

# Resource guide: Heat planning

## Purpose

This document provides long-term care and assisted living operators with actions to take to provide a safe environment for residents / tenants (hereby referred to as “residents”) and staff during a heat event. The document has been organized into four stages:

- 1) Plan (planning and assessing risk prior to the summer season)
- 2) Prepare (preparing and ensuring readiness prior to a heat event)
- 3) Respond (response and actions to take during a heat event)
- 4) Evaluate (assessing response to a heat event and learning for the future)

Plan*	Prepare	Respond	Evaluate
<i>Before May 1</i>	<i>Before June 1</i>	<i>Upon notification</i>	<i>Post event</i>
Finalize heat plan template	Source supplies and equipment	Implement cooling and hydration plans	Debrief with team
Complete site assessment checklist	Address opportunities in site assessment	Increase resident health checks	Revise your plans
Identify high risk residents and adjust care plans	Education teams, residents and families	Complete temperature checks	

\*Use the toolkit (Appendix A) to complete these steps

Within each stage, there are specific actions to be taken to ensure plan readiness, plan execution, plan and progress evaluation and learnings for the future, as outlined below. Some of these are required, while others are recommendations to keep your residents and team members safe during the summer season. Each action in the planning stage has an associated resource, included in a toolkit ([Appendix A](#)).

The required elements are noted throughout this document and apply to long-term care only.

## Heat Alert Response System (HARS)

To provide the public and partner organizations with a warning of the health risk from heat events, temperature thresholds have been established by The BC Health Effects of Anomalous Temperatures (BC HEAT) Coordinating Committee (BC HEAT Committee). The overarching objective is to support planning and response efforts related to public health impacts for significant heat events in BC.

Within British Columbia, there are two types of heat alerts that can be issued. Criteria specific to the Fraser region is outline below:

### Heat warning

Once the criteria is met, Environment and Climate Change Canada issue alerts for the specific regions.

Tier	Region	Criteria
Heat warning	<b>Southwest</b>	
	Western Metro Vancouver, including the North Shore, City of Vancouver and Richmond, Howe Sound, Whistler, Sunshine Coast, Vancouver Island (except northern sections)	2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 29°C or warmer and nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to be at 16°C or warmer
	<b>Southwest inland</b>	
	Eastern Metro Vancouver including Coquitlam and Surrey, and the Fraser Valley	2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 33°C or warmer and nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to be at 17°C or warmer

### Extreme heat emergency

Once the criteria is met, and based a decision from the BC HEAT Committee, Environment and Climate Change Canada issue alerts for the specific regions.

Tier	Region	Criteria
Extreme heat emergency	<b>Southwest</b>	
	Western Metro Vancouver, including the North Shore, City of Vancouver and Richmond, Howe Sound, Whistler, Sunshine Coast, Vancouver Island (except northern sections)	Daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 31°C or warmer, based on today's temperature and tomorrow's forecasted max
	<b>Southwest inland</b>	
	Eastern Metro Vancouver including Coquitlam and Surrey, and the Fraser Valley	Daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 34°C or warmer, based on today's temperature and tomorrow's forecasted max

### Licensing

Effective May 1, 2022 a new licensing standard for summer heat is in effect within Fraser Health. This standard applies to all long-term care operators (regardless of funding source). Assisted living operators are not required to follow this standard, although we do recommend that applicable elements be adopted where possible.

The **licensing standard** can be found in Appendix E and requires three components of all long-term care operators:

- 1) A written heat plan which summarizes the following:
  - a. Standard measures
  - b. Escalated measures
  - c. Emergency measures
- 2) Measurement of indoor temperature daily from May 1 to September 30 or any day where the exterior temperature exceeds 22° Celsius.
- 3) Implementation of emergency response plans as outlined in the Heat plan

Please refer to the **licensing standard** for additional details around all three of these elements, as well as criteria to be followed for measurement of indoor temperature.

### Stage 1 – Plan

The first step is to plan for the heat event. This stage includes all of the assessment and planning actions that will be required before you take any action.

There are three steps that you can take to plan well in advance of a summer heat event. Each of these steps has resources that have been developed to support you in your planning.

All care homes are encouraged to update their heat plan, complete their site assessment and a resident risk assessment **before May 1 annually**. Care plans should be updated for the highest risk residents at the same time and can be modified as new residents move in and out throughout the summer season.

Step	Resource
Develop a heat preparation and response plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heat Plan Guideline</li></ul>
Complete a site assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site Assessment Checklist</li></ul>
Complete a resident risk assessment & modify care plans for highest risk residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resident Risk Assessment</li></ul>

### Stage 2 – Prepare

The second step in ensuring readiness for the heat season is to prepare for a heat event. This stage outlines the actions to be taken to ensure readiness, such as purchasing supplies and equipment, completing required maintenance on equipment, etc.

All care homes are encouraged to complete this stage before June 1 annually. This includes sourcing equipment and supplies, and providing education on heat to residents, staff and families.

Step	Resource
Source equipment and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparation checklist</li></ul>
Address opportunities identified in the site assessment	
Educate team members, residents and families to ensure readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tabletop exercise</li></ul>

### Stage 3 – Response

This stage outlines the actions taken in direct response to an event after there has been a trigger. This stage includes implementing the completed heat plans as appropriate, and utilizing the preparation steps that have been done up to that point.

Initiate this stage upon notification of a heat wave. Notification can come from, but is not limited to, the health authority.\* Sites are encouraged to initiate their heat plans before an official notification of a heat event, if specific circumstances warrant it.

Regardless of notification, always follow the licensing standard and the guidance in the heat plan to implement standard, escalated, and emergency measures to ensure that indoor temperatures remain below 26° Celsius.

\*Other possible notifications can come from your municipality, Environment and Climate Change Canada, or from local temperature readings at your site

Step	Resource
Temperature monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat plan</li> <li>• Temperature log</li> </ul>
Implementation of the heat plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat response checklist</li> <li>• Escalation and notification visual</li> <li>• Heat plan</li> </ul>
Communications to residents, families, and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat poster</li> <li>• Family letter templates</li> </ul>

## **Stage 4 – Evaluation**

This section will be updated in the next iteration.

### Appendix A – Toolkit

Within each stage of heat events, there are specific actions to be taken to ensure plan readiness, plan execution, plan and progress evaluation and learnings for the future, as outlined below. Each stage has associated resource(s), which are mapped out below. Together, these resources are referred to as the 'toolkit.' In addition to heat-specific resources, there are generic resources that should be considered (included in grey text).

Plan	Prepare	Respond	Evaluate
Heat plan outline	Preparation checklist	Escalation and notification flowchart	Debrief
Heat plan template	Tabletop exercise	Temperature log	After action report
Site assessment checklist		Heat response checklist	
Resident risk identification		Heat plan*	
Licensing standard		Heat poster	
		Family letter templates	

\*Completed heat plan template

→ Access and download the resources listed in the toolkit from the [Fraser Health emergency management page](#).