

# Facilitator Guide

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Tabletop exercise: Heat

June 2022

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## Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the approach, roles and responsibilities, general flow, intended outcomes, and reference material. The exercise itself will provide an opportunity to identify and discuss key areas that require thoughtful conversation, reflection, and further follow-up. The conversations help to gather learnings, support documentation, and ultimately improve future mitigation and response activities.

The session itself will provide an opportunity to:

- Exercise decision-making processes and structures
- Identify issues or areas of improvement
- Problem solve
- Improve leadership confidence in dealing with heat events

The facilitator guide is broken down into two sections; it is recommended to review and print the guide in its entirety ahead of the session and follow the instructions on the day of the event. Supplemental material can also be provided to support coordination between the facilitators, and the participants (for example, copies of the heat plans). Click on the links below to jump to any section.

1. [Overview](#)
2. [Instructions](#)

The following documentation is also used to support the education sessions:

- PowerPoint presentation

## Background

Following the unprecedented heat dome event in 2021, which resulted in the death of six hundred and nineteen British Columbians, who were mostly older adults with compromised health who lived alone and without air conditioning, multiple initiatives were launched to support heat planning within the health authorities and the broader health care system.

This tabletop exercise intends to review the heat preparedness process for 2022, including an overview of the Heat Alert Response System (HARS), status reporting, and the standing up and de-escalation of a heat response, through the use of scenarios and discussion prompts, with the goal of improving our response processes and procedures.

## Overview

### Principles

Tabletop exercises align with the following principles:

1. Driven by a “no-fault” environment (focus on function and process, not people)
2. Solution-based conversations
3. Participants to engage and learn from one another
4. Promote a positive and respectful environment

### Roles and responsibilities

| Title              | Role/function  | Tasks and activities     |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Facilitator</b> | Coordinates and manages the tabletop exercise  | Introduction and closing |
| <b>Players</b>     | Personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise; players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated event |                          |
| <b>Observers</b>   | Observe and take any notes, provide context or discussion points   |                          |

## Sequence of events

This is a high-level overview of the sequence of events. Specific instructions for each of these steps is provided in further detail in the Instructions section of this document.

| Segment  | Led by      | Time frame  |
|--|-------------|---|
| <b>Opening</b>   | Facilitator | 5 minutes   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and introduction</li> <li>• Land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Overview               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduction</li> <li>○ Purpose of tabletop exercise                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Simulate the triggers for actions in response to a heat event</li> <li>c) Raise awareness of heat plans and the activation process</li> <li>d) Practice response to a simulated heat event</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Format of tabletop exercise</li> <li>○ Processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tabletop exercise</li> </ul> |             |   |
| <b>Exercise</b>  | Facilitator | 50 minutes  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenario 1: Increasing indoor temperatures</li> <li>• Scenario 2: Anticipated hot weather for the weekend</li> <li>• Scenario 3: Impacts from heat event</li> <li>• Scenario 4: Cooling pattern</li> </ul>  |             | 15 minutes<br>15 minutes<br>15 minutes<br>5 minutes |
| <b>Discussion and closing</b>  | Facilitator | 5 minutes   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General feedback</li> <li>• Closing and next steps</li> </ul>   |             |   |

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## Instructions

### Introduction

For awareness, the below introductory and housekeeping are included.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Facilitator</b> | <b>Introductions and housekeeping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome everyone</li><li>• Once everyone has joined, do introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Facilitator</li></ul></li><li>• Land acknowledgement</li><li>• Overview<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Purpose of session</li><li>○ Format</li><li>○ Processes</li></ul></li><li>• Table top exercise</li><li>• Ask if there are any questions before getting started</li><li>• Begin the session</li></ul> |
|--------------------|--|

## Scenarios

| 1. Increasing indoor temperatures (15 minutes)  |
|---|
| <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for potential heat impacts</li> <li>• Validate the standard measures of the heat plan</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Scenario</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Monday, July 18 14:00</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor temperatures are increasing and it is anticipated that they might reach 26° C</li> <li>• <i>Examples of notification provided; notifications/alerts of weather events can come from additional sources</i></li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How are we preparing for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Staffing</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Hydration and cooling</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Resident relocation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Managing internal temperatures</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Operational changes (food, recreation, etc.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Identify any equipment and supply needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Who are we notifying?</i></li> <li>• <i>At what point do we begin to implement escalated or emergency measures?</i></li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Potential answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How are we preparing?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement standard actions</li> <li>○ Cooling and hydration supplies are being checked</li> <li>○ Communications to staff and families are being prepared and or sent-out</li> <li>○ Planning for additional staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Who are we notifying?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff, facility medical directors, residents, and families</li> <li>○ Are we reaching out to the Health Authority?</li> <li>○ Has the Health Authority reached out to us?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

| 2. Anticipated hot weather for the weekend (15 minutes)   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Objectives</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify how to prepare for an emergency through the use of monitoring and response strategies</li> <li>Understand how to engage with key internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>Validate the escalated measures of the heat plan</li> <li>Prepare and respond to anticipated heat impacts</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Scenario</b>   |  |
| <b>Thursday, July 21 09:00 (+4 days)</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor temperatures approaching 26 °C are anticipated to continue to rise throughout the weekend</li> <li><b>Environment and Climate Change Canada</b> issues a <b>Heat Warning</b> (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)</li> <li><b>Fraser Health</b> has forwarded the Heat Warning to all LTC/AL sites in the Fraser region</li> <li>The LTC/AL program has scheduled a <b>coordination call</b> for all sites within the Fraser Health region</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Roundtable</b>   |  |
| <b>Questions</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Describe key impacts you are monitoring for and the triggers for response escalation</i></li> <li><i>What are some things you will be reporting in the coordination call</i></li> <li><i>How are we preparing for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Staffing</i></li> <li><i>Hydration and cooling</i></li> <li><i>Resident relocation</i></li> <li><i>Managing internal temperatures</i></li> <li><i>Operational changes (food, recreation, etc.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><i>Who are we notifying?</i></li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Possible answers</b>   |  |
| <b>Describe key impacts you are monitoring for and the triggers for response escalation</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portable air conditioners deployed</li> <li>A plan for increasing hydration of residents (e.g. adding additional staff to support active hydration)</li> <li>Assessing residents for heat-related illness and dehydration using a standardized protocol</li> <li>Ensuring fans are being used, particularly to bring air from cool spaces to warm spaces (note that fans should not be used when the indoor temperature is 36°C or higher, because beyond this temperature they cause heat to be transferred from the air to the body)</li> <li>Ensuring windows remain closed in the morning and open in the evening, where this would not create a safety risk for residents</li> <li>Ensuring curtains are drawn shut in the morning and drawn open at night</li> </ul> |  |



**What are some things you will be reporting in the coordination call?**

- Preparedness level
- Staffing levels
- Cooling equipment status
- Any concerns
- Resident impacts

| <b>3. Impacts for heat event (15 minutes)</b>   |
|---|
| <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding how to manage complex issues</li> <li>• Collaboration with internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>• Validate the emergency measures of the heat plan</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Scenario (2 minutes)</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Friday, July 22 14:00 (+5 days)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor temperatures have exceeded 26 °C</li> <li>• Heat related illnesses are being observed among residents</li> <li>• No longer meeting baseline staff requirements</li> <li>• Power failure (i.e. HVAC system down as emergency generator cannot support)</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Describe key impacts you are monitoring and experiencing, and the triggers for response escalation</i></li> <li>• <i>When should external partners be involved (health authority, other LTC/AL sites, contractors)?</i></li> <li>• <i>How are you preparing for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Staffing concerns</i></li> <li>○ <i>Hydration and cooling</i></li> <li>○ <i>Resident relocation</i></li> <li>○ <i>Managing internal temperatures</i></li> <li>○ <i>Operational changes (food, recreation, etc.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Identify any remaining staff and resident safety risk to escalate to the health authority, following the implementation of emergency measures (i.e. HVAC failure)</i></li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Potential answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Describe key impacts you are monitoring for and the triggers for response escalation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renting portable air conditioning units</li> <li>• Frequently assessing all residents for signs of heat-related illness or dehydration using standardized protocol</li> <li>• More frequent measurement of indoor temperature (at least twice daily)</li> <li>• Rotating residents into air-conditioned rooms</li> <li>• Encouraging residents to use self-dousing or ice towels, where this would not create a safety hazard</li> <li>• Adding additional staff to support increased active hydration, Taking residents to visit municipal or other local cool air shelters (e.g. public library, community centre)</li> <li>• Transferring residents out of the facility, starting with those most vulnerable to heat-related illness</li> <li>• Reaching out to Health Authority for support and guidance</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

| <b>4. Cooling pattern (5 minutes)</b>   |
|---|
| <p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the process of standing down</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Scenario</b></p> <p><b>Sunday, July 24 14:00 (+7 days)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperatures in all regions are expected to transition back to seasonal norms gradually over the next 3-5 days with intermittent showers forecasted for the majority of the province</li> <li>• Discussions occur regarding the demobilization of response; things to consider when demobilizing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>What is the trigger to stand down your response?</i></li> <li>○ <i>How will you incorporate any identified changes to your heat plan?</i></li> <li>○ <i>Where is your documentation being stored?</i></li> <li>○ <i>Is psychosocial support required?</i></li> <li>○ <i>When are your debriefs and after action reports scheduled?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Consideration</b></p> <p>Although the criteria for the heat warning may no longer be met; internal temperatures may still be rising and require emergency measures.</p>   |
| <p><b>Questions? Comments? Feedback?</b></p> <p><i>Open floor to group for any questions, comments, or feedback</i></p>   |

| <b>Closing Remarks</b> |
|------------------------|
| Thank You!             |