

Be prepared for extreme heat and wildfire smoke – a collection of resources

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods and Hey Neighbour Collective have curated a list of resources, tools, and guides from BC and Canadian sources to prepare for extreme heat and wildfires (updated 2024).

2024 July | By [Hey Neighbour Collective](#) and [Building Resilient Neighbourhoods](#)

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As hotter, drier summers and longer wildfire seasons become more common across British Columbia, what can we do as neighbours, organizations, policy-makers, and community advocates to help ourselves and our communities be more prepared?

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods and Hey Neighbour Collective have curated a list of resources, tools, and guides from BC and Canadian sources.

Be mindful, you could be at higher risk if you...

- are aged 60 years or older
- live alone
- have pre-existing health conditions that affect metabolism, such as diabetes, heart disease, or respiratory disease
- take psychiatric medications
- use recreational drugs or alcohol
- have limited mobility
- live in housing with poor air circulation
- work in hot environments
- are pregnant

Guides for individuals and neighbours

Prepare with neighbours

- [Prepare together for extreme heat](#) | Building Resilient Neighbourhoods and Hey Neighbour Collective
 - Are you and your neighbours connected and prepared for extreme heat? This neighbour-to-neighbour guide helps groups of residents prepare together for extreme heat events.
- [Heat protocol \(PDF\)](#) | Climate Resilience to Extreme Weather
 - This guide helps residents in high-rise communities to plan and prepare an emergency response during heat wave events.
- [Extreme heat preparedness guides – English \(PDF\)](#) | [Multiple Languages](#) | PreparedBC
 - This guide helps individuals put together a heat preparedness plan, including information about how to sign up for heat alerts, steps to keep your home cool, and actions to take before, during, and after extreme heat events.
- [Health checks during extreme heat events \(Multiple Languages\)](#) | National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health
 - This tool from the NCCEH was designed to help support people to do in-person or remote check-ins with each other during extreme heat events.

Stay cool

- [Extreme heat poster – English \(PDF\)](#) | [Multiple Languages](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health
 - This simple, educational poster/handout highlights who is at higher risk in extreme heat, how to spot heat-related illness, and strategies to stay cool.
- [Tips to beat the heat \(Multiple Languages\)](#) | BC Housing
 - This one-page poster from BC Housing offers simple tips to keep cool.
- [Fans in extreme heat events FAQ \(PDF\)](#) | Fraser Health
 - Fans, if not used correctly, can actually make you hotter! This resource from Fraser Health explains how to use fans safely.
- [Preparing for extreme heat events: Low-cost solutions for renters \(PDF\)](#) | Community Council
 - This guide offers low-cost ideas to keep your body and home cool during hot weather.
- [Extreme heat and human health \(PDF\)](#) | Health Canada
 - An information page from Health Canada that identifies some of the higher-risk classes of medications to be aware of during heat events, and how to mitigate risks.
- [Extreme weather preparedness guide \(PDF\)](#) | United Way
 - This workbook assists you in creating a comprehensive plan for extreme weather events. It guides you through conducting a personal assessment, building a network of close contacts, and establishing essential plans for crucial needs, such as medications.
- [How to protect yourself from heat this summer \(PDF\)](#) | Island Health
 - This informational poster/handout compiles essential resources and tips on staying cool, signing up for heat alerts, and keeping your home comfortable during extreme heat or smoke.

Health effects of extreme heat

Monitor yourself, family, neighbors, and infants or children for the following symptoms:

- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomit
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Muscle cramps
- Extreme thirst
- New skin rash
- Dark urine & decreased urination

Signs of extremely dangerous heat stroke include:

- High body temperature (39°C or higher)
- Fainting or drowsiness
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Very hot and red skin

If you or someone you know is experiencing serious impacts of extreme heat, contact 911 or a health professional.

Build a cool kit

- [Build your own cool kit](#) (multiple languages) | Vancouver Coastal Health & City of Vancouver
 - This one-pager document highlights the key items to include in a cooling kit.
- [Prepare an extreme heat kit \(PDF\)](#) | Toward the Heart
 - This one-pager infographic highlights key items to include in a cooling kit.

Pay attention to wildfire smoke

- [Wildfire smoke during extreme heat events \(PDF\)](#) | BCCDC
 - Smoke and extreme heat can both impact your health, but they have different effects on the body. This informative document from BCCDC outlines how smoke and heat events can interact and impact your health.
- [How to prepare for the wildfire smoke season \(PDF\)](#) | BCCDC
 - Wildfires and smoke are a normal part of summer in BC, but our seasons seem to be getting longer and more extreme. This BCCDC guide helps you stay safe and prepare for wildfire season.
- [Do-it-yourself air cleaners \(PDF\)](#) | BCCDC
 - One of the best ways to protect yourself from smoke is to create a cleaner air space at home. This BCCDC DIY guide shows you how to build your own Air Cleaner.

Protect kids and pets

- [Keep pets cool in the summer heat](#) | BCSPCA
- [Safety for infants and young children during extreme heat](#) | HealthLinkBC

Activities for community organizations

These tools are designed for community organizations to help their communities prepare for and stay safe during extreme heat and smoke events. They include resources for conducting heat check-ins, creating cooling spaces, and supporting seniors and tenants.

- [Heat check-in support framework for non-governmental organizations \(PDF\)](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health
- [Heat check-in training video](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health
- [Heat check-ins: train-the-trainer video](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health
- [Example heat check-in script \(Word Doc download\)](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health
- [Extreme weather check-in calls for multilingual seniors](#) | MOSAIC
- [Creating cooling spaces during hot weather: guidance for community organizations \(PDF\)](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health
- [Emergency support for seniors framework \(PDF\)](#) | Renfrew Collingwood Seniors' Society
- [Recommended Actions for Owners and Managers of Rental and Strata Housing \(PDF\)](#) | Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health

Sources of government information and resources on the impacts of climate change

- [PreparedBC](#) – Be prepared for extreme heat and drought
- [CleanBC](#) – Impacts of climate change
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Environment Canada](#) – Weather alerts for Canada
- [Vancouver Coastal Health](#) – Extreme heat

Emergency alert systems

- [Public weather alerts for BC](#) – Environment and Climate Change Canada
- [WeatherCAN App](#) – Environment and Climate Change Canada
- [Alertable](#) – Public alert system Vancouver
- [Vic-Alert](#) – Public alert system Victoria
- [Air quality subscription service](#) – Government of BC
- [Air quality and climate action bulletins](#) – Metro Vancouver

Detailed investigative reports on extreme heat in BC

- [Lived Experience of Extreme Heat in B.C. \(PDF\)](#) | Final Report to the Climate Action Secretariat | SHIFT Collaborative & URSUS
- [Lived experience & stories of extreme heat among Indigenous household in British Columbia \(PDF\)](#) | Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- [Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021 \(PDF\)](#) | Report to the Chief Coroner of British Columbia, 2022

Maps and data

- [Extreme heat vulnerability map](#) | Université Laval
 - Interactive online mapping application which provides information about the geographic distribution of the vulnerability and exposure of major Canadian communities to heat waves.
- [BC emergency cooling centres and public cooling spaces](#) | ClimateReadyBC
 - A geographical referenced layer of the emergency cooling centres and public cooling spaces that may be utilized as extreme temperature relief resources during extreme heat events in British Columbia.