

Extreme Heat Response BC Housing



Photos: Global News, showing Prince George on 17 Aug.2018, 9:09am



Heat, Health & Collaborative Responses for Resilient
Communities
Climate Change Symposium
Kelowna, Nov 2018

Outline

- About BC Housing
- Why are we concerned?
- Adaptation planning and actions
- Lessons learned
- Collaboration
- Next steps



BC Housing

- develop, manage and administer subsidized housing;

- license residential builders, administer owner builder authorizations, and carry out research and education



Who do we serve?

- Individuals who are homeless
- Individuals with disabilities
- Indigenous individuals and families
- Women and children at risk of violence
- Low-income seniors and families
- Buyers of new homes



Why are we concerned?



BC Housing's Climate Adaptation Framework

Why is Climate Adaptation Needed?



**Hotter and
Drier Summers**



**Warmer and
Wetter Winters**



**Increased Risk
of Flooding**



Extreme Heat Response Plan

- Before the summer
- Regular summer
- Extreme Heat weather: **high risk**

Collaboration and learning

Internal staff across different business units



Non-profit housing societies



Health Canada



Extreme Heat Response Plan

Before the summer:

1. Know the risks and what to do.
2. Identify tenants most vulnerable to extreme heat illness (create a list).
3. Prepare your building
(assess risk of overheating and prepare spaces where tenants may cool-off such as: shaded areas outside, a 'cooling room' in the common area in the building).
4. Get what you may need during extreme heat:
 - portable air conditioning units
 - fans
 - communication tools such as "[Tips to Beat the Heat](#) post"

Use
Before the
Summer
Checklist

Before the
Summer
Checklist

Before Summer Actions – Pod Groups		Completed? – check box Or write NA: Not Applicable
Team Members	Building Cooling	
All	1. I’m familiar with extreme heat health risks, symptoms, and appropriate action.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site Staff and PPM	2. I have assessed where there might be potential cooling opportunities within the property for the tenants. (E.g. creation of a “cool rooms” or “chill zones” by installing a portable air conditioning or fans in the common rooms, or creation of a shaded area outside of the building if there’s adequate space, or creating air flow by opening windows when it’s colder outside than inside)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site Staff	3. If my building has a common area, I have set it up as a “chill zone” using fans or air-conditioning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site Staff	4. If my building already has a portable air-conditioning unit I have maintained it (e.g. cleaned the filters) as recommended and checked that it works.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Before the
Summer
Checklist

Site Staff	5. If appropriate, I have provided shaded outdoor areas for tenants to spend time.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site Staff	6. I have signs for the 'chill room'. (So that I can use them when the chill room is activated). Ensure water cooler/station is available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
All	7. I have all equipment or items I may want to use this summer during an extreme heat event for distribution to tenants (such as: fans)	<input type="checkbox"/>
All	8. I have communication materials for the tenants which I may need during an extreme hot weather event, such as: <i>Tip to Beat the Heat!</i> poster & flyer, neighbourhood maps showing places with air conditioning such as community centers, libraries, shopping malls, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
All	9. Pod Team Members, I have identified tenants who might be most at risk of heat related illnesses (created a list)	<input type="checkbox"/>

High Risk Level Response - activated when
Environment and Climate Change Canada
issues Heat Warnings and
Air Quality Warnings

for the specific regions in the province.
Local Health Authorities and Municipalities create
public announcements based on these alerts

**Hot!
Weather
Checklist**

ONCE YOU RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF EXTREME HEAT, THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS ARE TO BE COMPLETED

**Extremely Hot Weather Actions – Pod Team Members
(High Risk)**

Completed –
check box
Or write NA:
Not
Applicable

Building Cooling

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. If my building has a common area, I have set it up as a “chill zone” using fans or air-conditioning. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have posted signs for the ‘chill room’, if it’s activated. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. If appropriate, I have provided shaded outdoor areas for tenants to spend time. | |
| 4. I check the weather forecast on regular basis for hot weather or air quality warnings and alerts. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I posted Tips to Beat the Heat poster around my site/s. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I checked that all the heating in the building is turned off. (And reported up if there are any challenges with it) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I have opened windows in hallways slightly to allow air to circulate (if appropriate). ⁵ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I encourage tenants to reduce solar heat gain by putting blinds down or drawing the curtains; and have windows open only when outdoor air is cooler than indoor air (e.g. at night). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I have checked on tenants that might be at high risk and notified Health & Housing Services if further assessment should be conducted. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checking on Tenants/ Door-to-door

1. Check directly with the tenants most vulnerable to heat related illness (using your list).
2. When talking to the tenants assess:
 - a) home environment:

e.g. Does it feel very hot?
Are there any forms of cooling such draughts or fans?, etc.;
 - b) assess the tenant's:

e.g. Do they show physical signs of being in distress?
Do they know where they can go to cool off? Can they get there?
Is s/he at risk from exposure to extreme heat?
3. **Take action.** (*e.g. advise how to stay cool and about places to cool off, call 911 if you suspect tenant might be suffering from heat stroke*).
4. **Report.**

Checking on Tenants/ Door-to-door

Below is a sample recording sheet:

Date: 1 Aug. 2018 Time: 2pm

Site/building name: Grandview Terrace

Unit nr	Door opened/Not	Observations/Comments	Items given out	High risk Yes/No	Further action required
101	Yes	Tenant looked hot but had drawn curtains, open windows and fan. Aware of risk and how to stay cool.	Cooling bandana	No	No
102	Yes	Tenant wearing heavy clothing. Advised to wear something lighter and looser. Unaware of risks. Hard to communicate with.	Fan, how to stay cool poster	Yes	Someone should revisit tomorrow
103	No				
104	Yes	Potential heat stroke		Yes	Called 911

Conducted by: Jo Smith

Lessons Learned

- Learning from others accelerates the process and makes it more fun
- Good data helps to get support from the executive
- Having a designated and passionate contact person makes things happen
- Preparation is the key to success

Next Steps

- Collect all the learning from the past summer & plan and prepare for the next one
- Refine the process
- Update and expand the educational materials
- Improve communication and reporting
- **Share with others** (BCNPHA conference, spring workshop with non-profits)

Thank you!

