
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate
Readiness
Ministry of Health
Office of the Provincial Health Officer

Prepare for heat

VICTORIA – People throughout British Columbia are encouraged to be prepared for heat as many regions of the province will experience high temperatures beginning Friday, July 5, 2024.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has forecast increasingly hot temperatures for many parts of the province this weekend, and the Province is reminding people to plan ahead to stay safe.

Heat warnings and special-weather statements are in place for coastal areas of B.C., and ECCC is expected to expand warnings to the Interior. High temperatures are expected to first hit Vancouver Island and southwestern B.C. and spread to the Interior. The hot weather is expected to last into the middle of next week.

For many, these will be the first high temperatures of the season, which can lead some people to overheat because they are not yet accustomed to warmer weather.

Older adults and people with chronic health conditions are most susceptible to extreme heat, especially if they live alone. High-risk conditions include schizophrenia, COPD, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, and physical and cognitive disabilities. People who are most susceptible should plan to access a cool space, take measures to stay cool and hydrated, or even stay with friends or family who have air conditioning if they cannot stay cool at home.

People are encouraged to begin preparing for hot summer weather and reviewing their own plans for potential extreme heat emergencies. The Province's PreparedBC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide includes information about how to prepare for heat and tips about how to stay safe. The guide is available in French, Punjabi, traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese. The guide is available here: <https://PreparedBC.ca/ExtremeHeat>

The Province supports and co-ordinates with communities to open and operate community cooling centres where people can go to stay cool. Funding may also be available to transport people to and from cooling centres.

Plan to stay safe in the heat:

- Identify cool zones inside your home or nearby, such as a shaded outdoor location or air-conditioned space where you can cool off on hot days. Consider places in your community to spend time, such as libraries, community centres, religious spaces, movie theatres or shopping malls.
- Check in regularly with family members and neighbours who are at higher risk.

- Shut windows and close curtains or blinds during the heat of the day to block the sun and to prevent hotter outdoor air from coming inside. Open doors and windows and use fans when it is cooler outside to move cooler air indoors.
- Prepare to cool down by applying cool cloths and drinking plenty of water.
- Use caution when cooling down in streams and lakes due to high flow in some areas and very cold water temperatures.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a parked car.

The BC Heat Alert Response System (HARS) has been developed and recently updated by a group of public-health, emergency-management and climate-readiness professionals. BC HARS is a two-tier heat-alert and response system that issues notices for heat warnings and extreme-heat emergencies to provide important information to people in B.C.

Extreme heat also brings wildfire risk. While wildfire activity has been relatively quiet in most of the province and there are currently no wildfires of note, the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) notes that fire danger across the province is trending up as temperatures rise.

As the hotter weather continues, the BCWS expects more wildfire activity in the coming weeks. People are urged to use caution when enjoying B.C.'s great outdoors.

Learn More:

For public health guidance and more information about the BC Heat Alert and Response System, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/extremeheat>

EmergencyInfoBC heat warning and cooling centre information:

Web: www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EmergencyInfoBC>

Interactive map of cooling centres and hot-weather resources in B.C.:

<https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=950b4eec577a4dc5b298a61adab41c06>

PreparedBC's heat preparedness information:

Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide: <http://www.preparedbc.ca/extremeheat>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/PreparedBC>

X (Twitter): <http://www.twitter.com/PreparedBC>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/prepared_bc/

Environment and Climate Change Canada's weather alerts: <https://weather.gc.ca/?province=bc>

Environment and Climate Change Canada's Heat Warning criteria:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/types-weather-forecasts-use/public/criteria-alerts.html#heat>

General guidance on preparing for extreme heat and

drought: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/know-your-hazards/severe-weather/extreme-heat>

For information on how to care for someone who is too hot:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/beat-heat>

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/heat-related-illness>

How to do a health check on someone: <https://ncceh.ca/resources/evidence-reviews/health-checks-during-extreme-heat-events>

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