

Prepare for Extreme Heat: A Guide for Service Providers

People who use substances are more likely to experience heat-related illness.

Substances can make it harder for the body to regulate temperature, recognize overheating, and find ways to cool down - especially when sedated for long periods.

Identify people who need frequent check-ins

- People who use substances
- People with mental illness
- Older people (65+)
- Pregnant people
- People with a disability
- People who do not have access to adequate housing
- People who have chronic health conditions
- People who work outside

Gather resources

- Indoor and body temperature thermometers
- Extreme heat kits
- Taxi vouchers
- Harm reduction supplies

Make a list of nearby community resources

- Air-conditioned public spaces
- Cooling centres
- Pools, beaches, or water parks
- Green spaces with shade, if possible

Learn the signs and symptoms of heat illness

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke

- Dizzy
- Thirsty
- Very sweaty
- Nausea
- Weakness

Heat stroke can cause disability or death

- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness

For both heat exhaustion and heat stroke: **ACT FAST**

- Move to a cooler area
- Cool body with water and ice
- Loosen clothing and remove layers

Heat stroke can cause people to appear drowsy, confused, or unconscious. Do not assume their sedation is caused by substance use.



**Heat stroke is a medical emergency!
Call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention!**

Make an action plan

- Bookmark and follow guidance from weather alerting systems:
 - [BC Heat Alert and Response System \(BC HARS\)](#)
 - [Environment and Climate Change Canada Heat Alerts](#)
 - WeatherCAN App
- Plan to check on people two times a day **during** the heat event and for 2-3 days **after** the heat event