



July 30, 2021

Best Practices and Safety for Heat Wave and Long Weekend

As we head into a hot BC Day August long weekend, the Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers want to remind everyone to be safe and use best practices for activities and the heat. BC Day long weekend brings us all eagerness to break for the outdoors and explore. It's time to load up the vehicles, hit the roads, adventure, and put the boat in the water. While these are all popular items on a long weekend checklist, understandably we all tend to get a bit overanxious with the anticipated enjoyment that lies ahead. It is important to take all safety precautions to avoid injury and make sure we all can have a safe and fun weekend. From the car to the cabin, to the boat, to the entertainment, we ask that we all take the extra steps to be safe and help protect us all from accidents and injuries this long weekend.

As the weather continues to warm up in many parts of the province, we urge British Columbians to do their part to prevent human-caused wildfires and help keep communities safe. Human-caused fires are completely preventable and can unnecessarily divert firefighting resources from naturally occurring wildfires.

We would like to also remind you about the best practices when it comes to coping with higher-than-normal temperatures.

Here are some reminders:

- Extreme heat affects everyone.
- The risks are greater for young children, pregnant women, older adults, people with chronic illnesses and people working or exercising outdoors.
- Watch for the effects of heat illness: swelling, rash, cramps, fainting, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and the worsening of some health conditions.
- Drink plenty of water even before you feel thirsty and stay in a cool place.
- Check on older family, friends and neighbours. Make sure they are cool and drinking water
- Reduce your heat risk. Schedule outdoor activities during the coolest parts of the day.
- Seek a cool place such as a tree-shaded area, swimming pool, shower or bath, or air-conditioned spot like a public building.
- Shade yourself with an umbrella or a wide-brimmed hat.
- Never leave people or pets inside a parked vehicle.
- Ask a health professional how medications or health conditions can affect your risk in the heat.

- Watch for the symptoms of heat illness: dizziness/fainting; nausea/vomiting; rapid breathing and heartbeat; extreme thirst; decreased urination with unusually dark urine.
- Keep your house cool. Block the sun by closing curtains or blinds.
- Outdoor workers should take regularly scheduled breaks in a cool place.

To get more information:

- Check the local news for health and safety updates.
- Check HealthLinkBC online resources about heat-related illness and how to protect yourself at www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/heat-related-illness
- Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to ask about heat-related illness.

Environment Canada and local Medical Health Officers expect an increase in health and safety risks from heat and are advising the public to take precautions.

Please continue to monitor alerts and forecasts issued by Environment Canada. To report severe weather, send an email to BCstorm@canada.ca or tweet reports using #BCStorm.

https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/report_e.html?bc42
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/extreme-heat-heat-waves.html>
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/fact-sheet-staying-healthy-heat/fact-sheet-staying-healthy-heat.pdf>

From our medical dispatchers, call takers to our ground paramedics and air ambulance teams, to our community paramedics, who are working hard over the weekend and every day to ensure you get timely, quality, and advanced medical aid and transport to hospital we thank you all, be safe and well.

You can follow APBC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @APBC873

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Media Inquiries:

Troy Clifford, 250 319 4713 or troy.clifford@apbc.ca



HEAT EXHAUSTION



Skin rash



Muscle cramps



Dizziness or fainting



Nausea or vomiting



Heavy sweating



Headache



Rapid breathing and heartbeat



Extreme thirst



Dark urine and decreased urination



If you experience any of these symptoms during extreme heat, immediately **move to a cool place and drink liquids**; water is best.

What are the **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS** of heat illness?

HEAT STROKE

High body temperature



Confusion and lack of coordination



Dizziness/
Fainting



No sweating,
but very hot,
red skin



Heat stroke is a medical emergency! **Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.** While waiting for help—cool the person right away by:

- moving them to a cool place, if you can;
- applying cold water to large areas of the skin; and
- fanning the person as much as possible.



Who is
**MOST AT
RISK?**

FACT 1
**OLDER
ADULTS**

Older adults may be faced with compounding factors that could put them at increased risk during extreme heat events. These factors may include chronic illnesses, medications that interfere with the body's cooling mechanisms, social isolation, and poverty.

FACT 2
**INFANTS AND
YOUNG
CHILDREN**

Given the unique physiological characteristics of children's bodies and their high dependency on caregivers, they are likely to be at risk during extreme heat events.



FACT 3
**CHRONIC
ILLNESS/
SPECIAL
MEDICATION**

Individuals with breathing difficulties, heart problems, and psychiatric illnesses are at a higher risk of heat-related health effects.



FACT 4
**PEOPLE WHO WORK
OR ARE ACTIVE
OUTDOORS**

People who work outdoors (e.g. construction, road repair) and physically active individuals who exercise in the heat could face greater environmental heat exposure and physical strain.





TIP 1 PREPARE FOR THE HEAT

- Tune in regularly to local weather forecasts and alerts so you know when to take extra care.
- If you have an air conditioner, make sure it works properly.
- If you don't have an air conditioner, find an air-conditioned spot close by where you can cool off for a few hours on very hot days.

TIP 2 KNOW THE SIGNS OF HEAT

TIP 3 PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU AND THOSE AROUND YOU FEEL

Frequently visit neighbors, friends and older family members, especially those who are chronically ill, to make sure that they are cool and hydrated.

TIP 4 DRINK LIQUIDS; WATER IS BEST.

TIP 5 STAY COOL



SAFETY TIPS

How to stay cool?



Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made of breathable fabric.



Take cool showers or baths until you feel refreshed.



Plan strenuous outdoor activities for cooler days, or choose a cooler location, like a place with air conditioning or with tree shade.



Spend a few hours in a cool place. It could be a tree-shaded area, swimming facility or an air-conditioned spot.

