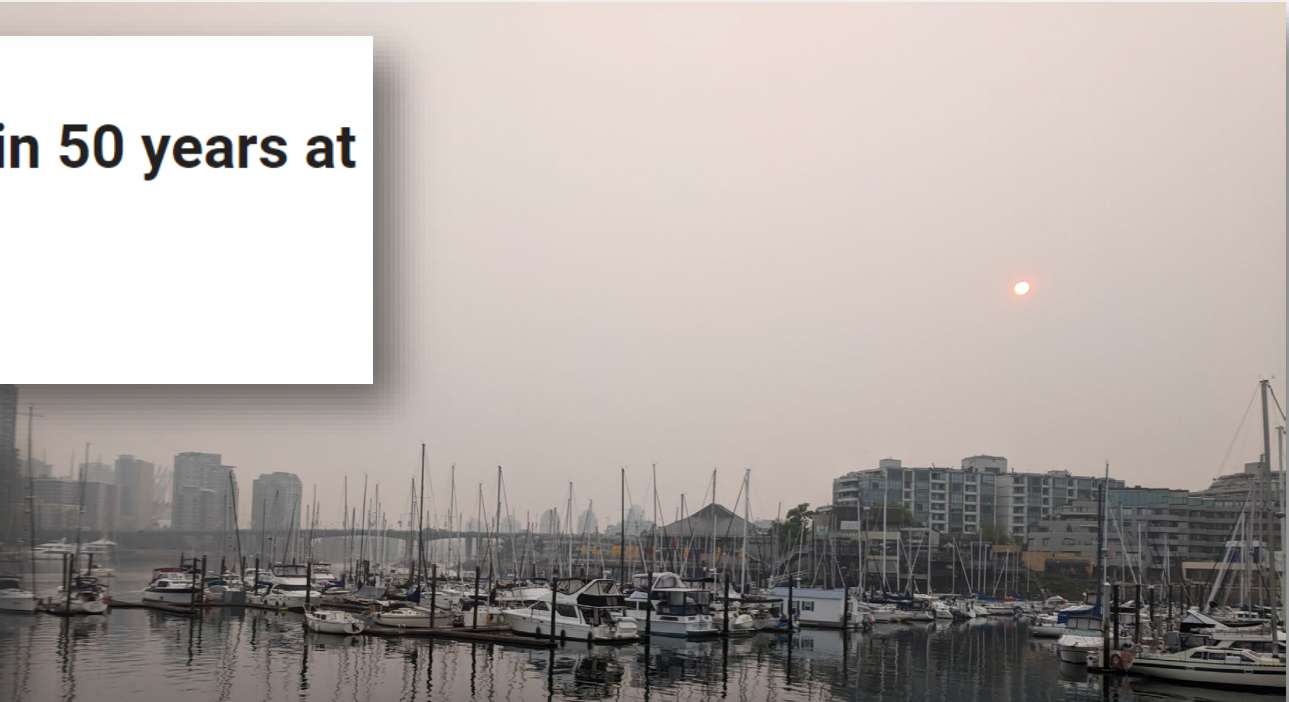


By **Darrian Matassa-Fung** • Global News

Posted April 10, 2024 1:48 pm • Updated April 10, 2024 6:22 pm • 3 min read



Chapman Lake reservoir in the Sunshine Coast region seen during drought conditions in October, 2022. **Sunshine Coast Regional District**



## It's the middle of winter, and more than 100 wildfires are still smouldering

Dry weather after record-breaking summer season has kept fires going in Western Canada



**Benjamin Shingler** • CBC News • Posted: Feb 21, 2024 1:00 AM PST | Last Updated: February 21

# EXTREME HEAT

Some people are impacted by the heat more than others. People over 60, people who live alone, people with certain health conditions or disabilities, people who use substances, people on certain medications, people who are pregnant, infants and young children may need extra care.



## HEAT EXHAUSTION SYMPTOMS

- Skin rash
- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid breathing & heartbeat
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Muscle cramps
- Extreme thirst
- Dark urine & decreased urination

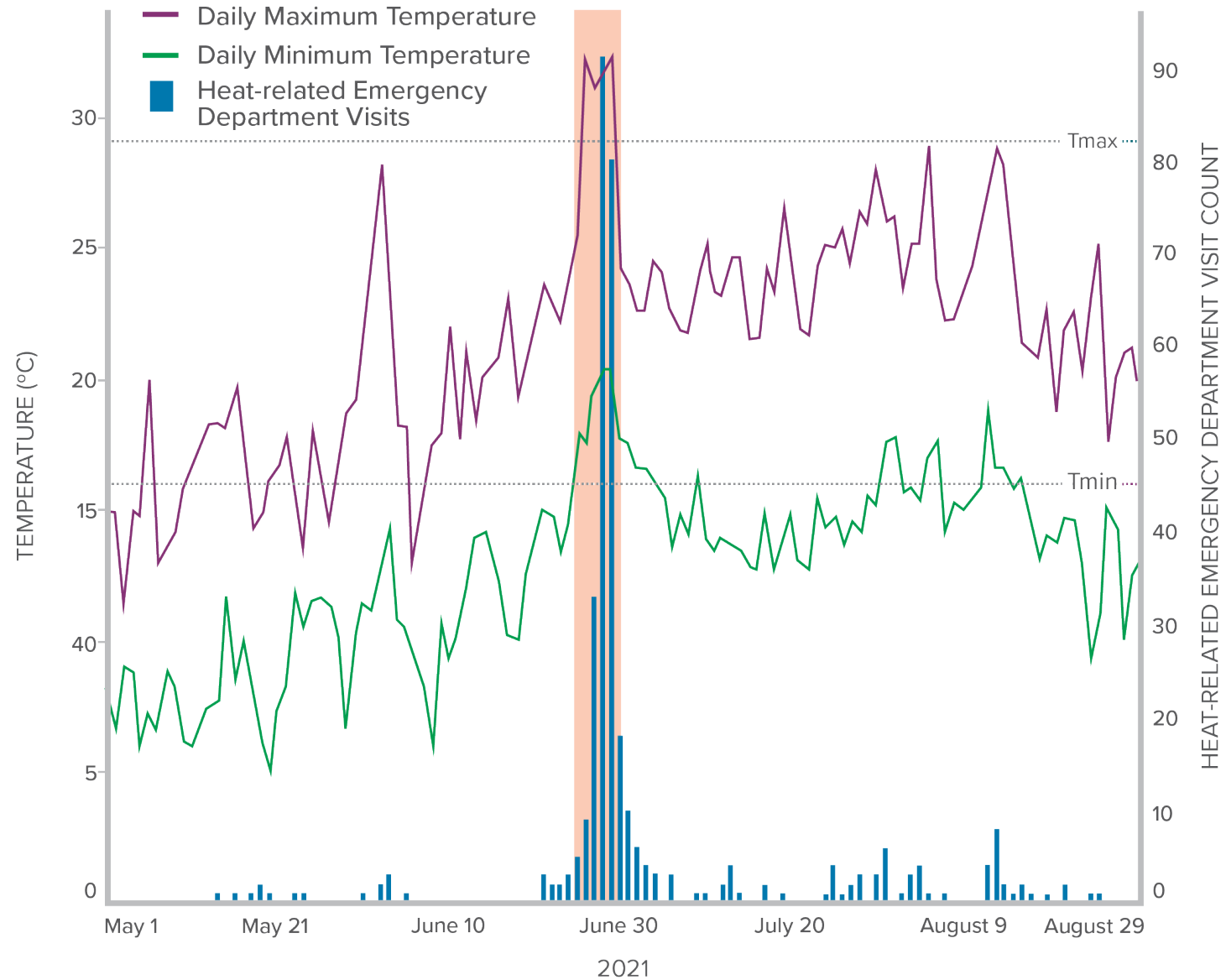
Anyone with these symptoms should be moved to a cool space, given plenty of water to drink, and cooled down with water applied to the skin (see “Cool Off” section below)”

## HEAT STROKE SYMPTOMS

- High body temperature
- Fainting or decreased consciousness
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Very hot and red skin

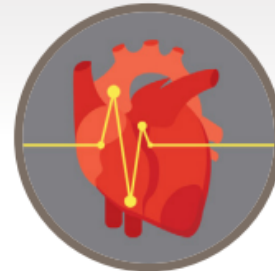
**Seek medical attention, call 911 if necessary.** Submerge some or all of the body in cool water, remove clothes and apply wet towels.

# Daytime temperatures, heat warnings, and VCH emergency department visits (Summer 2021)



# WILDFIRE SMOKE

Different people respond differently to smoke. People with chronic conditions, people who are pregnant, infants and small children, older adults and people with respiratory infections may need extra care.



## SYMPTOMS

- Sore throat
- Eye irritation
- Runny nose
- Mild cough
- Phlegm/mucous production
- Wheezy breathing
- Headaches

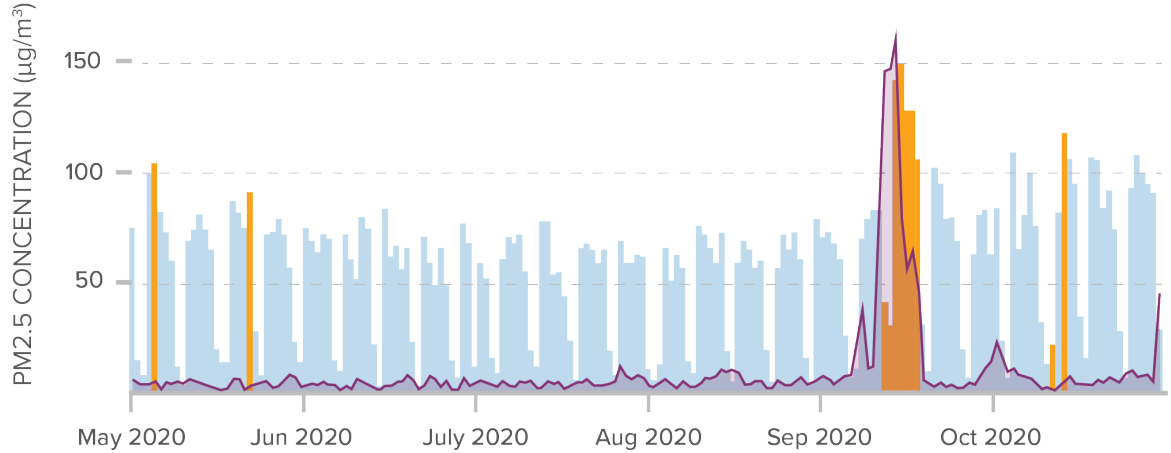
## MORE SEVERE SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath
- Severe cough
- Dizziness
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations

Anyone with these symptoms needs medical attention

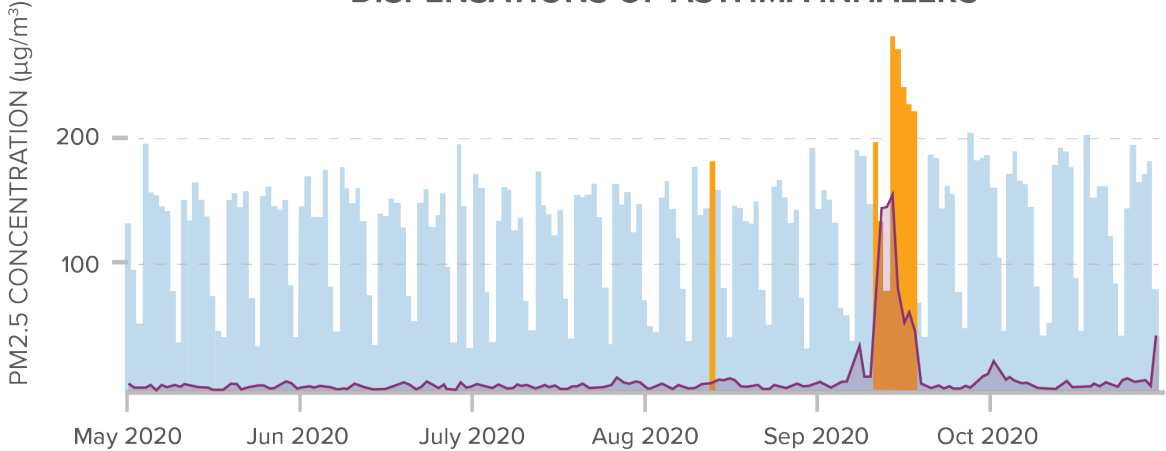
# Local fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) concentration and asthma-related health care measures (Vancouver, 2020)

ASTHMA-RELATED PHYSICIAN VISITS



- Count within expected range
- Count rare compared with expected range
- Mean daily PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations

DISPENSATIONS OF ASTHMA INHALERS

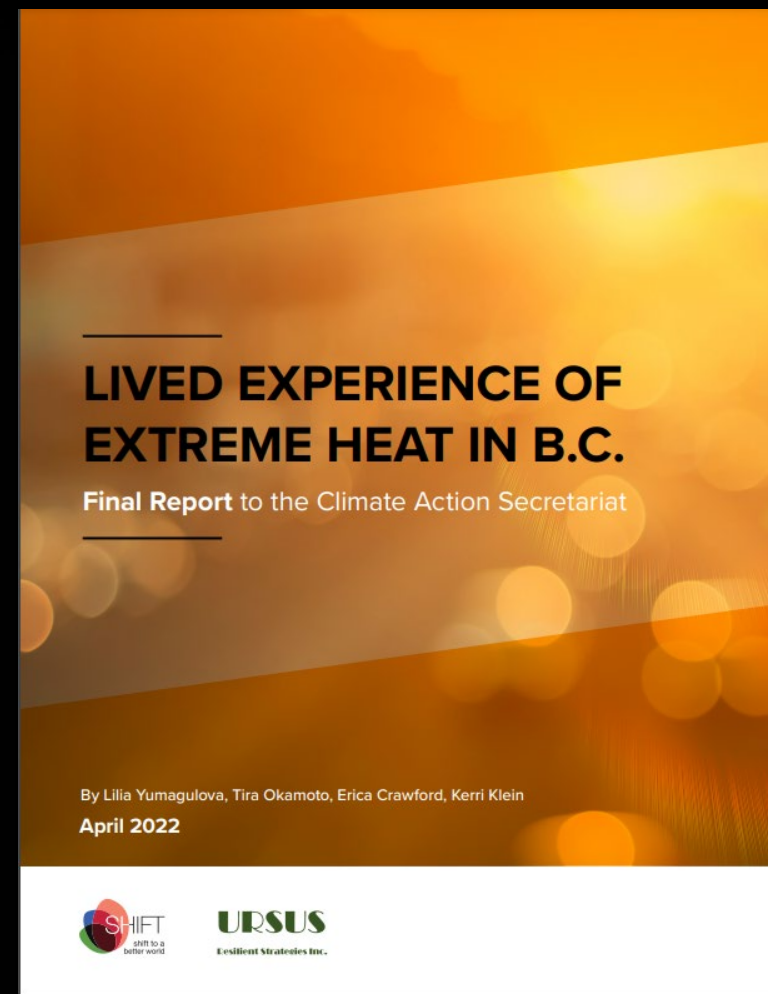
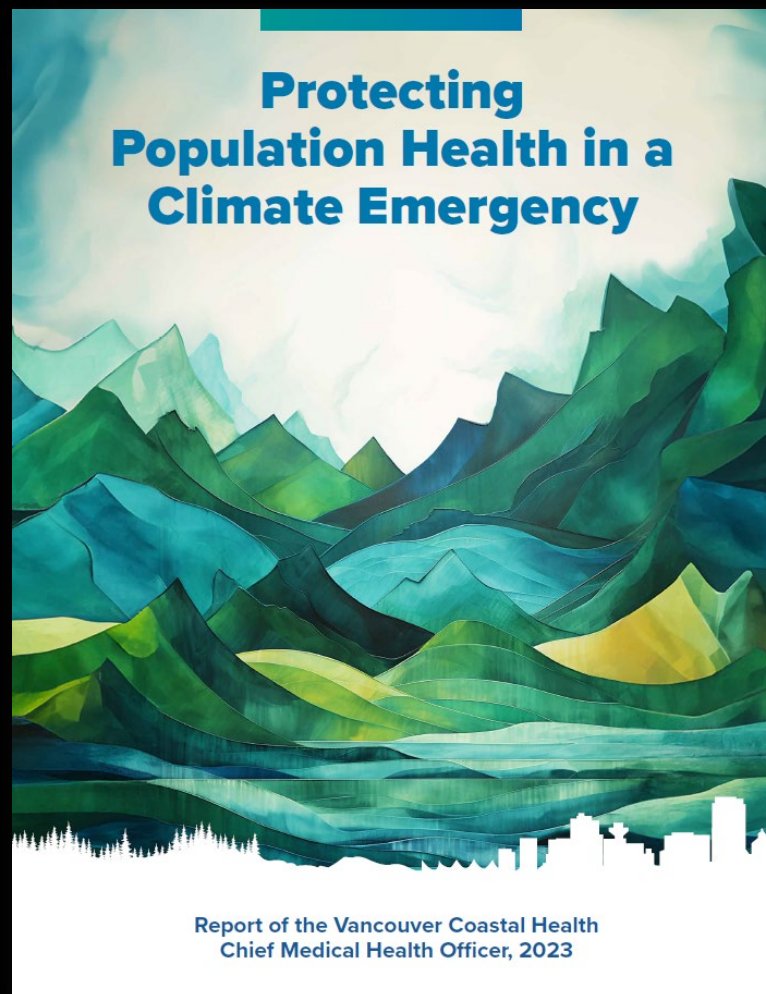


# Outline

- Heat/wildfire smoke events and related illness
- Risks for health effects of heat and wildfire smoke
  - Biomedical
  - Environmental
  - Social
- Planning and action for extreme heat and wildfire smoke
- Resources

**Extreme Heat and Human Mortality:  
A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C.  
in Summer 2021**

**Report to the Chief Coroner of British Columbia**  
Release Date: June 7, 2022



# Extreme heat: People at higher risk

- Older adults, aged 60 years or older
- People who live alone
- People with pre-existing health conditions
- People with mental illness, e.g. schizophrenia
- People who use substances, including alcohol
- People with limited mobility
- People experiencing homelessness or marginal housing
- People working in hot environments
- People who are pregnant
- Infants and young children

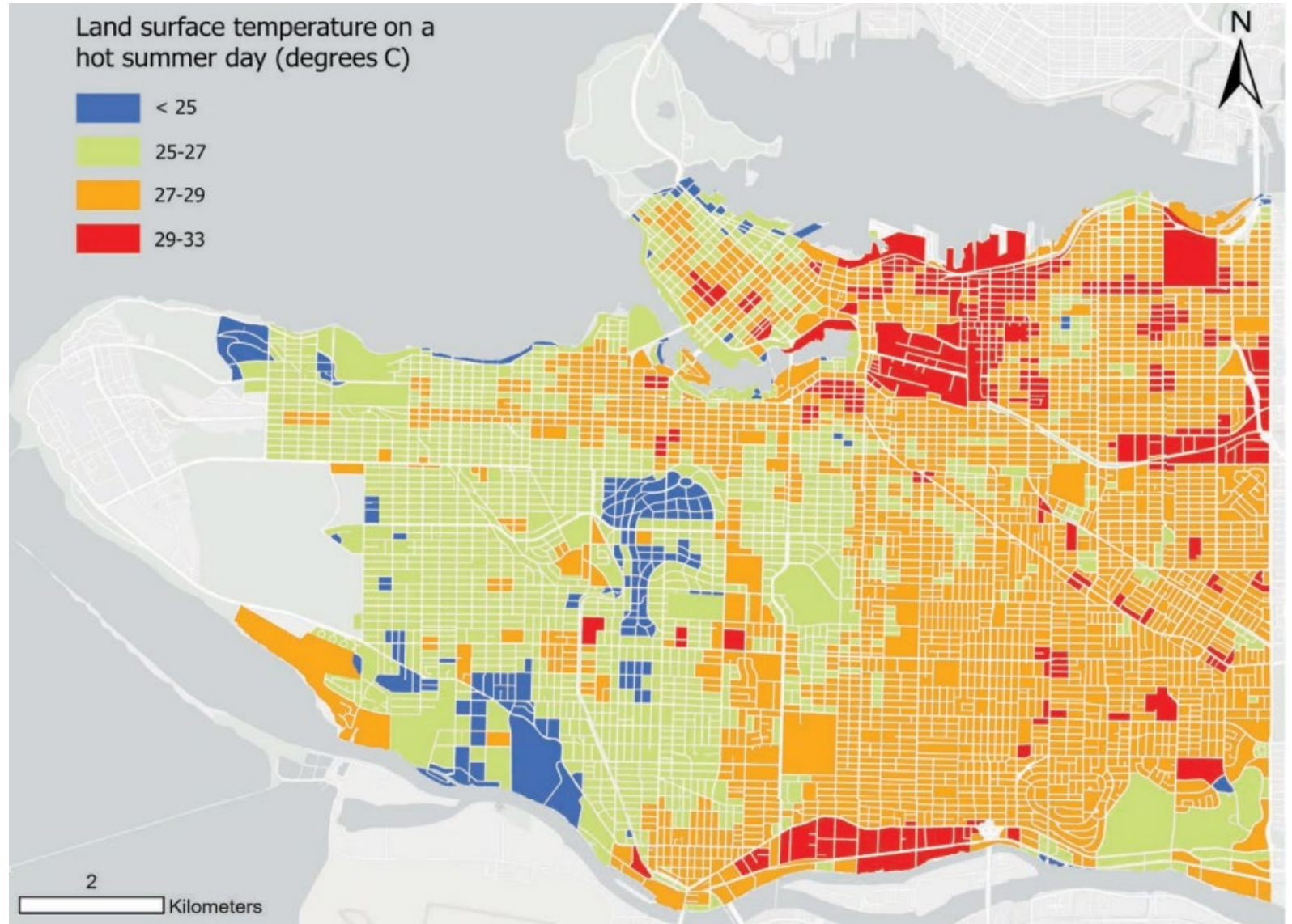




# Environmental risk for extreme heat

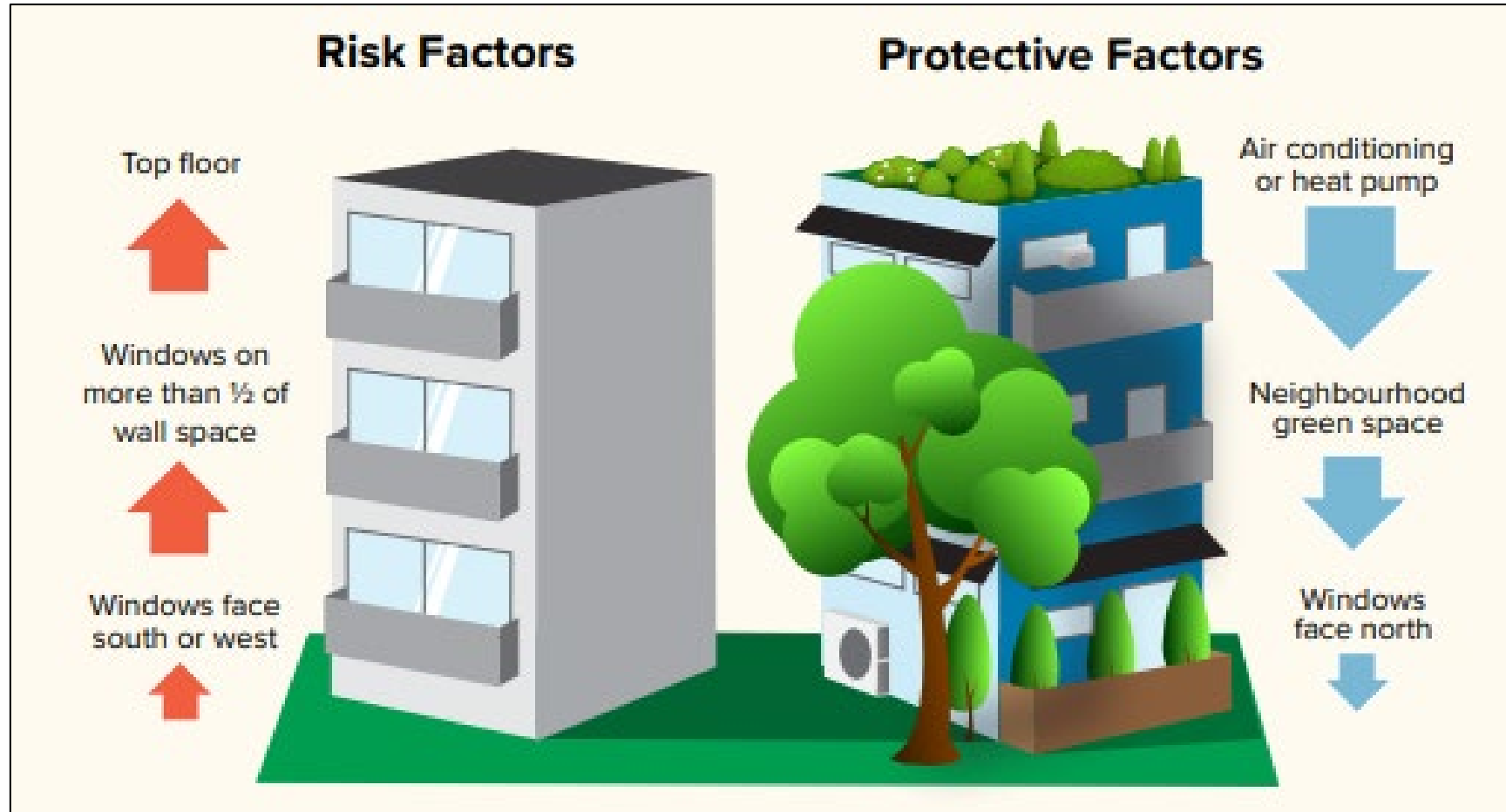
- Sparse vegetation
- Darkly hued roofing and paving materials
- Lack of neighbourhood green space

→ Higher heat load in urban areas: “urban heat islands”



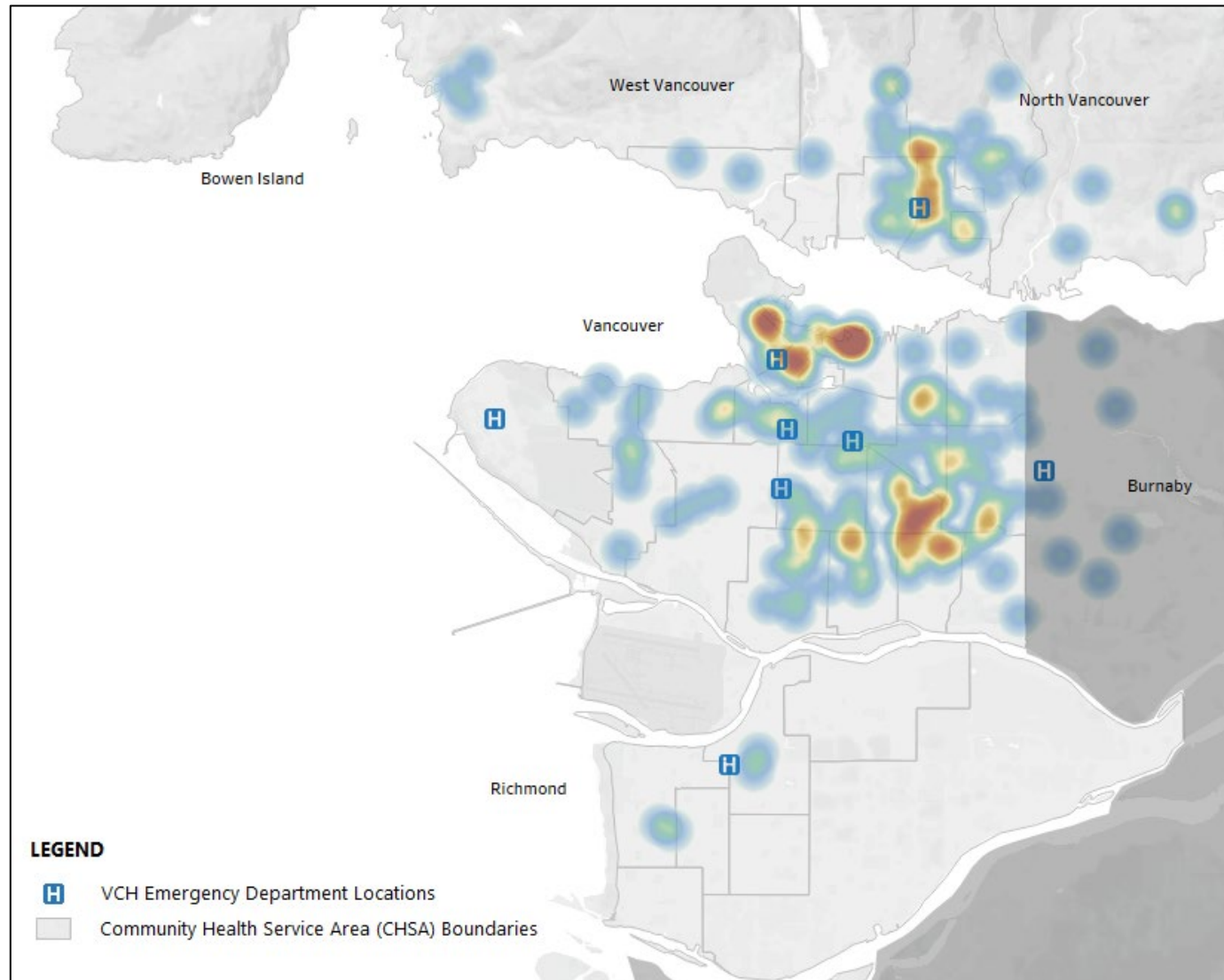
City of Vancouver: *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Update, 2024-25 Update*

# Heat and housing



*Protecting population health in a climate emergency: Report of the Vancouver Coastal Health Chief Medical Health Officer, 2023*

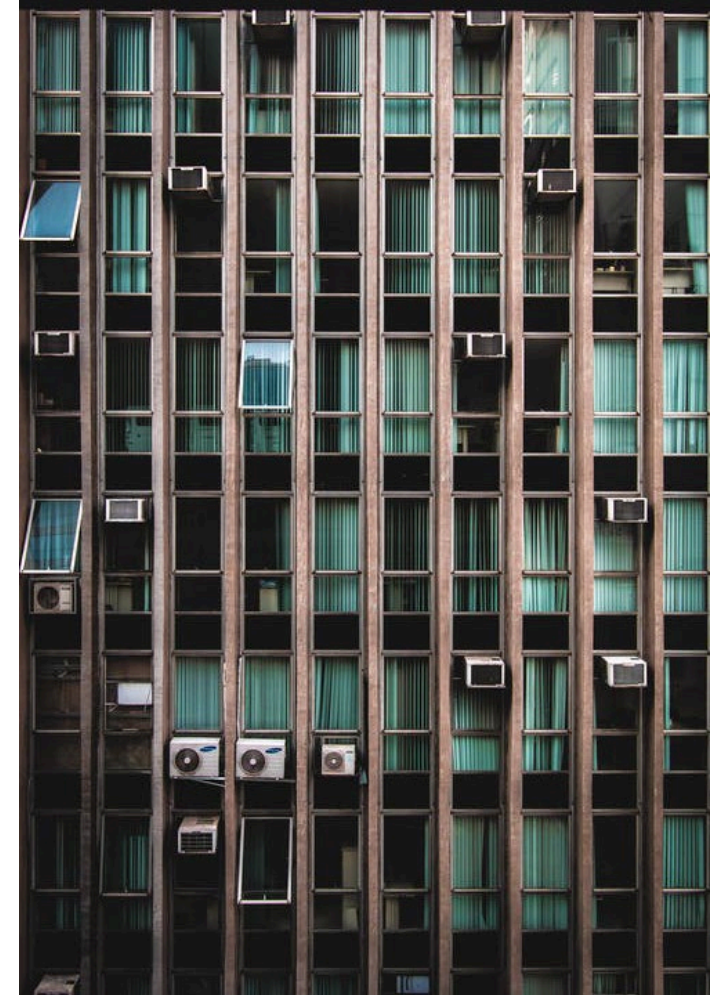
## Heat-related VCH emergency department visits, by place of residence (June 25-July 2, 2021)



*Protecting population health in a climate emergency: Report of the Vancouver Coastal Health Chief Medical Health Officer, 2023*

# *Social* risks for extreme heat

- Reduced access to cooling spaces and other heat mitigation measures (e.g. A/C)
- Social isolation and barriers to reaching help, including health and social services
- *Socially* vulnerable groups may be more likely to live in neighbourhoods with *environmental* vulnerability



# Risks for impacts of wildfire smoke

## More sensitive

- People with pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. asthma, cardiovascular disease)
- Infants, young children, and people who are pregnant
- Older adults

## More exposed

- People who are homeless and under-housed
- People who live in spaces without air filtration
- People who work or are active outdoors

### THOSE MOST AFFECTED



PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC  
LUNG/HEART DISEASE

OLDER  
ADULTS



PREGNANT  
WOMEN



INFANTS,  
YOUNG CHILDREN

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# Actions to keep *people* cool

- ✓ Seek cooler spaces
- ✓ Drink plenty of water and other liquids
- ✓ Limit physical activity
- ✓ Take a cool shower or put part of body in cool water
- ✓ Wear a wet shirt or apply damp towels to skin
- ✓ Wear loose fitting, light colored breathable clothing
- ✓ Monitor indoor temperature and watch for symptoms

# Actions to help keep *spaces cool*

- ✓ Use A/C or heat pumps
- ✓ Close blinds/shades to block sunlight
- ✓ Use external window shading and/or external window films
- ✓ Close windows during the day (approx 10am to 8pm) and open windows overnight





# Extreme Heat: **Dangerous** Indoor Temperatures

- **Indoor temperatures over 26°C (79°F):** Increasing risk of heat-related illness for heat-vulnerable people.
- **Indoor temp over 31°C (88°F):** Significant risk of heat-related illness for heat-vulnerable people.
- **If in doubt, help people move to a cooler space.**



# Notes on fans

- **Fans do not lower core body temperatures – do not rely on a fans as a primary cooling method.**
- Do not direct fans toward the body when indoor temperatures are very high (over 35°C).
- Do use fans strategically to help move cooler air into living spaces overnight.



# Optimizing benefits of cool/clean air spaces

- Well-advertised in advance of hot days
- Familiar spaces
- Longer hours are ideal
  - It can take many hours for susceptible people to cool down
- Low-barrier approach, welcoming to diverse communities
- Location, transport options
- Outdoor cooling centres are also possibilities
- Options for pets
- Something to do!
  - Programming with advice of communities



# Protection from wildfire smoke

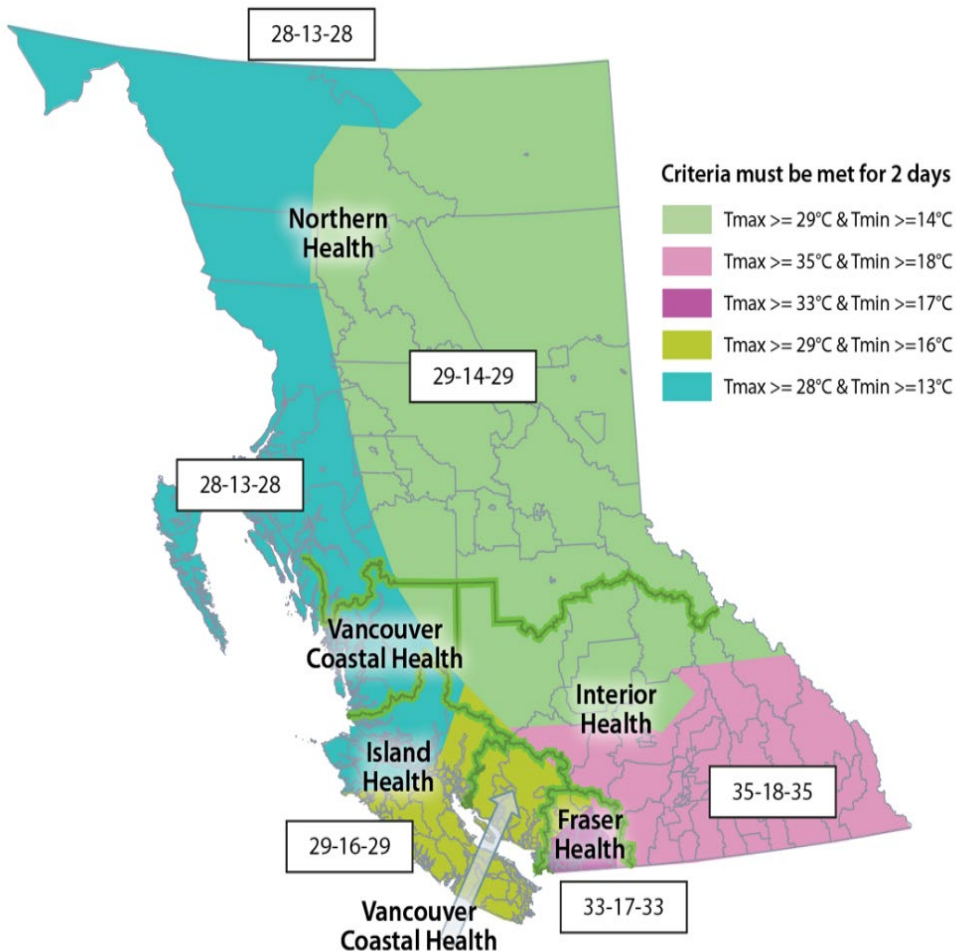


- Seek clean filtered indoor air
- Take it easy outdoors. The harder we breathe, the more smoke we inhale.
- An N95 respirator can help provide protection from wildfire smoke.

# Considering heat and air quality together

- Periods of poor air quality may overlap with extreme heat events during the summer
- **Many risks heat-related illness are *also* important for air quality impacts**
- Heat is a greater immediate health risk than smoke for *most* people, so cooling should generally be prioritized
- **Key for both heat and smoke events: Cool, clean indoor air**

# BC Heat Alert Response System (BC HARS)



Alert level	Heat Warning	Extreme Heat Emergency
Public health risk	Moderate (5% increase in mortality)	Very high (20% or more increase in mortality)
Descriptor	Very hot	Dangerously hot
Historic frequency	1-3 per summer season	1-2 per decade
Criteria	Southwest = 29-16-29* Fraser = 33-17-33* Southeast = 35-18-35* Northeast = 29-14-29* Northwest = 28-13-28* * °C (daytime high, nighttime high, daytime high)	Heat warning criteria have been met and forecast indicates that daily highs will increase day-over-day for 3 or more consecutive days

# BC Heat Alert and Response System: Key recommendations for NGOs

## Pre-season

- Create or review heat response plan
- Organize or participate in forums to discuss collective responses to extreme heat
- Identify and display/share information on extreme heat (e.g. VCH and BC Housing resources)
- Identify clients who may be at high risk for severe illness during extreme heat
- Explore options for temporary cooling spaces and clean air on-site
- Create lists of cooling and cleaner air centres/spaces
- Explore potential options for transportation to cooling

## During a Heat Warning

- Conduct community outreach, focusing on high-risk populations to raise awareness
- Share local cooling centre information, consider establishing cooling spaces

## During an Extreme Heat Emergency

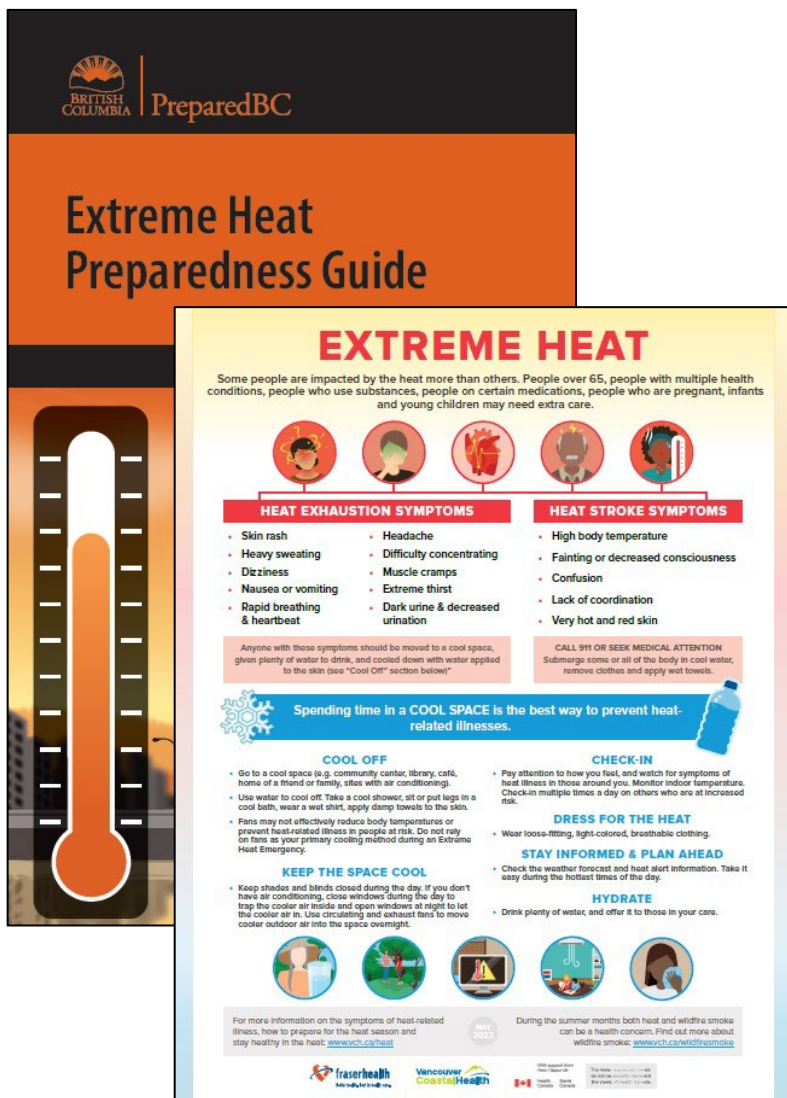
- Engage in wellness checks for people at high risk ([VCH Heat Check-In Support Framework available](#))
- Increase community messaging
- Consider expanding hours of temporary cooling spaces

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# Resources: Extreme Heat



The poster is titled "Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide" and features a large thermometer graphic on the left side. The main heading is "EXTREME HEAT". Below this, it states: "Some people are impacted by the heat more than others. People over 65, people with multiple health conditions, people who use substances, people on certain medications, people who are pregnant, infants and young children may need extra care." The poster is divided into two columns of symptoms: "HEAT EXHAUSTION SYMPTOMS" and "HEAT STROKE SYMPTOMS".

**HEAT EXHAUSTION SYMPTOMS**

- Skin rash
- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid breathing & heartbeat
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Muscle cramps
- Extreme thirst
- Dark urine & decreased urination

**HEAT STROKE SYMPTOMS**

- High body temperature
- Fainting or decreased consciousness
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Very hot and red skin

Anyone with these symptoms should be moved to a cool space, given plenty of water to drink, and cooled down with water applied to the skin (see "Cool Off" section below)

CALL 911 OR SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION  
Submerge some or all of the body in cool water, remove clothes and apply wet towels.

Spending time in a COOL SPACE is the best way to prevent heat-related illnesses.

**COOL OFF**

- Go to a cool space (e.g. community center, library, café, home of a friend or family, sites with air conditioning).
- Use water to cool off. Take a cool shower, sit or put legs in a cool bath, wear a wet shirt, apply damp towels to the skin.
- Fans may not effectively reduce body temperatures or prevent heat-related illness in people at risk. Do not rely on fans as your primary cooling method during an Extreme Heat Emergency.

**KEEP THE SPACE COOL**

- Keep shades and blinds closed during the day. If you don't have air conditioning, close windows during the day to trap the cooler air inside and open windows at night to let the cooler air in. Use circulating and exhaust fans to move cooler outdoor air into the space overnight.

**CHECK-IN**

- Pay attention to how you feel, and watch for symptoms of heat illness in those around you. Monitor indoor temperature. Check-in multiple times a day on others who are at increased risk.

**DRESS FOR THE HEAT**

- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored, breathable clothing.

**STAY INFORMED & PLAN AHEAD**

- Check the weather forecast and heat alert information. Take it easy during the hottest times of the day.

**HYDRATE**

- Drink plenty of water, and offer it to those in your care.

For more information on the symptoms of heat-related illness, how to prepare for the heat season and stay healthy in the heat: [www.vch.ca/heat](http://www.vch.ca/heat)

During the summer months both heat and wildfire smoke can be a health concern. Find out more about wildfire smoke: [www.vch.ca/wildfiresmoke](http://www.vch.ca/wildfiresmoke)

Logos for Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health are at the bottom.

## PreparedBC Guide: [preparedbc.ca/extremeheat](http://preparedbc.ca/extremeheat)

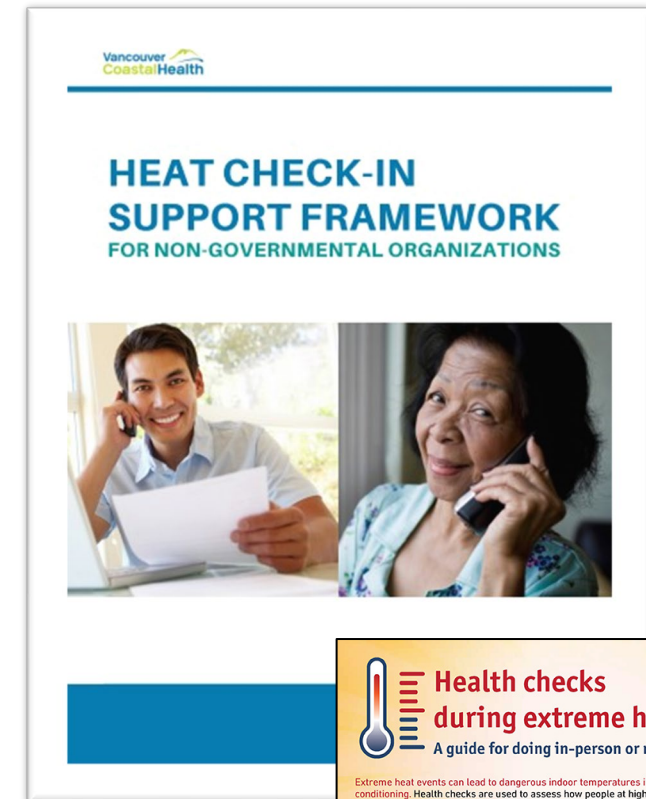
- Advice for creating a heat plan, and actions for heat events. For example: Home preparation, awareness of neighbourhood cool spaces, identifying and checking on an 'extreme heat buddy'

## Vancouver Coastal Health materials: [vch.ca/heat](http://vch.ca/heat)

- Information on symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, risk factors, actions for community members
- Guidance for NGOs conducting community wellness checks
- Advice for operators of rental housing buildings and licensed care facilities

# Wellness check tools

- **VCH NGO Heat Check-In Support Framework:**
  - Framework for organizational check-in procedures and answers to common questions
  - Identifying heat-vulnerable people and spaces
  - Mitigation and emergency actions for someone suffering from heat-related illness
  - Tools to carry for in-person wellness checks
  - [vch.ca/heat](http://vch.ca/heat)
- **NCCEH Heat Check-In Guide:**
  - Instructions for individuals without health training on how to conduct a check-in
  - [bit.ly/ncceh-heat-tool](http://bit.ly/ncceh-heat-tool)



### 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

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.

<input type="checkbox"/> Older adult (60 years+)	The body's ability to cool itself is impaired as people age.
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental illness or cognitive impairment	Conditions such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, and dementia can reduce awareness of heat-related risks.
<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic disease	Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, and cancer can limit the body's ability to cool.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> Impaired or decreased mobility	People with impaired or reduced mobility might be less able to take protective measures during extreme heat events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Medication use	Some prescription medications for common conditions can cause dehydration and affect the body's ability to cool itself.
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor physical fitness	People who are not engaged in regular physical activity are less able to keep cool in the heat.

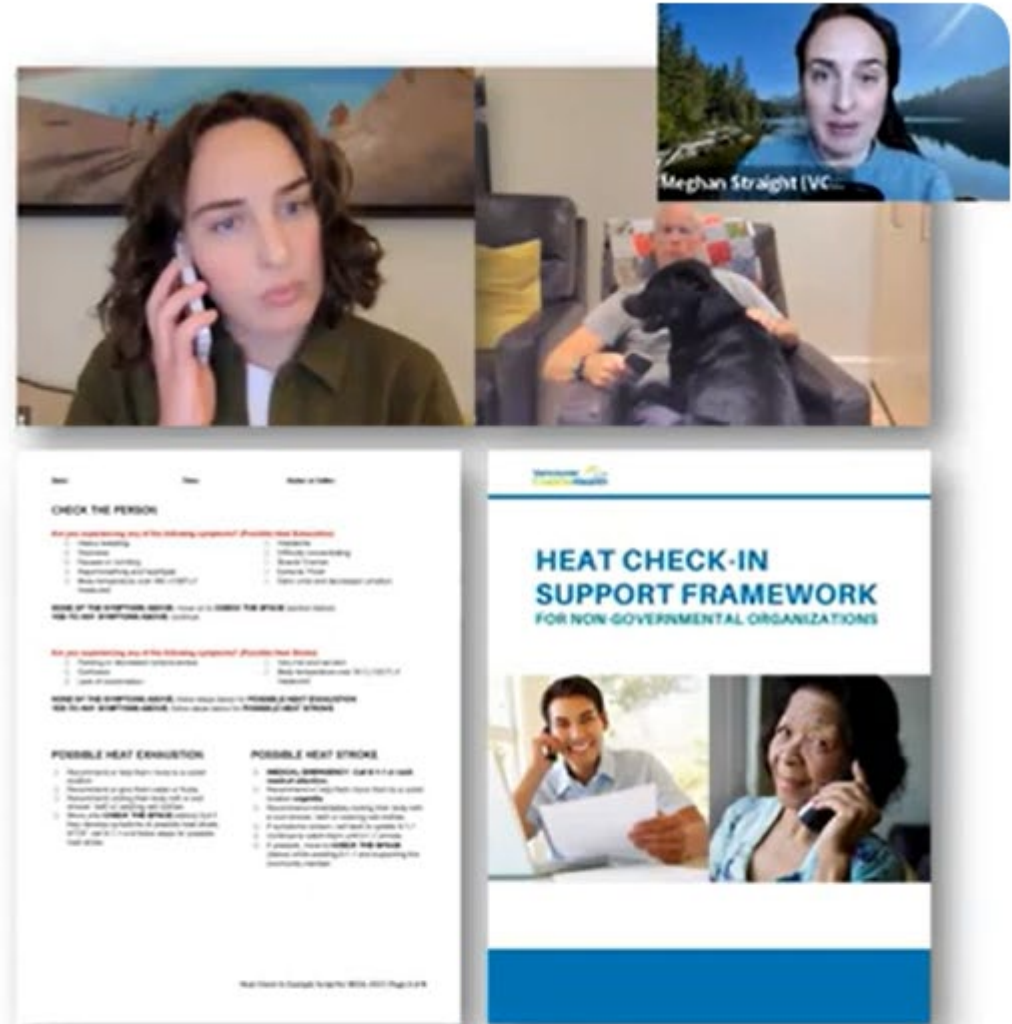
National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health  
Centre de collaboration nationale en santé environnementale

www.ncceh.ca

# VCH Heat Check-Ins Training Package

## Resources:

- Extreme Heat Check-Ins: Training video
- Extreme Heat Check-Ins: Train-the-trainer video
- Heat Check-In Practice Scenarios: Facilitation Guide
- Heat Check-In Practice Scenarios
- Heat Check-In Support Framework for NGOs
- Example Heat Check-In Script



Heat Check-In Training Video

# Resources: Wildfire smoke

- **BC Centre for Disease Control materials:**  
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/wildfire-smoke>
- **Vancouver Coastal Health materials:**  
[vch.ca/wildfire](http://vch.ca/wildfire)
  - Information on health effects and symptoms, risk factors, actions for community members
  - Information on air quality monitoring tools and advisories



The BCCDC has created fact sheets with information about wildfire smoke and its health impacts, including information on how to prepare for wildfire season. You can view and download the fact sheets here:

- [Health effects of wildfire smoke](#)
- [How to prepare for the wildfire smoke](#)
- [Portable air cleaners for wildfire smoke](#)
- [Wildfire smoke and air quality](#)
- [The composition of wildfire smoke](#)
- [Wildfire smoke and outdoor exercise](#)
- [Wildfire smoke and Air Quality Health](#)
- [Home-made box air fan filters](#)
- [Face masks for wildfire smoke](#)
- [Wildfire smoke during extreme heat](#)
- [Translated Content](#)

**WILDFIRE SMOKE**

Different people respond differently to smoke. People with chronic conditions, people who are pregnant, infants and small children, older adults and people with respiratory infections may need extra care.

SYMPTOMS	MORE SEVERE SYMPTOMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Eye irritation</li><li>• Runny nose</li><li>• Mild cough</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phlegm/mucous production</li><li>• Wheezy breathing</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Shortness of breath</li><li>• Severe cough</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Chest pain</li><li>• Heart palpitations</li></ul>

Anyone with these symptoms needs medical attention

**REDUCING EXPOSURE** to wildfire smoke is the best way to protect health.

STAY INFORMED & PLAN AHEAD	REDUCE EXPOSURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check the latest local air quality readings and advisories regularly.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce outdoor physical activities and stay indoors when smoke is heavy.</li></ul>
<b>CHECK-IN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pay attention to how you feel, and watch for symptoms in those around you.</li></ul>	<b>COOL &amp; FILTER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Filter indoor air using portable HEPA air filters.</li><li>• Keep windows and doors closed during high smoke times; but on hot days, make sure the indoor temperature is at a comfortable level because heat can be dangerous.</li></ul>
<b>HYDRATE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink plenty of water, and offer water to those in your care.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use energy efficient, mechanical cooling in addition to portable air cleaners to create cool spaces with clean air for hot days.</li></ul>
<b>RELOCATE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go to local libraries, community centers or other public spaces that have central air conditioning and cleaner air.</li></ul>	

Further information on the health effects of wildfire smoke, how to prepare for the season, and the use of portable air cleaners can be found at [www.vch.ca/wildfiresmoke](http://www.vch.ca/wildfiresmoke)

During the summer months both wildfire smoke and heat can be a health concern. Find out more about heat at [www.vch.ca/heat](http://www.vch.ca/heat)

Logo: Vancouver Coastal Health

# Thank you

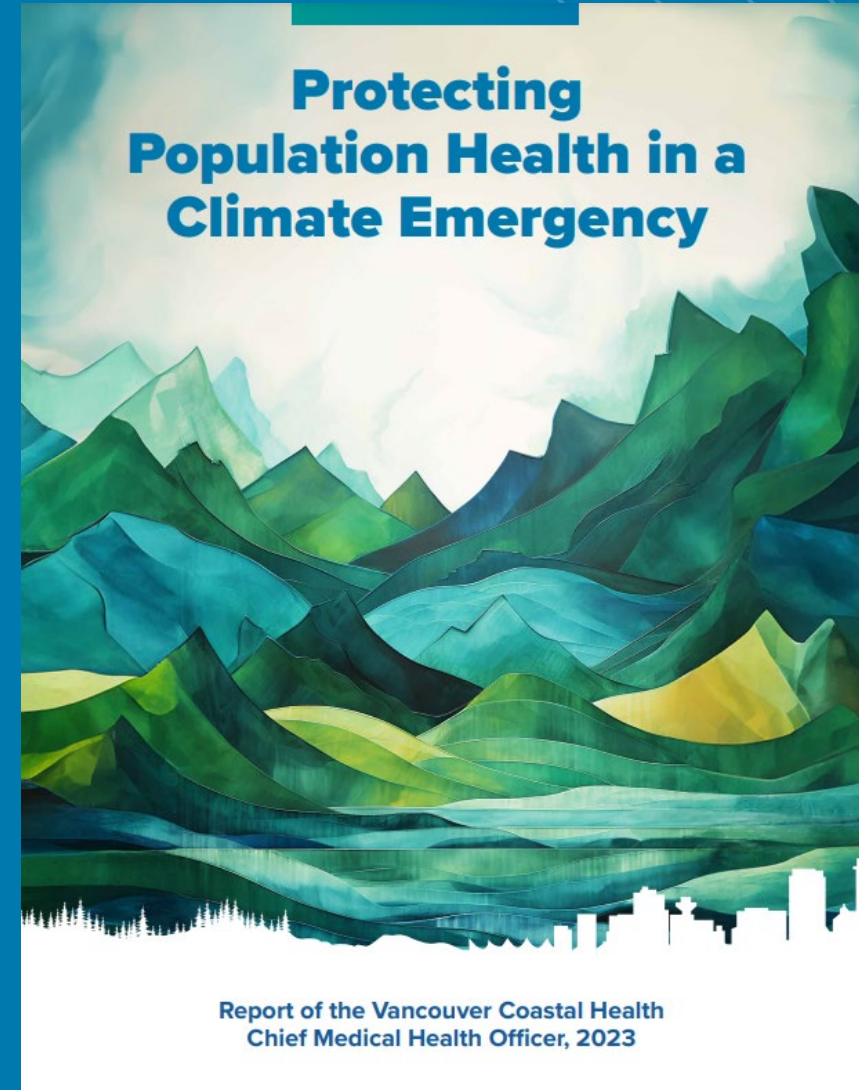
[vch.ca/heat](https://vch.ca/heat)

[vch.ca/wildfire](https://vch.ca/wildfire)

[vch.ca/climatechange](https://vch.ca/climatechange)

[Michael.Schwandt@vch.ca](mailto:Michael.Schwandt@vch.ca)

[Healthy.Environments@vch.ca](mailto:Healthy.Environments@vch.ca)





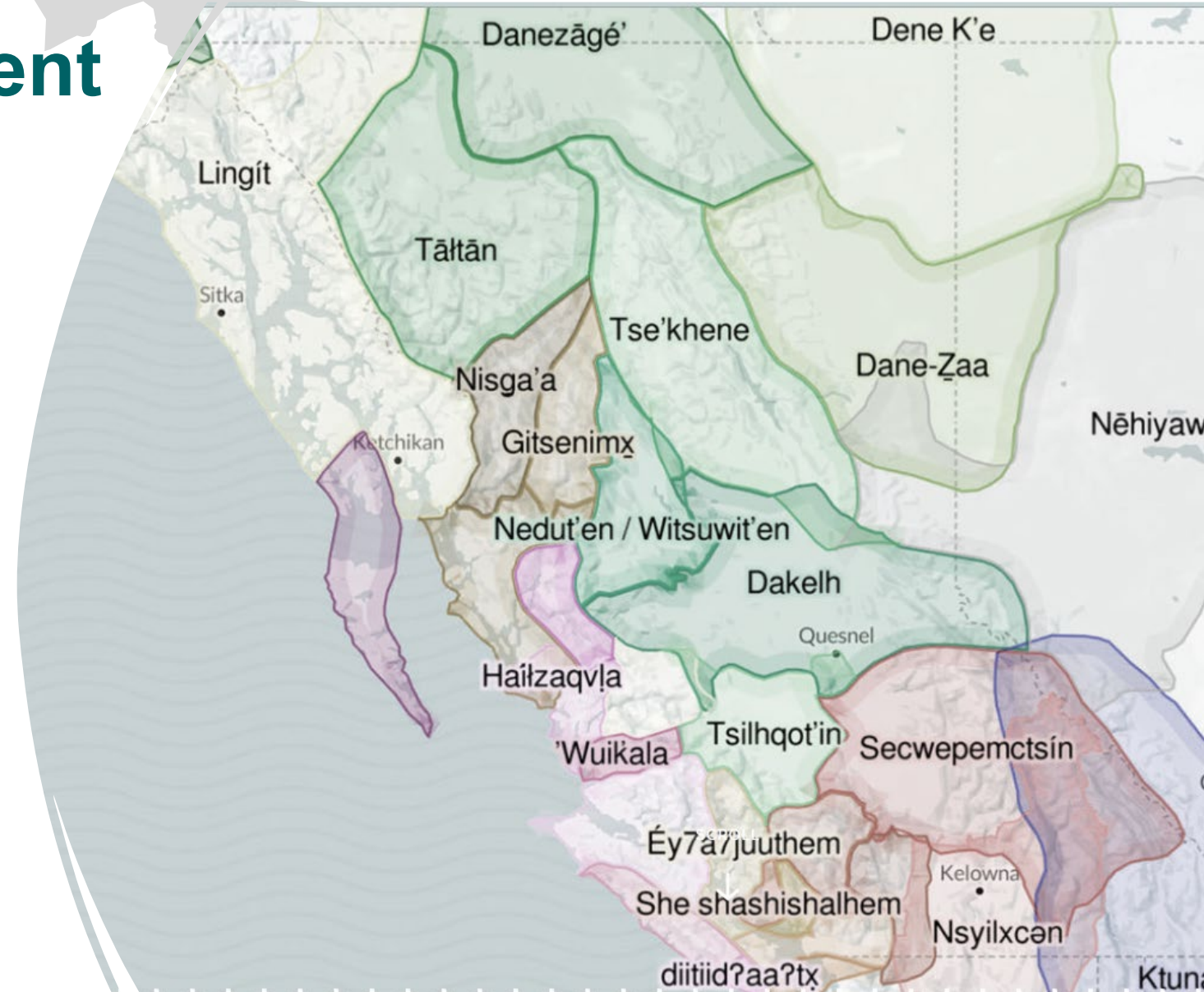
# BC Housing Extreme Heat Response

Dexter Charlebois-Holmes, Operational Services

May 8, 2024

# Land Acknowledgement

BC Housing gratefully acknowledges that we live and work on the unceded traditional and ancestral homelands of hundreds of Indigenous Peoples and Nations across British Columbia, each with their own unique traditions, history and culture. We are committed to strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships based on principles of Reconciliation.



# Presentation Outline



INTRO TO BC  
HOUSING



BC HOUSING  
EXTREME HEAT  
RESPONSE: AREAS  
OF ACTIVITY



CHANGES TO HOW  
NEW BUILDINGS  
ARE BUILT AND  
EXISTING  
BUILDINGS ARE  
RENOVATED



KEY ELEMENTS  
OF A GOOD  
EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE PLAN



TOOLS &  
RESOURCES



# BC Housing

## Who we are

- Crown Agency – BC Housing Management Commission
- Ministry of Housing (Annual Mandate Letter)
- Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC)

## Working with municipalities to:

- Facilitate the creation of new affordable rental housing across the housing ecosystem
- Bring partners to create developments that are financially and environmentally sustainable
- Ensure consistency with regional and community priorities



# BC Housing 101

## Our partners

- Private sector
- Non-profit societies
- Provincial health authorities
- Government ministries
- Community groups
- Local governments

~ 800  
housing  
providers

## Who we serve

- People at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- People with disabilities
- Indigenous people and families
- Women and children at risk of violence
- Low-income seniors and families
- Buyers of new homes

110,000+  
BC  
Households



## Areas of Activity

1. Increasing Capacity Within the Non-Profit Housing Sector
2. Building Organizational Capacity within BC Housing
3. Reducing Risk of Overheating in New Construction and Existing Buildings
4. Research and Engagement
5. Collaborating with Stakeholders



## Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke Action Plan

# Changes for New Buildings – BC Housing

## BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards

(Technical Bulletin No.3)



Overheating sensitivity analysis using future climate files



Recommendations for passive cooling measures



Indoor air filtration adequate for wildfire smoke (MERV 13 or HEPA)

Publications & guides on addressing the risk of overheating, including Climate Ready Housing Design Guide

### CLIMATE-READY HOUSING DESIGN GUIDE Snapshot

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and is already having significant impacts on homes and communities across British Columbia - from extreme heatwaves, more frequent flooding, and more severe wind storms.

This Climate-ready Housing Design Guide is intended to serve as a reference tool for housing providers, developers and other building sector actors across B.C. on emergent best practices and recommended technical standards for more climate-ready housing design. The Guide provides an editable toolkit of resources that design teams can use to inform more climate resilient design of new or existing housing.

#### Inside the Guide

This first version of the Guide is focused on resilient design for new Part 3 (multi-family) housing, though content can be applied to other contexts. It includes measures to address a broad range of climate hazards but with more detail provided on approaches for addressing overheating and poor air quality.

- Warming & Extreme Heat
- Wildfires Air & Quality Impacts
- Flooding
- Seismic & Slope Hazards
- Power Outage
- Wind & Storms
- Snowfall
- Water Shortage & Drought
- Moisture & Humidity
- Freeze/Thaw

# BC Building Code Update, Effective March 2024

*"Cooling requirements in one  
living space per home,  
not to exceed 26°C"*

Photo: 330 Goldstream: awarded Best Multi-family  
Low Rise Development at the Vancouver Island  
Building Excellence Awards



# Emergency Management in British Columbia



Planning and Mitigation



Response to a disaster



State of Local Emergency



Evacuation Alert vs. Evacuation Order



Provincial State of Emergency

# Key Elements of a Response Plan



Know your Hazards



Make a Plan



Build a Kit

# What Information is Available for you?

[bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat](https://bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat)

## Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke

Share



Tenants can make use of [dedicated extreme heat information](#) to keep safe during hot weather.

If you are a non-profit housing provider in B.C. in need of extreme heat and wildfire smoke related equipment, see [sourcing equipment](#).

### Quick Links

[Public Weather Alerts for BC](#)

[HealthLinkBC - Beat the Heat](#)

[BC CDC Wildfire Smoke](#)

[PreparedBC - Extreme Heat](#)

[PreparedBC - Extreme Heat Guide](#)

### Useful Documents

[Tips to Beat the Heat - Poster](#)

[Tenant Extreme Heat Check-In Card](#)



### Health Impacts

Everyone is at risk of heat and wildfire smoke illnesses in the summer, and social housing tenants are at increased risk because they often have fewer resources.

### Prepare a EHWS Response Plan

A guide to help non-profit housing providers develop an Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke Response Plan for their organization.

### Planning and Communicating with Tenants

Building managers and housing providers should communicate with tenants and building staff about the risks of extreme heat and poor air quality, the signs and symptoms of related illnesses, and how to stay safe.

### How to Cool a Space

There are different actions building operators, staff and tenants can take to cool a space.

### Resources and Webinars

The following resources and webinars will help you stay informed and prepared during extreme heat and wildfire smoke in BC.

### Extreme Heat Information for Tenants

Find information on cooling centres, tips to beat the heat, and when to seek help.




InPrivate Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke x +

https://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat

Let's Talk Housing BC


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Housing Assistance ▾ Projects & Partners ▾ Licensing & Consumer Services ▾ Research Centre ▾

Home / Projects & Partners / Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke

## Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke


 Tenants can make use of [dedicated extreme heat information](#) to keep safe during hot weather.  
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### Quick Links

- [Public Weather Alerts for BC](#)
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- [PreparedBC - Extreme Heat Guide](#)

### Useful Documents

- [Tips to Beat the Heat - Poster](#)
- [Tenant Extreme Heat Check-In Card](#)



### Health Impacts

Everyone is at risk of heat and wildfire smoke

### Prepare a EHWS Response Plan

A guide to help non-profit housing providers

### Planning and Communicating with Tenants

# Tools & Resources

# Sorry We Missed You!

 **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Unit Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

You can reach us at:



See a doctor if you are not feeling well, and in a medical emergency call 911. For non-emergency health information and services call 811.

For Deaf and hearing-impaired assistance call 7-1-1 in BC.  
Translation services available in more than 130 languages upon request.

# Tips to Beat The Heat

## Cool Your Body

- Wet clothing to help bring down body temperature
- Use water-soaked cloths or cooling packs on neck/wrists
- Sit in or put legs in cool (not cold) bath



## Hydrate

- Drink water/cool liquids
- Eat fresh fruit & salads
- Drink before you feel thirsty. Thirst is not the only indicator of dehydration



## Reduce Indoor Heat

- Daytime: cool living and working areas by closing windows, and use window coverings, air conditioners and misters
- Nighttime: keep windows open, with a fan near window to bring in cool air



## Protect Your Pets

- Provide shade & cool drinking water & baths
- Never leave pets unattended in cars or direct sunlight
- Plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of day. Asphalt might be too hot for bare paws



## Ask Your Doctor

- If taking medications, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you need to be extra careful
- Some medical conditions may increase vulnerability during hot weather



## Check on Others

- Visit or call family & neighbours when you can



## Avoid Sun Exposure

- Wear wide-brimmed, breathable hat or use umbrella
- Avoid / limit strenuous activities during hottest part of the day
- Find shade if you need to be outside
- Use sunscreen



## Avoid/Limit Alcohol & Caffeine

- These can lead to dehydration



Extreme heat can be dangerous.

[www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/beat-heat](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/beat-heat)  
[www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat](http://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat)



# Tips to Beat the Heat:

# Poster & Leaflets

# KEEP PETS COOL DURING EXTREME HEAT



**Cool down your pets** by giving cool treats / cold food / chilled wet food. Use a cooling body wrap, cooling vest or cooling mat.

**Keep pets indoors during the hottest times of the day.** Plan walks for morning or evening hours, play on grassy areas, take breaks and bring water.



**Don't leave your pets** like birds in direct sunlight or dogs in crates **without** fresh water or in the sun. Fans don't cool pets as effectively as humans.



**Don't walk your pets midday or let them walk on asphalt** for long periods of time.

# Cool Kit Suggestions



**Thermometer**



**Gel Compress**



**Small Tote**



**Water Bottle**



**Towel**



**Spray Bottle**

# How Can Non-Profits be Prepared / How Can BC Housing Support you?



Check your Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke inventory



Identify inventory items that need to be restocked – if you need additional funding contact your Portfolio Manager (NPPM/SHA)



Proceed to purchase Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke supplies (Do No Wait!)



Monitor Heat Alert updates from Ministry of Health and our Partner Bulletin



When a Heat Alert is announced – If your region is facing supply shortages contact [extremeheat@bchousing.org](mailto:extremeheat@bchousing.org)

# What supplies can BC Housing support with?

**We continue to support reasonable requests to provide cooling spaces in common areas, this includes:**

- Air Conditioners (different types to support small and large spaces)
- Fans (different types to support small and large spaces)
- Air Purifiers
- Tents
- Water
- Misters
- Cooling Kit Supplies (tote, cooling towel, ice pack, water bottle, spray bottle thermometer)
- Sunscreen (for outreach/homeless)
- N95/ K95 masks

# Share Out Your Success!

**We Are Always Looking for Creative Solutions to Share with the Sector**

**Share your Organizational Solutions / Experiences with us:**

**[extremeheat@bchousing.org](mailto:extremeheat@bchousing.org)**

# Emergency Management and Service Continuity Program for Women's Transition Housing & Support Programs

Lisa Benini & Louise Godard



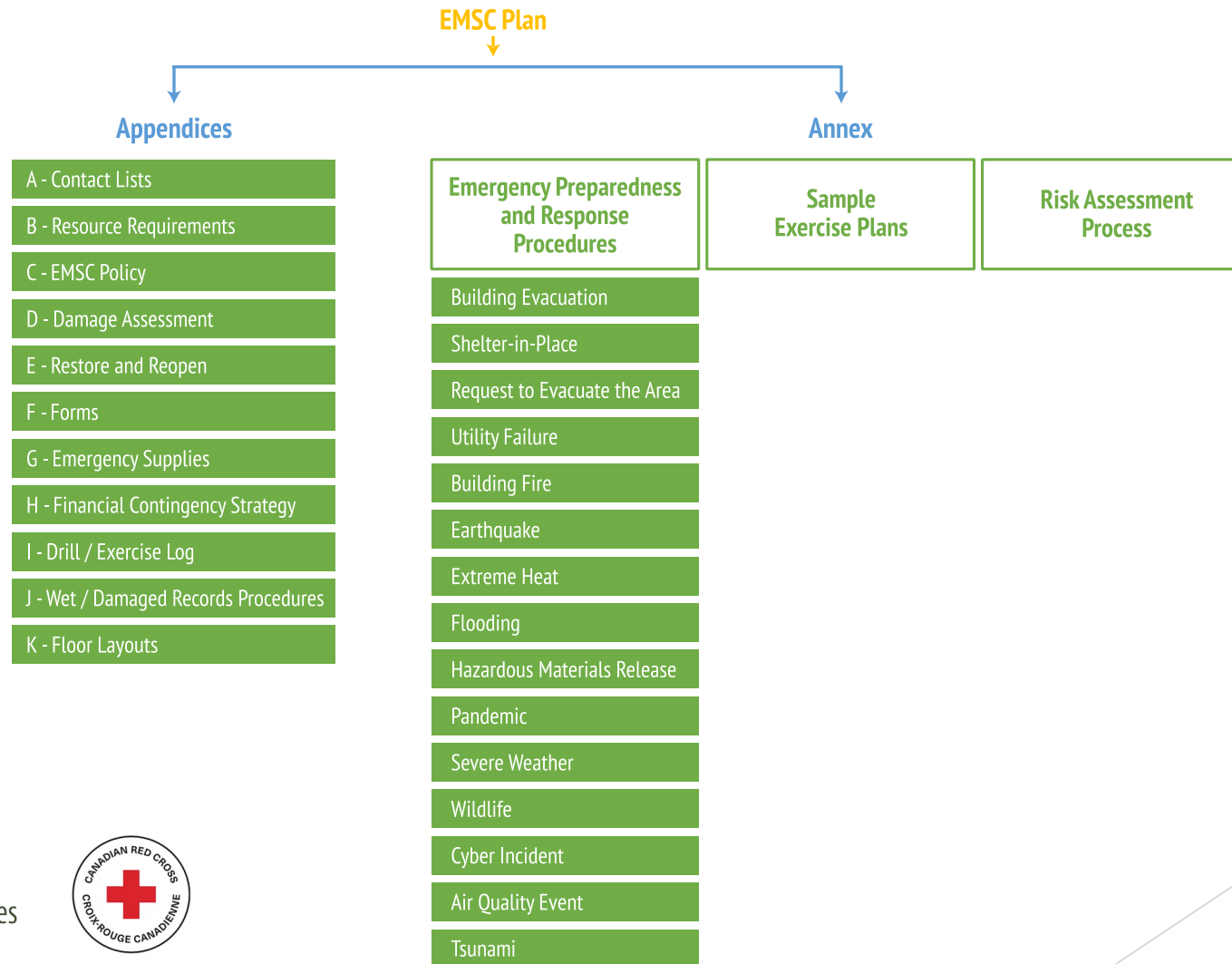
# Project Overview

- ▶ **Emergency Management and Service Continuity (EMSC) Planning Process**
- ▶ **EMSC Program 8 Stage Process and Online Platform**

# Emergencies and GBV

- ▶ Emergency Management and Service Continuity planning does not historically take into account intersectionality and how people may be impacted differently due to their gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, ability and immigration status.
- ▶ Everyone can be equally exposed to a hazard, but gender can impact an individual's level of vulnerability and access to resources.
- ▶ Violence against women, children and youth will continue, and often escalate, during, and post-event.
- ▶ EMSC planning can mitigate against loss, reduce vulnerability, and ensure equity of outcomes, so service providers may continue their important work.

# EMSC Program Tools and Templates



# Online EMSC Program Planning Platform

BC Society of Transition Houses

ALL COURSES   FAQ   MY DASHBOARD   LOUISE G

## Emergency Management and Service Continuity Program Planning

Work through the 8-stage process of developing your organization's Emergency Management and Service Continuity Program. Step-by-step instructions and tools and templates will assist you to prepare, mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

[Resume Course](#)   [Enroll for free](#)

- **Welcome and Introduction** 0/5 ^
- **Introduction to Emergency Management & Service Continuity Planning for Women's Transition House and Supports Programs** VIDEO - 1 MIN
- How to Use this Online Toolkit TEXT
- Components of the Emergency Management and Service Continuity Program TEXT
- Organizing and Saving Your EMSC Program Components TEXT
- How to Approach the Work TEXT
- **Why is Emergency Management and Service Continuity Planning Important?** 0/6 v

○ **Stage 1: Build Your Team** 0/3 v

### Introduction to Emergency Management & Service Continuity Planning for Women's Transition House and Supports Programs

**Introduction**

[COMPLETE & CONTINUE →](#)



# Staged Approach

Stages
Stage 1: Build Your Team
Stage 2: Assess your Risks
Stage 3: Protect your People and Property
Stage 4: Determine your Operational and Resource Requirements for Service Continuity
Stage 5: Develop Financial Contingency Strategy
Stage 6: Develop the EMSC Plan
Stage 7: Train and Exercise
Stage 8: Maintain the EMSC Program

## 2

# Sample - Completed Risk Assessment

Threats / Hazards	Probability	Impact on Life	Impact on Facility	Impact on Operations	Impact on Dependencies	Total Risk Impacts	Rationale
Pandemic	5	5	2	4	4	18.75	We recently experience a Pandemic Event which highly impacted our organization and the world at large. There is a good possibility it will happen again.
Flooding	4	4	5	5	4	18	We have had previous threat from the river water rising last year as our building is in a low lying area and close to the river.
Building Fire	4	4	5	5	4	18	No sprinkler system in building and near a forest area.
Damaging Earthquake	3	5	5	5	5	15	Our building is very old and would be susceptible to a damaging earthquake. It also sits on reclaimed land.
Severe Weather	5	2	3	3	3	13.75	We live in an area where the weather has been severe and impacted our power.
Extreme Heat	4	2	3	4	2	11	We have had severe heat in the last few years that has impacted our clients.
Power Outage	4	2	3	4	2	11	We have had power outages at least 2 to 3 times per year due to severe weather.
Wildfire	2	3	5	4	4	8	Our building is close to a forest area and we have had wildfires in previous years.
Loss of Utility (Water)	2	3	3	3	1	5	We have not had any problems with loss of access to water but if we did we wouldn't be able to continue to operate.
Loss of Utility (Gas)	2	2	3	3	1	4.5	We have not had any problems with loss of access to gas for heating our building. If we did in the winter we wouldn't be able to stay very long in the building.
Hazardous Material Release	2	3	1	3	1	4	Our building is near an industrial area where a major gas plant is within close proximity. If there was a leak we would have to shelter in place as it would not be safe to leave the building.



# 3

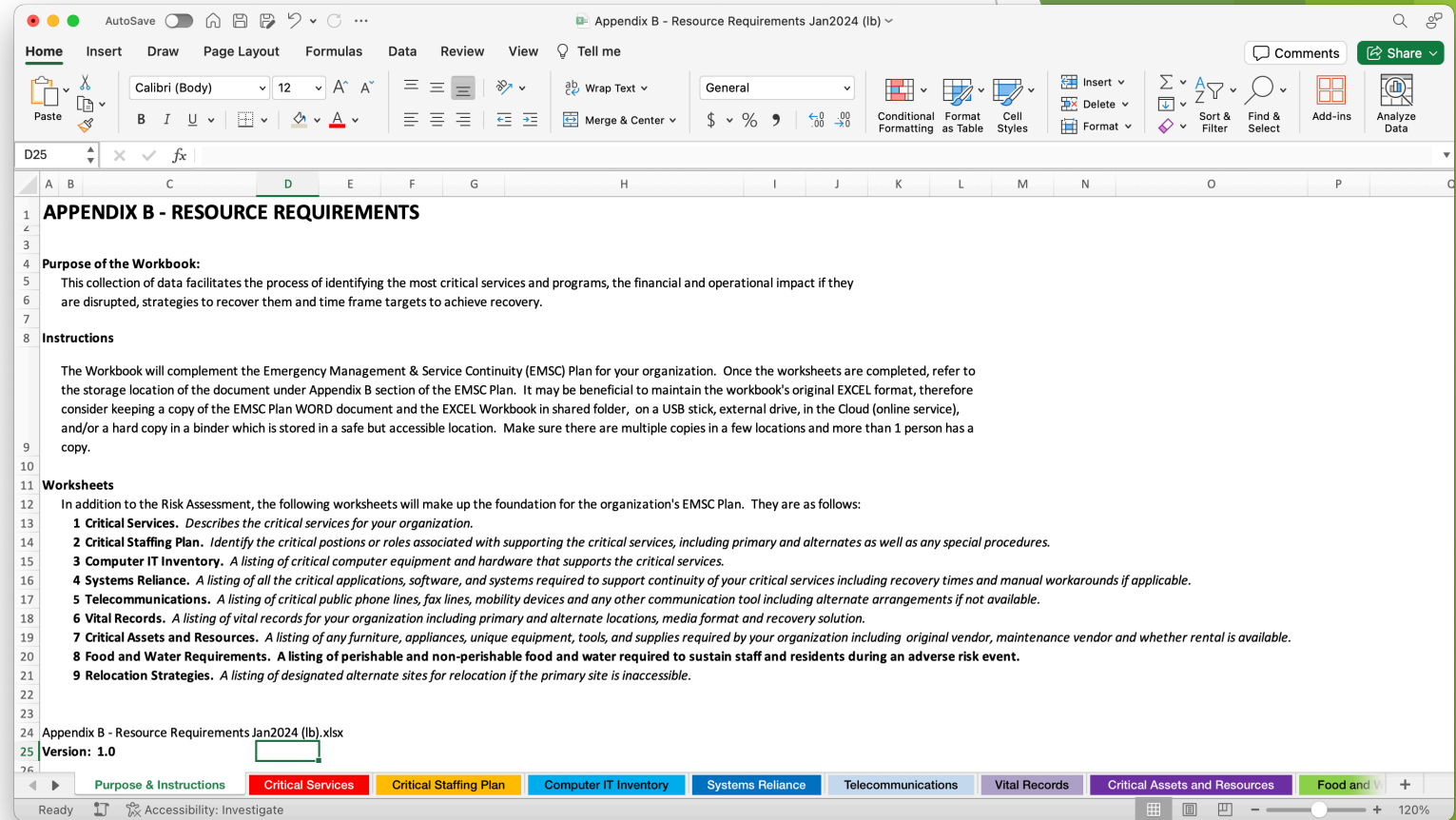
## Develop Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedures

1. Building Evacuation
2. Shelter-in-place
3. Request to Evacuate the Area
4. Utility Failure (i.e., power outage, loss of gas or water)
5. Building Fire
6. Earthquake
7. Tsunami
8. Extreme Heat
9. Flooding
10. Pandemic
11. Severe Weather
12. Wildfire
13. Air Quality Event
14. Cyber Incident
15. Hazardous Material Release

# 4

## Resource Requirements

- ▶ Critical Services
- ▶ Critical Staffing Plan
- ▶ Computer IT inventory
- ▶ Systems Reliance
- ▶ Telecommunications
- ▶ Vital Records
- ▶ Critical Assets and Resources
- ▶ Food and Water Requirements
- ▶ Relocation Strategies





# 6

## Develop the EMSC Plan

1. Before an adverse risk event
2. Responding to an adverse risk event
3. Post adverse risk event
4. Appendix
5. Annex

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE CONTINUITY (EMSC) PLAN

ORGANIZATION NAME

Date

Take the time to do it now so you will be ready for the inevitable emergency!

Something is better than nothing, even if it's just getting a core team together to have conversations about what you would do. Do not be intimidated by writing things down. In an emergency we have no choice but to assist the women and children in our programs, so take some time to think about potential scenarios, roles/responsibilities, and backup plans in advance.

Allocate time to do the work.

Don't become overwhelmed with trying to look at everything at once. Take it section by section and build your own binder as you complete tasks. Also - Use only what is useful to you and your agency (we all have different needs and sizes!)

Take your time to read through how to use the templates. Remember that it is not a one size fits all. You can change and adjust to what works for your agency.

# Next Steps

- ▶ Justice Institute of BC Project - BC Housing and BC Society of Transition Houses
  - ▶ Identify best practices for working with local authorities to increase buy in and collaboration
- ▶ Community of Practice
- ▶ Advocacy

## ▶ Contact Us

- ▶ Louise Godard, EMSC Project Coordinator  
[louisegodard1@gmail.com](mailto:louisegodard1@gmail.com)
- ▶ Lisa Benini, Business Continuity Expert [ltbenini@gmail.com](mailto:ltbenini@gmail.com)

**ABORIGINAL HOUSING  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**



# Stories of Extreme Heat among Urban Indigenous Households in BC



Overview of engagement with AHMA's membership

May 8, 2024



# Land Acknowledgement

I respectfully acknowledge that I work, live and play on the unceded and traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy'əm (Musqueam), Sk<sup>w</sup>x<sup>w</sup>ú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səlilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) and k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>əł'əm (Kwkwetlem) Nations.

At AHMA, we honour Elders past, present, and future from all Nations and traditional territories.

The land and waters colonially named B.C. are home to over 290,000 Indigenous people and more than 200 distinct First Nations. (Statistics Canada 2021).

# Shahed Shafazand

Energy Projects Coordinator,  
Engagement and Technical Services



5+ years in the Indigenous non-profit sector



7+ years in the clean energy sector



BA Chemical Engineering



ASSET STRATEGIES

# AHMA

- First Indigenous housing authority in Canada
- 54 Indigenous Housing & Service Provider members
- Represent over 8,700 Indigenous families
- Partners with the province of BC
- AHMA Members make up 1/3 of all Indigenous housing providers in Canada
- Advocating for self-agency



**Aboriginal Housing Management Association**

*Celebrating 25 Years*





## ASSET STRATEGIES

Supporting maintenance planning, capital planning, capital renewals and new construction.



## ADVOCACY

Advancing the quality of housing for the collective interests of our communities.



## OPERATIONS

Ensuring the effective delivery of safe, affordable, secure, culturally appropriate housing, programs and services.

## AHMA'S MISSION

Lead and advance  
the housing rights for  
all Indigenous people  
living in BC





# Agenda

Our research journey  
What we heard  
A path forward  
Questions/Discussion

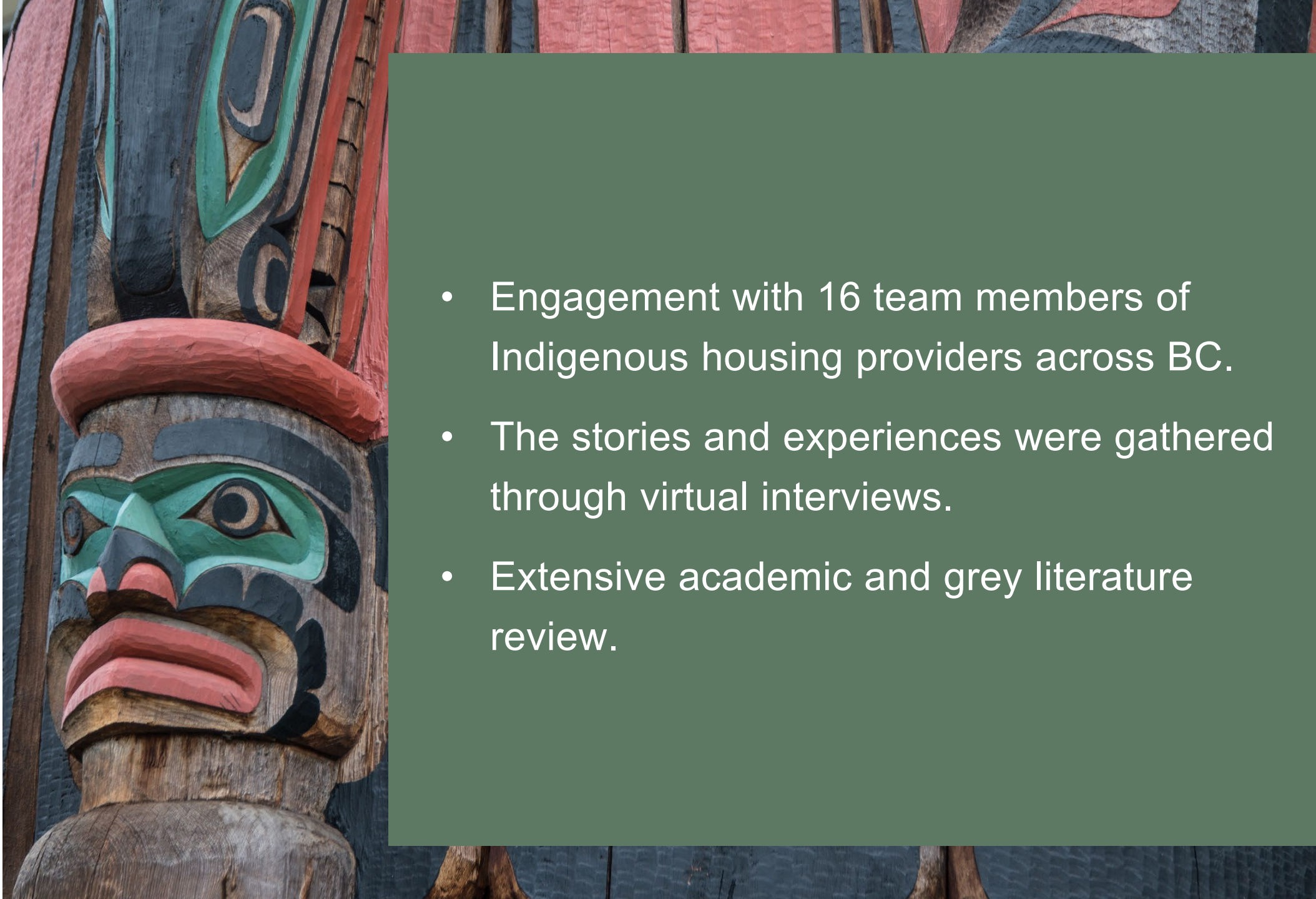


# Why this research?

## Why now?

- Indigenous and equity-deserving populations are at a higher risk during extreme heat events.
- BC experienced an acute extreme heat event in the summer of 2021.
- Indigenous populations were deeply impacted due to many systemic barriers.

# Methods



- Engagement with 16 team members of Indigenous housing providers across BC.
- The stories and experiences were gathered through virtual interviews.
- Extensive academic and grey literature review.

*The 2021 heat dome was incredible. I have never experienced anything like it in my life.*

*I think we got to about 48 Celsius in Chilliwack, which is just unbelievable.*

Anonymous member,  
Stó:lo Service Agency



# Key Messages

## **Heat impacts & intersectional barriers**

Extreme heat events, poor housing conditions, and other challenges faced by Indigenous peoples are interconnected.

## **For Indigenous peoples by Indigenous peoples (FIBI)**

Indigenous housing providers have long-lasting, deep relationships with their tenants.

## **Cascading crises**

Housing providers reported dealing with multiple crises, including extreme heat, wildfires, and smoke.

## **Capacity & resources**

Limited capacity, funding, and resources are major challenges among housing providers.





### **Place-based approach**

Rural and urban communities experience extreme heat events differently.

### **Infrastructure & housing conditions**

All housing providers agreed that improving energy efficiency is an essential step.

### **Community support & partnerships**

Housing providers advocated for building intentional alliances.

### **Trauma-informed & reciprocal**

Trauma-informed approaches to extreme heat response planning are essential to protect the most vulnerable.

*We tell tenants that they need to prepare for higher electrical bills during the summer. That can be a strain, especially for our tenants that are on a [fixed income] and can afford only so much.*

Anonymous member,  
Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society



# A path forward

## **Centering Indigenous rights & ways of being**

Uplifting Indigenous sovereignty, culture, and knowledge systems.

## **Housing is the foundation**

Climate-resilient, culturally supportive & human-centered homes.

## **Placed-based approach**

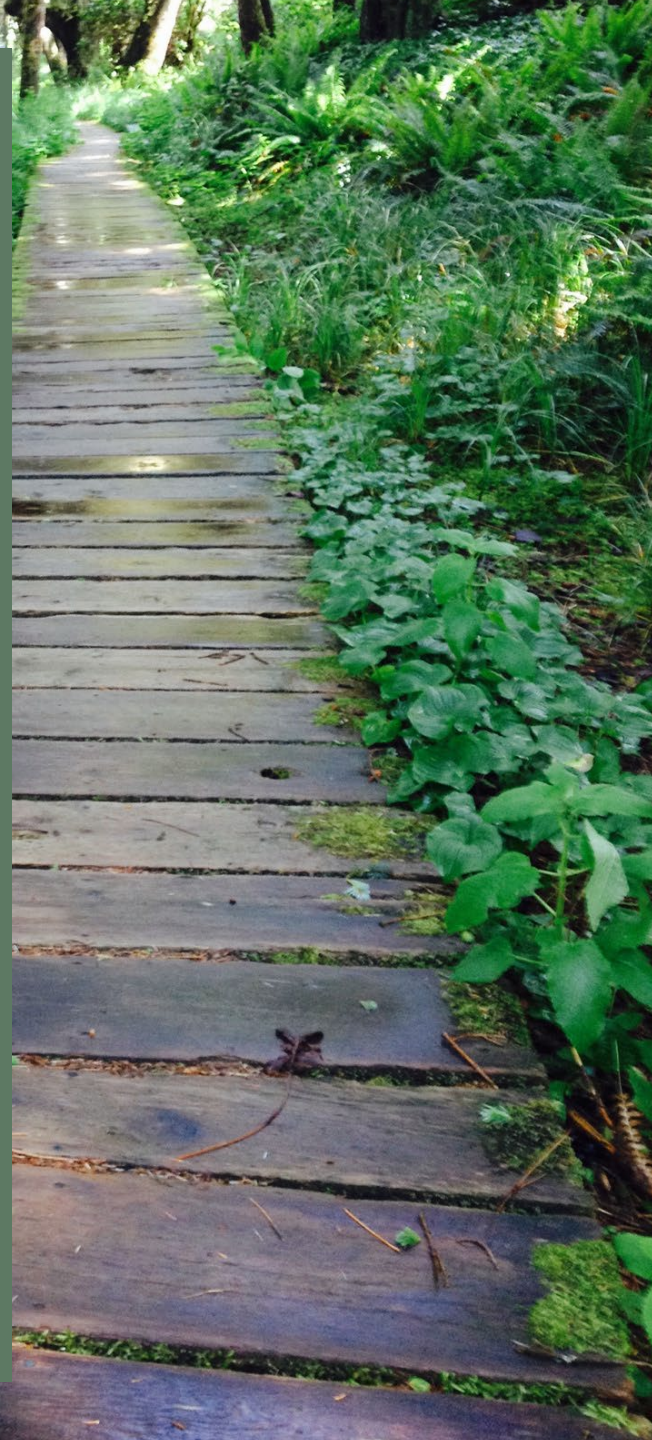
Regional approach to extreme heat response planning.

## **Holistic response**

Heat response strategies must be holistic, resilient to uncertainty, and contain a contingency plan.

## **Towards decolonization**

Address the complex interconnected challenges rooted in the historical colonial systems.





# Questions

Please ask questions by raising your Zoom hand

Visit our website [AHMA-bc.org](http://AHMA-bc.org) to read the full report.

Thank you



# Turning Points Collaborative Society

Preparing and responding to  
Extreme Heat, Wildfire Smoke  
and Wildfire Evacuations

# TURNING POINTS

COLLABORATIVE

# Introductions

Kelly Fehr

- Executive Director of Operations
- Responsible for operations in Enderby, Vernon, Kelowna, West Kelowna and Summerland

# Topics

- Procedure for Activating an Extreme Weather Response
- Fire Evacuation Planning
  - Who to include
  - Alternate Command Center
  - Emergency Response Center support
  - Notifications
  - Staff Coordination
  - Site Salvaging and Closure
  - Client Transport
  - Temporary Accommodations
  - Resuming Regular Operations

# Procedure for Activating an Extreme Weather Response

Partner organizations track weather reports and IH alerts to see if conditions are meeting heat wave definition

- In the Okanagan "Heat Waves" are when temperatures are above 35°C for two consecutive days and overnight temperatures remain above 18°C.
- A "Heat Emergency" is when heat wave temperatures last longer than two days AND there are concerns for the health and safety of vulnerable populations. In this situation, other levels of government (Province of BC, IH, and the City of Vernon) may initiate additional warnings, protocols and resources.

# Communication procedures between providers during a heatwave, heat emergency or wildfire smoke Event

- Partner organizations use the COOL Team email distribution list for easy communication with service providers/Bylaw/RCMP/IH
  - Monthly COOL Team Meeting
  - Updates on program changes are emailed to the team in real time and provided to clients.
  - The Survival Guide and other related brochures are updated and provided to people at the library, emergency shelters and through outreach teams.

# Communication procedures to notify people who are unsheltered during a heatwave, heat emergency or wildfire smoke event

- Social Planning Council develops “poster” of resources/first aid tips/map; can be adapted as needed
- COOL Team assist with warning clients of upcoming heat and smoke events and hand out posters with health tips and resources
- COOL Team will conduct wellness checks during the heat and smoke events and provide referrals/support as needed.

# Access to Air-Conditioned and Smoke Free Spaces

Service Providers extend the hours of operation as staffing capacity permits

- Shelter
- Upper Room Mission
- Street Clinic/MHSU/CSO/Service Providers
- Library
- Weekends – Anglican Church for Saturday lunch



# Access to Drinking Water

- 24/7 access: Three exterior drinking fountains
- The Library has an interior drinking fountain
- MHSU and Salvation Army– have water stations for filling bottles inside their facilities
- Shelters, URM, Street Clinic, MHSU, CSO, Service Providers – access to water for clients during regular operating hours
- COOL Team delivers water to camps

# Resources to Be Activated During Heat Wave

(temporary measures until temperatures return to normal range or smoke significantly clears)

- Posters of resources/map/first aid tips are promoted/distributed by COOL Team
- COOL Team partners will provide access to additional bottled water as needed. COOL Team partners will assist with coordination and funding for additional bottled water (e.g. donations from community etc.)
- CSO to set up tents for additional shade during regular operating hours
- Street Clinic to set up a hose/mister, shade and water, located on outside patio during regular operating hours

## Where to access water



### FOUNTAINS AND REFILL STATIONS

- 1** Polson Park - Close to Band Shell, across from the Pavilion (fountain)  
2600 BC-6
- 2** Downtown washroom on 30th Avenue at 35th Street (fountain & bottle refill station)
- 3** Downtown washroom at Bus Loop 31st Avenue at 30th Street (fountain & bottle refill station)
- 4** DND Park (bottle refill station)  
Falaise Drive (access off Mission Road)
- 5** Marshall Field back of soccer building (near washrooms) (fountain & bottle refill station)  
6891 Okanagan Landing Road
- 6** Ranger Park (fountain)  
1900 47th Avenue

### WASHROOMS WITH POTABLE WATER

- 1** MacDonald Park  
43rd Avenue and 27th Street
- 2** Alexis Park  
3951 Alexis Park Drive
- 3** Grahame Park  
5700 Okanagan Avenue
- 4** Polson Park - two locations  
2600 BC-6
- 5** Kin Beach Park  
7248 Tronson Rd
- 6** Paddlewheel Park  
7815 Okanagan Landing Road
- 7** Marshall Field  
6891 Okanagan Landing Road

Subject to Seasonal Operation (April to October)

## Where to find safe spaces with Air Conditioning, access water and Health & Safety Tips

### 💧 Sleeping Outside? Places to Find Water and Stay Cool! 💧

#### 💧 Water Access:

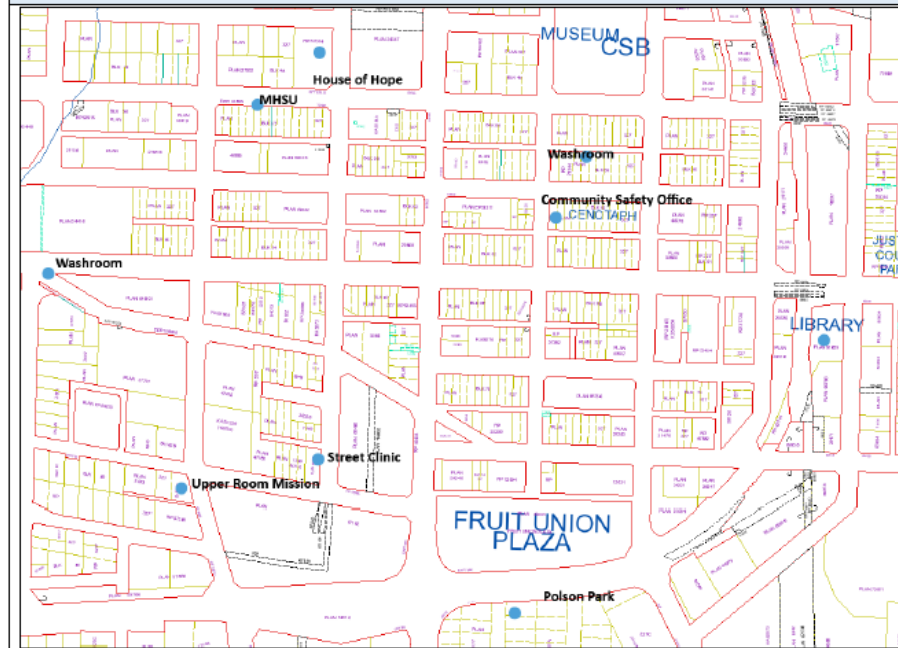
- Polson Park has an outdoor drinking fountain close to the Band Shell across from the Pavilion.
- The downtown washrooms have exterior taps with drinking water.
- The Library has an indoor drinking fountain.
- MHSU (Downtown) and the Salvation Army House of Hope have water stations to fill bottles.
- Most service providers and outreach teams (Upper Room Mission, Street Clinic, Community Safety Office etc) will provide extra water, as needed.

#### 🚑 Health and Safety TIPS:

- Protect yourself from the sun by staying in the shade, avoiding direct sun mid-day and wearing a hat.
- Seek cooler, breezier areas when outdoors, such as large parks with lots of trees.
- Stay hydrated – drink water regularly, even more than you think you need.
- Take it slow with outdoor activities – rest and relax often if you feel fatigued.
- Stay in tune with your body. Watch for thirst, fatigue, dizziness, confusion, weakness, and fainting.
- First aid includes cooling and hydration. If illness is severe, call 911.

#### 🏠 Spaces with Air Conditioning:

- Okanagan Regional Library:
  - Mon: 10:00 am to 5:30 pm; Tue, Wed & Thu: 10:00 am to 9:00 pm; Fri & Sat: 10:00 am to 5:30 pm
- Upper Room Mission:
  - Monday to Friday: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm; Saturday and Sunday: 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm



# Procedure for dealing with media inquiries

- Each partner organization will handle media inquiries for their component of the extreme weather plan

# What if the wildfire smoke event escalates and the fire is at your door?

- Does your organization have a plan in place?
- Will you be prepared to transition your clients to an alternate location?
- Do your staff know how to respond? Will they participate in the evacuation of the site and transportation to the alternate site?
- Do you know what your staff will prioritize when salvaging an at risk site?
- Where will your staff stay when they are working from an alternate worksite in another community?

# In 2023 TPCS evacuated three worksites during the wildfires

What can you learn from our experience:

- We were prepared with a well thought out and documented plan that all staff were trained in.
- Regular planning meetings were held a minimum of once per day leading up to the evacuation, during it and as restoration work was completed at the sites.
- BC Housing and service providers from a neighbouring community were there to support us.
- Not everything will go as planned

# Fire Evacuation Planning, who to include

- Communications Department
- Finance Department
- Human Resources Department
- Operations Department
- Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Residents/Clients



# Questions? Comments?

**Kelly Fehr, Director of Operations** [kelly@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:kelly@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Turning Points Collaborative Society** [www.turningpoints.ngo](http://www.turningpoints.ngo)  
**Serving Enderby, Vernon, Kelowna, West Kelowna and Summerland**

**Vision Group Consulting supported Turning Points Collaborative Society in creating the  
Emergency Fire Evacuation Plan.**

**Email:** [Vgconsultingcanada@gmail.com](mailto:Vgconsultingcanada@gmail.com)



Executive Director of Human Resources and Executive Director of Operations – The moment we realized the time spent consulting with staff and clients, calling transportation companies, looking for accommodations and training staff was all worth it.

## Resources:

- [www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat](http://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat)
- [bcsth.ca/project/risk-reduction-and-service-continuity-for-womens-transition-house-and-support-programs-in-bc](http://bcsth.ca/project/risk-reduction-and-service-continuity-for-womens-transition-house-and-support-programs-in-bc)
- [www.ahma-bc.org/research-reports](http://www.ahma-bc.org/research-reports)