July 20, 2021
Mayor and Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City of Burnaby
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2

By email: mayor@burnaby.ca
copy email: clerks@burnaby.ca

Your Worship Mayor Hurley and City Council,

On behalf of the Task Force To End Homelessness in Burnaby, the diverse and collaborative strategic planning table supported by our Society, we are writing today to request approval for the Society to appear as a delegation at the July 26, 2021 Council meeting. Our representative would be Carol-Ann Flanagan, Executive Director of our Society.

The recent heat dome phenomenon was deadly in BC. While data for the number of BC deaths confirmed as heat-related is not yet available and still under investigation, according to the BC Coroner’s Service, from June 25 – July 1, 2021 coroner responded deaths in BC reached 808\(^1\). This is three times more than would normally occur in the province during the same time period and is believed likely that the extreme hot weather was a significant contributing factor\(^2\). In 2009 over 150 people in BC died due to a heat wave\(^3\). Environment Canada projects more hot weather is expected for this year. It is estimated by Climate Atlas of Canada that by 2051 Burnaby will have 13 days of extreme heat annually.

Vulnerable populations are at higher risk than the public, and this includes people affected by homelessness. The absolute homeless are vulnerable to severe health risks when hotter weather occurs for two or more days. Cities trap heat: on sunny days pavement can be 27°- 50° hotter than the air\(^4\). Homeless people cope with unusual heat with minimal protection and have limited locations to access drinking water. Food spoils faster leading to higher risk of illness, i.e. botulism and salmonella. They face significant stigma, exacerbated by no or poor access to showers, laundry or secure storage. They are

1. Source: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/news-and-updates/coroner-responded-deaths](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/news-and-updates/coroner-responded-deaths)
2. Chief coroner’s statement on public safety during heat wave [https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PSSG0062-001295](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PSSG0062-001295)
often excluded from cooling off in air-conditioned malls and free public spaces. Many cope with pre-existing health conditions and all are at high risk of COVID-19.

In March 2021, working with the City Social Planning Department, the Society created a partnership of key stakeholders with the focus of reducing the risk of heat related illnesses for people who are homeless in Burnaby. Together this planning committee created a Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Plan, attached. The Plan identifies that cooling sites are a necessity when the weather in Burnaby reaches 29° for two consecutive days or more\(^5\). The pop-up cooling sites would operate between June 1 – September 30 on an intermittent basis when day temperatures put homeless people at high health risk. Hours would be from 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. with set up/take down time immediately before and after.

Since April, our Society has been actively reaching out to the community, seeking locations for weather-dependent, intermittent services to be offered. This has included reaching out to all Burnaby churches three separate times, and although several churches indicated support for the services, their locations are committed elsewhere this year, including most notably with summer camps that utilize the same spaces.

We have also reached out to social services and community groups, but they do not have available space either. Other sites have been looked at, e.g. community halls, with a plan to utilize parking lots. However, locations need to be accessible and located in areas where people who are homeless are not stigmatized. A complicating factor has been the Covid-19 closures. Now, with the restrictions reducing and services ramping up, spaces are committed elsewhere.

The EWHR is a community response to extreme heat, with commitments from the Primary Care Network to provide nursing health care to the cooling centres. The Ministry SD&PR will provide outreach services. Progressive Housing has committed to send Outreach Workers. The Library is providing free Wi-Fi capacity. Churches, businesses and individuals are donating their time to prepare and serve food, provide welcoming support, set up/take down of the pop ups, while others are donating the food and supplies.

We are therefore asking Mayor and Council to approve the use of city property for the operation of Burnaby’s Extreme Weather Heat Response cooling site(s) for people who experience homelessness in Burnaby. The request would be for the remainder of this year’s Extreme Weather Heat Response season, i.e. September 30, 2021. We request that city staff work closely with us to find the most appropriate location to provide the services, e.g. shady park space currently used by homeless people would be ideal.

Thank you for your attention to this time critical matter,

Sincerely,

Carol-Ann Flanagan  
Executive Director  
Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby

Karen O’Shannacery, OBC  
Extreme Weather Heat Response Committee  
Task Force To End Homelessness in Burnaby

Attachment: Burnaby’s Extreme Weather Heat Response Plan 2021 for people who are homeless

\(^5\) Environment and Climate Change Canada issues heat warning alert bulletins for each province and territory, and in some instances for specific geographical regions. These Heat Warnings are complemented by extreme heat alerts and criteria developed by the BC Centre of Disease Control and regional health authorities.
# The Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Response Plan

July 19, 2021

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT THE PLAN DOES</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HEAT RESPONSE PLAN MAIN OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE EXTREME WEATHER HEAT RESPONSE PLAN</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. EXTREME WEATHER HEAT – WEATHER CRITERIA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TIMEFRAME</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. LOCATIONS, HOURS OF OPERATION AND CAPACITY DURING HEAT ALERTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ACTIVATION TEAM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ACTIVATION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. NOTIFICATIONS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. NOTIFICATION LIST</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ACTIVATION RESPONSE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 GENERAL</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OPERATOR OF THE COOLING SITES</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOCIETY TO END HOMELESSNESS IN BURNABY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. MEDIA INQUIRIES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. DEACTIVATION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. EVALUATION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. APPENDIX I – HEAT AND HEAT ILLNESSES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. APPENDIX II – EXTREME HEAT SAFETY TIPS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. APPENDIX III - CONTRIBUTORS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Climate change is increasing the summer temperatures in British Columbia and has already resulted in increased droughts, deteriorating air quality (including fire-related air pollution) and heat waves. Extreme heat can put people’s health at risk causing illnesses including heat stroke and death. In June 2021 a heat dome phenomenon occurred that set abnormal and record temperatures around BC and likely contributed to a record number of wildfires and a high death toll. While the exact number of deaths related to heat is unknown as of yet, BC’s Chief Coroner stated that the number of deaths were three times as high as in prior years. This extreme heat wave has been recognized by scientists as a result of climate change.

Homeless populations are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of extreme heat. The 2020 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count found 87% of respondents self-reported having one or more health conditions, with the majority (63%) having two or more health conditions. Heat complications on these health conditions can have severe to lethal consequences.

People who are the absolute homeless, e.g. living on the streets, in parks, in vehicles or couch surfers face a greater number of issues when the weather becomes hotter than normal for two or more days. Because of closely packed buildings and paved surfaces, cities trap heat, and on sunny days paved surfaces can be 27 ° -50 ° hotter than the air – a condition called the “urban heat island” effect. Homeless people therefore cope with unusual heat with minimal protection, and they have limited locations to access fresh, clean drinking water to stay hydrated. Food they may have on hand will spoil faster, leading to high risk of physical illness caused by, i.e. botulism and salmonella.

In Burnaby, there are few locations for people who experience homelessness to escape hot weather. Discrimination and stigma create significant barriers towards using community resources, exasperated by many not having access to regular showers and clean laundry, or secure storage to keep their belongings. As a result they are often excluded from cooling off in air-conditioned malls and free public spaces in ordinary times. During the COVID-19 pandemic, resources are even further limited.

Research shows that homeless people have greater numbers of heat distress calls and heat mortality. Research also shows that symptoms of heat distress are often unrecognized for what they are, or the symptoms are ignored. Recognizing and planning for these risks is the purpose of this plan.

What the Plan does

The Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Response (EWHR) Plan sets the framework to prevent harmful health impacts of extreme hot weather on people experiencing homelessness within the municipality of Burnaby and coordinates resources to respond.

The EWHR Plan works in conjunction with the City of Burnaby heat response, providing additional directions and support due to the extra vulnerability of people who experience homelessness in Burnaby.

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1. 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver, November 2020 pgs. 5, 40
2. Source: Climate Atlas of Canada: climateatlas.ca/urban-heat-island-effect

2021 Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Plan
The Heat Response Plan Main Objectives

The core response objectives of this EWHR during periods of extreme heat are to:

- alert the most vulnerable that extreme heat weather conditions are either expected or currently exist so that they can take heat precautions;
- educate both people who are homeless and the services and support they rely on to the risks of heat to the homeless population and identify actions they can take to reduce risks; and
- identify temporary relief locations in Burnaby, and establish as needed, where people experiencing homelessness can go to cool down.

The EWHR Plan has been developed in recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been drafted to follow the instructions and guidelines of the provincial Chief Medical Health Officer.

The Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Response Committee, on behalf of the Task Force To End Homelessness in Burnaby - working collaboratively with the City of Burnaby, Division of Family Practice, Fraser Health, Lookout Housing and Health Society, Progressive Housing and other interested parties - has the responsibility of creating Burnaby’s Extreme Weather Heat Response (EWHR) and conducting annual reviews. See Appendix I for the list of committee members. The Task Force is grateful for the work of this committee.

The Extreme Weather Heat Response Plan

The Extreme Weather Heat Response (EWHR) Plan must meet the needs of a wide range of people who experience homelessness (e.g. all genders, all ages, families, couples, singles) in the community and be flexible enough to deal with a varying number of people, including individuals who may be coping with challenging issues such as disabilities, mental illness, substance use and other health issues. The EWHR will provide support regardless of ethno-cultural background, race, religious beliefs, gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The EWHR will endeavour to support those with physical disabilities to the extent that it is safe for the individual. To meet these criteria, the following response has been developed.

Extreme Weather Early Season Notice – It is important for all populations, including all ages and genders, indigenous peoples, cultural groups and vulnerable populations including the homeless be forewarned at the beginning of the warm weather season, about the dangers of heat and what individuals can do to reduce and prevent heat illnesses.

Fraser Health provides sun and heat safety information on their website at the start of hot weather, to educate the general public about the health risks of extreme heat and prevention activities that should be taken. Health Canada also provides website information as well as print information on risks and prevention. This committee is working with the City of Burnaby to provide linkages through their website to these resources.
1. Extreme Weather Heat – Weather Criteria

Extreme Weather, for the purposes of this EWHR, is defined as conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life and/or health of people experiencing homelessness.

Environment and Climate Change Canada issues heat warning alert bulletins for each province and territory, and in some instances for specific geographical regions. These Heat Warnings are complemented by extreme heat alerts and criteria developed by the BC Centre of Disease Control and regional health authorities. Burnaby’s Extreme Weather Heat Response Plan builds on these criteria.

a. **Heat Warning**

   Issued when 2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 29°C or warmer.⁴

b. **Heat Alert** (notice that an Extreme Weather Heat Response is in effect)

   Issued when 2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures have reached 29°C or warmer.⁵ The Alert will open cooling resources for people experiencing homelessness.

2. Timeframe

The Extreme Weather Heat Response operates:

- Between June 1 – September 30
- Intermittently opening cooling resources as required by weather conditions

Should severe weather conditions occur outside of the above time frame, the EWHR Alert team will discuss opening with the EWR Coordinator from Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSA-BC) and the Burnaby EWHR Committee.

3. Locations, Hours of Operation and Capacity during Heat Alerts

a. Existing Resources:

   The following is a list of existing resources that people may be able to access during heat waves. Access is at the discretion of resource operators.

   - Douglas Shelter – staff at the shelter will direct people to best fit locations – e.g. by family grouping, resources available, etc.
   - Public centres such as community centres, libraries and swimming pools – all currently have restricted access due to Covid-19, including appointment only access at swimming pools and community centres.
   - Metrotown shopping centre
   - Burnaby Family Life – for families; availability dependent on numbers currently in building.

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• Burnaby Neighbourhood House – South House – currently operating at reduced capacity; access through door buzzer system; availability dependent on numbers currently in building.

b. Create additional cooling resources for people who are homeless, as needed - Intent is to:
• open 2 outdoor cooling sites, one in each half of the City of Burnaby (north & south).
  o South – to be identified when location found
  o North – to be identified when location found
• Operate from 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
• Capacity of 24 at each site at any given time, capacity established within Covid-19 protocols and can be increased based on Fraser Health protocols and operating resources.
• Operating outdoors until air conditioned roomy indoor space becomes available.

4. Activation Team
The following individuals (and assigned back-ups) are designated to issue Extreme Weather alerts. At least two of the Activation Team members will be available throughout the duration of the Extreme Weather Heat Response timeframe to determine together, when there is an identified need to activate an Extreme Weather Heat Response Alert. They will ensure that the sole determining factors are: anticipated need to ensure accessibility/availability to cooling areas and the local weather reports.
  o Dave Brown, Lookout Housing and Health Society
    ▪ Jennifer Goyette, Lookout Housing and Health Society, (back-up to Dave)
    ▪ Shamina Kallu, Lookout Housing and Health Society (back-up to Jennifer)
  o Pastor Norman Oldham, The Task Force To End Homelessness In Burnaby: EWR Committee
    ▪ Carol-Ann Flanagan, The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby (Back-up to Norman)

During the EWHR season, they, or their back-ups, must be available 7 days/week, including holidays, to call an alert.

5. Activation
a. Collaboration between Dave Brown and Norman Oldham will determine activation;

b. When activated, the Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby will ensure all individuals identified within the Notification List are contacted no later than 10:00hrs on the day prior to the alert;

c. The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby is the operator of the EWHR and will activate cooling sites according to this Plan.

6. Notifications
a. Heat Warning - When the activation team identifies that hot weather is forecast for the near future, a notice is sent out to the emergency and health care providers, community organizations and individuals who provide the support, volunteers and services during the extreme heat alert.
The notice will clearly describe that this is a heat **warning**, provided to facilitate preparations should the hot weather occur as projected.

b. **Heat Alert** – The heat alert is issued when the activation team confirms hot weather is occurring, putting people who are homeless at high health risk. It initiates the opening of dedicated cooling sites for people experiencing homeless, especially for people who are not comfortable utilizing existing resources. The alert goes to a broad community distribution list (see below) where people who may be homeless can learn that cooling site(s) have been opened and identifies other known resources.

The Heat Alert notice is distinguished from the Heat Warning by being printed on yellow paper similar to extreme cold weather alerts. It specifies areas that people experiencing homelessness can go to get or stay cool. Recipients of the Alert are requested to print the Heat Alert on yellow paper and post it wherever people who are homeless are likely to see the Alert.

7. **Notification List**

The Extreme Weather Heat Response Committee maintains the Burnaby Heat Notification List and ensures the list remains current. Notifications are provided to a wide range of homelessness serving groups as well as community and government contacts to ensure that people experiencing homelessness receive the critical information about extreme hot weather, the risks, precautions and heat respite locations.

The Notification List contains private information such as names, personal phone numbers and email addresses to facilitate good communication. This information is highly confidential and is collected only with the owner’s permission and under strict privacy policies as required by the BC Personal Information and Privacy Act. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis with individuals responsible for the notification of the Extreme Weather Heat Warnings and Alerts.

The Notification List is provided to the operator of Burnaby’s EWHR annually and is updated in real time. Currently the Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby is responsible for the notifications.

8. **Activation Response**

8.1 **General**

- That wherever possible during the hot weather season, required items will be stored/re-stocked within the host location(s) to ensure prompt service delivery. The Society will provide storage for the off season.
- Appropriate referral and resources will be made available to all individuals accessing services.
- The Cooling Sites will ensure welcoming service provision without discrimination, ensuring that:
  - privacy and confidentiality are strictly observed
All services, including food, hygiene, water, cooling cloths, etc. to be provided within Fraser Health safety protocols to prevent the spread of infectious diseases including Covid-19 as well as using other strategies that serve to eliminate or reduce risks.

- Meal provisions will be provided with the support from community and faith groups to ensure: water, sandwiches, fruit and juice is available for lunch and supper.

- Where possible, additional support will be provided by:
  - Progressive Housing:
    - notification to the absolute homeless of cooling centre openings, and
  - Fraser Health:
    - Pre-season notification of hot weather risks and preventative actions to take
  - Burnaby’s Primary Care Network:
    - Attendance at cooling sites to assess people’s conditions re heat and health support
  - Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction:
    - Attendance at cooling sites to assess and engage people in services

8.2 Responsibility of the Operator of the cooling sites

The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby will:

- Operate the cooling site(s) according to this Plan
- Ensure a minimum of two volunteers and one coordinator are present throughout cooling site(s) operation.
- Ensure volunteer management, including volunteer records/database, training and coordination of volunteers (through use of the HSA-BC Extreme Weather Response Committee as available) and personal information is protected as per the Society Privacy Policy and the BC Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA).
- Ensure an appropriate quantity of required essentials are supplied, including but not limited to: disinfecting and sanitizing supplies, COVID-19 related personal protection devices such as but not limited to face masks and gloves, cooling fans, first aid supplies, harm reduction supplies, health and safety requirements, cleaning supplies, hygiene supplies, food supplies, gently used light coloured summer clothing, and administrative items for the purposes of data/information collection and reporting.
- Provide bus tickets for critical appointments, shelter, housing and, as needed, to get to/from the cooling sites as determined by distance, mobility and weather conditions
- Provide all transportation of goods and materials to and from the site location(s) as needed and/or required.
• Track services provided e.g. number of meals served, bus tickets issued, number of people provided hygiene or other supplies and report out at the end of the season to the EWHR committee and Task Force.
• Track numbers of persons served by gender and by family and age grouping (youth, adults, seniors). To also track the number of people heat affected and responses. Report out unidentifiable information at the end of the season on person’s served, activities and outcomes to the EWHR committee and Task Force.
• Report out on the number of volunteers, donors and supporting agencies for purposes of acknowledgement and appreciations.

8.3 Responsibility of The Task Force To End Homelessness in Burnaby:

Through the Burnaby Extreme Weather Heat Committee:

• Locate community space for the cooling site(s) operation
• Recruit volunteers to assist in cooling site operations including such tasks as:
  ▪ Maintaining the Notification list in real time throughout the season;
  ▪ Set up and take down of cooling areas;
  ▪ Cleaning and sanitizing of all areas, furnishings and equipment, before use, between use by different individuals, and after use;
  ▪ Beverage and meal preparation and provision as per Food Safety requirements;
  ▪ Clothing and supplies, bus fare distribution;
  ▪ Donation organization and distribution
• Annually:
  ▪ Update the Notification Lists and notify the person responsible for the distribution of information of any changes it becomes aware of during the EWHR season.
  ▪ Update the Extreme Weather Heat Response Plan at the end of each season
  ▪ Conduct a review/debrief of the EWHR and use to strengthen future EWHR
  ▪ Keep the community informed of the outcomes of the EWHR

9. Media Inquiries

Upon any EWHR enquiry made by media, working collaboratively, the following procedures are to be adhered to:

  o Enquiries are to be directed to:
    ▪ Dave Brown, Lookout Housing and Health Society re Burnaby EWHR: 778-389-4044
    ▪ Carol-Ann Flanagan, Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby re Burnaby Homelessness: 604-200-0712
    ▪ Chloe Good, Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator, Homelessness Services Association of BC re regional EWR program: 778-855-2575
10. Deactivation

Upon sufficient evidence to the Activation Team that the weather no longer represents a substantial threat to the health and safety of homeless people in Burnaby, the Extreme Weather Heat Alert will be deactivated.

All individuals utilizing Extreme Weather cooling sites will be notified of the deactivation.

The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby will be responsible to distribute the deactivation notice utilizing the same Notification List and process at least by 10 a.m. of the day it is deactivated.

11. Evaluation

The evaluation will include data and analysis based on the following:

- **Activities**: Number of warnings and alerts called and total duration of alerts. What is offered to participants; # person’s heat afflicted and responses
- **Outputs**: Number of people served – non-identifiable information will be kept on the numbers of people who attend the cooling sites, by gender and family grouping; quantities of services provided (e.g. numbers of meals/hygiene supplies distributed)
- **Incidents**: Number and cause of incidents that arise.
- **Outcomes** – Results for individuals or systems that can be attributed, either directly or indirectly to the EWHR. Outcomes may be initial, intermediate or longer term.

12. Appendix I – Heat and Heat Illnesses

a. What is Extreme Heat
b. Recognizing Heat Illnesses
c. Preventing Heat Illnesses
13. Appendix II - Extreme Heat Safety Tips
   Government and Health recommendations

14. Appendix III - Contributors
   a. Members of the Extreme Hot Weather committee
   b. Extreme Hot Weather Response community organizations
APPENDIX I
HEAT AND HEAT ILLNESSES

What is Extreme Heat?
Extreme heat events involve high temperatures and sometimes high humidity. Although the level of temperature extremes may vary between regions, unusually high heat can have negative impacts on health.

What are Heat Illnesses?
Heat-related illnesses are mainly caused by a person being over-exposed to extreme heat especially if they are doing too much for their age and physical condition. Heat illnesses can quickly affect people and can lead to long-term health problems and even death.

Heat illnesses include:
- heat exhaustion
- heat fainting
- heat edema (swelling of hands, feet, and ankles)
- heat rash
- heat cramps (muscle cramps)

Heat Stroke
- Symptoms include high body temperature, and either unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating. Heat stroke is deadly; if heat stroke is suspected, 911 should be called immediately.

Recognizing Heat Illnesses
Symptoms of heat illness include:
- dizziness or fainting
- weakness or tiredness
- nausea or vomiting
- headache
- rapid breathing and heartbeat
- extreme thirst (dry mouth or sticky saliva)
- pale and clammy skin
- decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine
- changes of behaviour in children (like sleepiness or temper tantrums)

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If any of these listed symptoms are seen during extreme heat, they are at risk for more severe symptoms. The person should be moved to a cool place and drink water right away. Apply cool cloths especially to face, neck, head. If the person does not improve, call 911.

**Preventing Heat Illness**

- Drink plenty of water before feeling thirsty to decrease risk of dehydration
- Eat fruits and vegetables as they have a high water content
- Drink water before, during and after physical activity; avoid physical activity
- Stay out of the sun
- Wear a hat, light-coloured clothing
- Stay in a cool place – e.g. tree-shaded area, air-conditioned spots like a shopping mall, community centre and public library
- Go swimming
- Have a cool bath until refreshed
APPENDIX II
EXTREME HEAT SAFETY TIPS

Government of Canada:

Government of Canada: - First aid advice for sunburn and heat illness

Health Link BC:
https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/beat-the-heat

Fraser Health:
https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/sun-safety#.YNS3ay295UP

BC Centre for Disease Control:

POSTERS:

Government of Canada:

What are the Signs and Symptoms of heat illness?
Who is Most at Risk?
Safety Tips


EMERGENCY:

Call 9-1-1 if you or someone you see exhibits symptoms of serious heat illness

Government of Canada: Weather Alerts for Metro Vancouver
https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/report_e.html?bc42
### APPENDIX III

#### CONTRIBUTORS

**EXTREME WEATHER HEAT RESPONSE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
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