Extreme Heat Check-In Training

VCH Healthy Environments & Climate Change
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Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Vancouver Coastal Health operates within the traditional territories of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Lil'wat, Musqueam, N'Quatqua, Nuxalk, Samahquam, shíshálh, Skatin, Squamish, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Wuikinuxv, and Xa'xtsa First Nations.

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Liability

IMPORTANT:

This training provides general information about supporting individuals at higher risk from heat. The information contained in this training does not constitute legal or medical advice. Organizations utilizing this training are encouraged to seek legal guidance regarding their specific context and whether there are potential risks associated with performing check-in services or providing supports during heat events.

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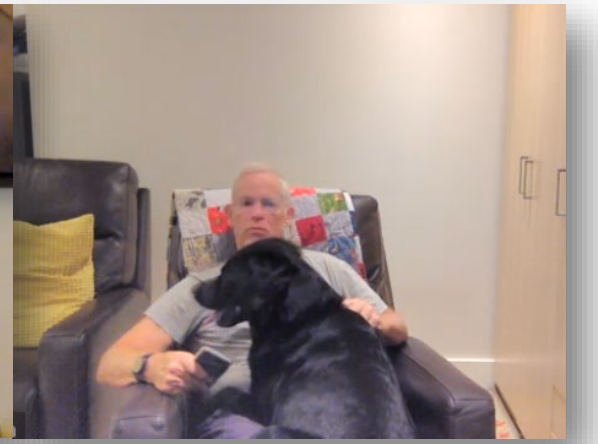
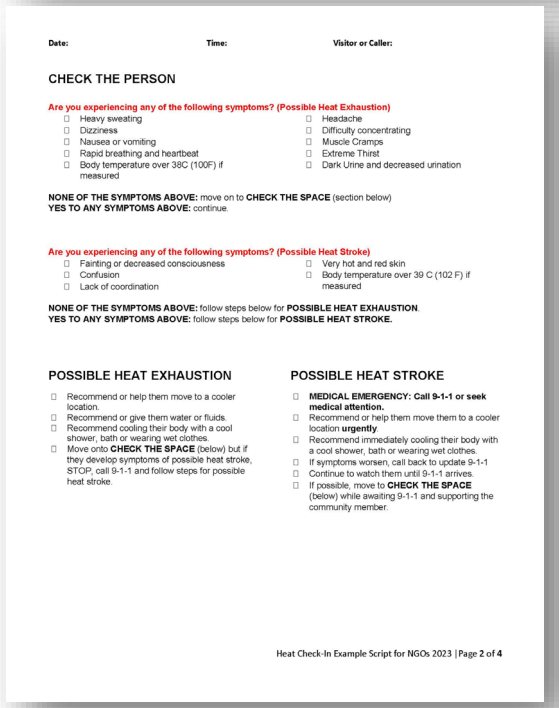
VCH Heat Check-Ins Training Package

Resources:

- Extreme Heat Check-Ins: Training video
- Extreme Heat Check-Ins: Train-the-trainer video
- Heat Check-In Practice Scenarios: Facilitation Guide
- Heat Check-In Practice Scenarios
- Heat Check-In Support Framework for NGOs
- Example Heat Check-In Script





Date: **Time:** **Visitor or Caller:**

CHECK THE PERSON

Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms? (Possible Heat Exhaustion)

- ☐ Heavy sweating
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Nausea or vomiting
- ☐ Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- ☐ Body temperature over 38C (100F) if measured
- ☐ Headache
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Muscle Cramps
- ☐ Extreme Thirst
- ☐ Dark Urine and decreased urination

NONE OF THE SYMPTOMS ABOVE: move on to **CHECK THE SPACE** (section below)
YES TO ANY SYMPTOMS ABOVE: continue.

Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms? (Possible Heat Stroke)

- ☐ Fainting or decreased consciousness
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Lack of coordination
- ☐ Very hot and red skin
- ☐ Body temperature over 39 C (102 F) if measured

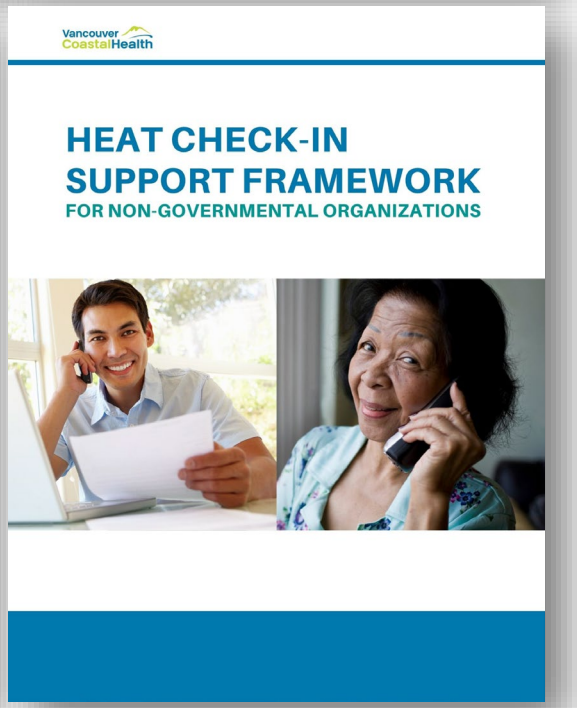
NONE OF THE SYMPTOMS ABOVE: follow steps below for **POSSIBLE HEAT EXHAUSTION**.
YES TO ANY SYMPTOMS ABOVE: follow steps below for **POSSIBLE HEAT STROKE.**

POSSIBLE HEAT EXHAUSTION

- ☐ Recommend or help them move to a cooler location.
- ☐ Recommend or give them water or fluids.
- ☐ Recommend cooling their body with a cool shower, bath or wearing wet clothes.
- ☐ Move onto **CHECK THE SPACE** (below) but if they develop symptoms of possible heat stroke, STOP, call 9-1-1 and follow steps for possible heat stroke.

POSSIBLE HEAT STROKE

- ☐ **MEDICAL EMERGENCY: Call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention.**
- ☐ Recommend or help them move them to a cooler location **urgently**.
- ☐ Recommend immediately cooling their body with a cool shower, bath or wearing wet clothes.
- ☐ If symptoms worsen, call back to update 9-1-1
- ☐ Continue to watch them until 9-1-1 arrives.
- ☐ If possible, move to **CHECK THE SPACE** (below) while awaiting 9-1-1 and supporting the community member.



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HEAT CHECK-IN SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Agenda

45 min Presentation

-Extreme heat and health impacts

-Heat check-in steps

-Additional considerations/ resources

-Key messages

75 min Practice scenarios

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* Train-the-trainer resources available below

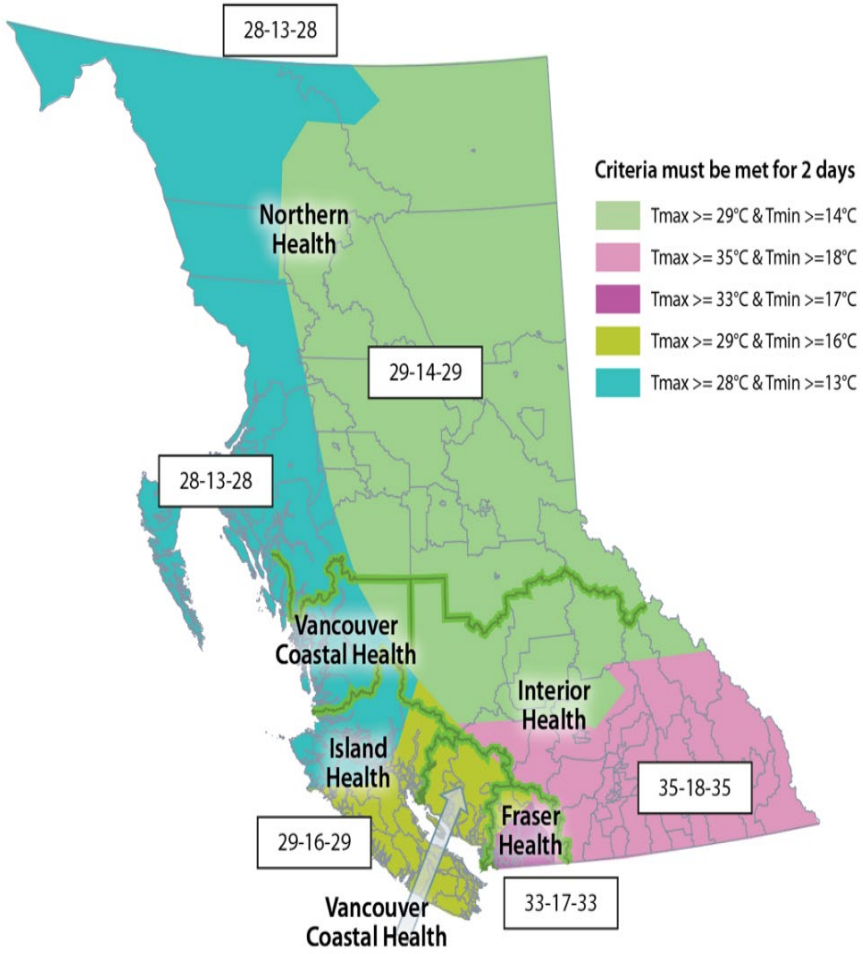
What is extreme heat?

Hotter than normal temperatures that last for an extended period of time.


(Ben Nelms/CBC)

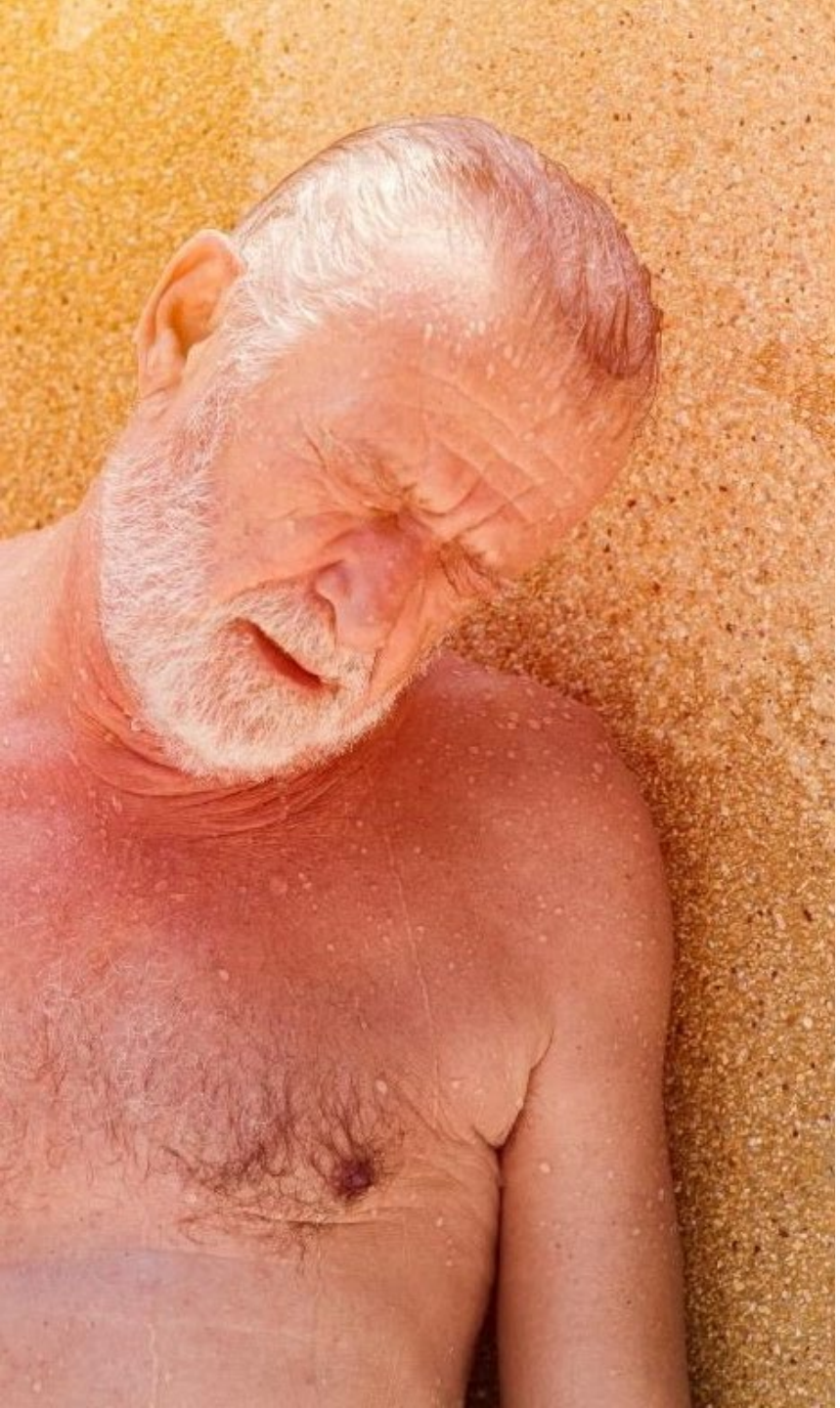
BC Heat Alert and Response System

BC Heat Warning Regions



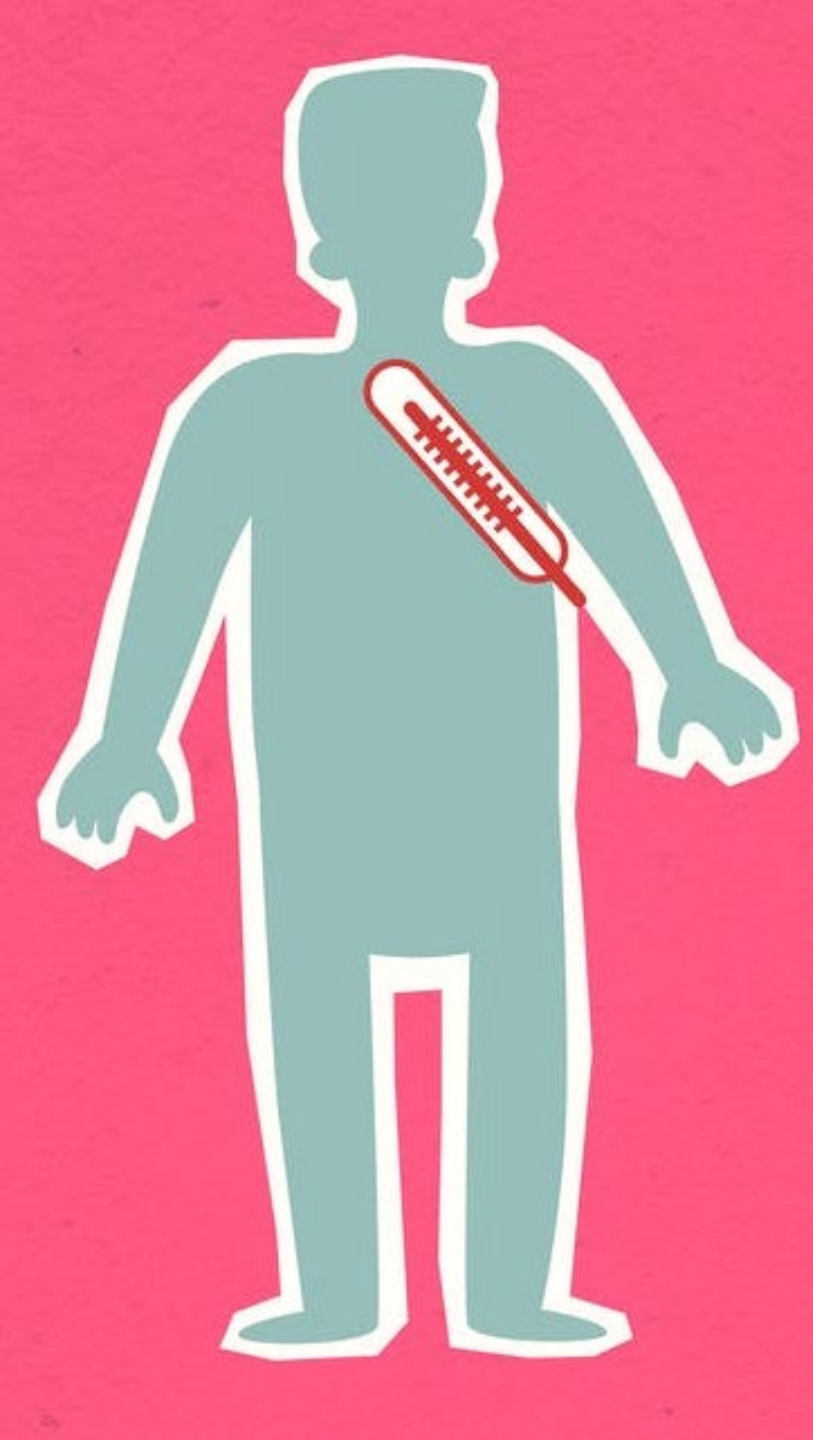
Alert level	Heat Warning (All of Canada)	Extreme Heat Emergency (Only British Columbia)
Public health risk	Moderate (5% increase in mortality)	Very high (20% or more increase in mortality)
Descriptor	Very hot	Dangerously hot
Historic frequency	1-3 per summer season	1-2 per decade
Criteria	Southwest = 29-16-29* Fraser = 33-17-33* Southeast = 35-18-35* Northeast = 29-14-29* Northwest = 28-13-28* *(Daytime high, nighttime high, daytime high)	Heat warning criteria have been met and forecast indicates that daily highs will substantively increase day-over-day for 3 or more consecutive days

BC HARS, 2023



Dangerous temperatures

- **Indoor temp over 26 °C (78 °F):** Increased risk of heat-related illness for heat-vulnerable people.
- **Indoor temp 31 °C (88 °F) or higher:** Significantly increased risk of heat-related illness for heat-vulnerable people.
- Without A/C or other mechanical cooling, heat-vulnerable people in consistently high indoor temperatures are advised to move to a cooler space.



Who is at risk during heat events?

- ❑ Older adults, especially 60 years or older
- ❑ People with schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorders or dementia
- ❑ People who live alone
- ❑ People with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or respiratory disease
- ❑ People with substance use disorders, including alcohol
- ❑ People with limited mobility and other disabilities
- ❑ People experiencing homelessness or who are marginally housed
- ❑ People who are pregnant
- ❑ Infants and young children

More boxes checked = more risk

Heat check-ins

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Heat check-ins

What is a heat check-in?
Visit, call or text to a heat-vulnerable person to assess the heat-related safety of their home environment, if they show signs of heat-related illness and if they need help.

Who can do heat check-ins?
Check-ins do not require health training and may be done by organizations or people in the community, such as neighbours, building managers or NGOs

Who to check on?
Heat-vulnerable people, especially those who have multiple risk factors and are socially isolated.

Heat check-ins continued…

Starting check-ins:

Start when a Heat Warning or Extreme Heat Emergency is declared.

Ending check-ins:

Keep in mind the cumulative effect of heat over days, and that heat-vulnerable people may be at risk even after a heat alert has ended. Follow your facility protocols.

Frequency:

At least once a day, regardless of the time. Increase the frequency of check-ins to multiple times a day for those most at risk, especially if an Extreme Heat Emergency is declared.

Check-In Steps

1. **Introduction**
   Confirm identity and address
2. **Check the Person**
   Check for heat-related illness and help as needed.
3. **Check the Space**
   Check for high indoor temperatures and risk factors that may cause the space to heat up.
4. **Provide Education**
   How to cool people. How to cool spaces. When to go to a cooler space and nearby options. When to seek medical attention.
5. **Wrap-Up**
   Anyone else who can check on them? When is the next check-in? Any questions?

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Heat check-ins Step 1: Introductions

May include:

- Your name, role and organization
- Why are you calling
- Is now a good time to talk?
- Can you explain how you know the person and their contact information to reassure them it is not a scam call?
- Confirm their name, number, address and emergency contact information.

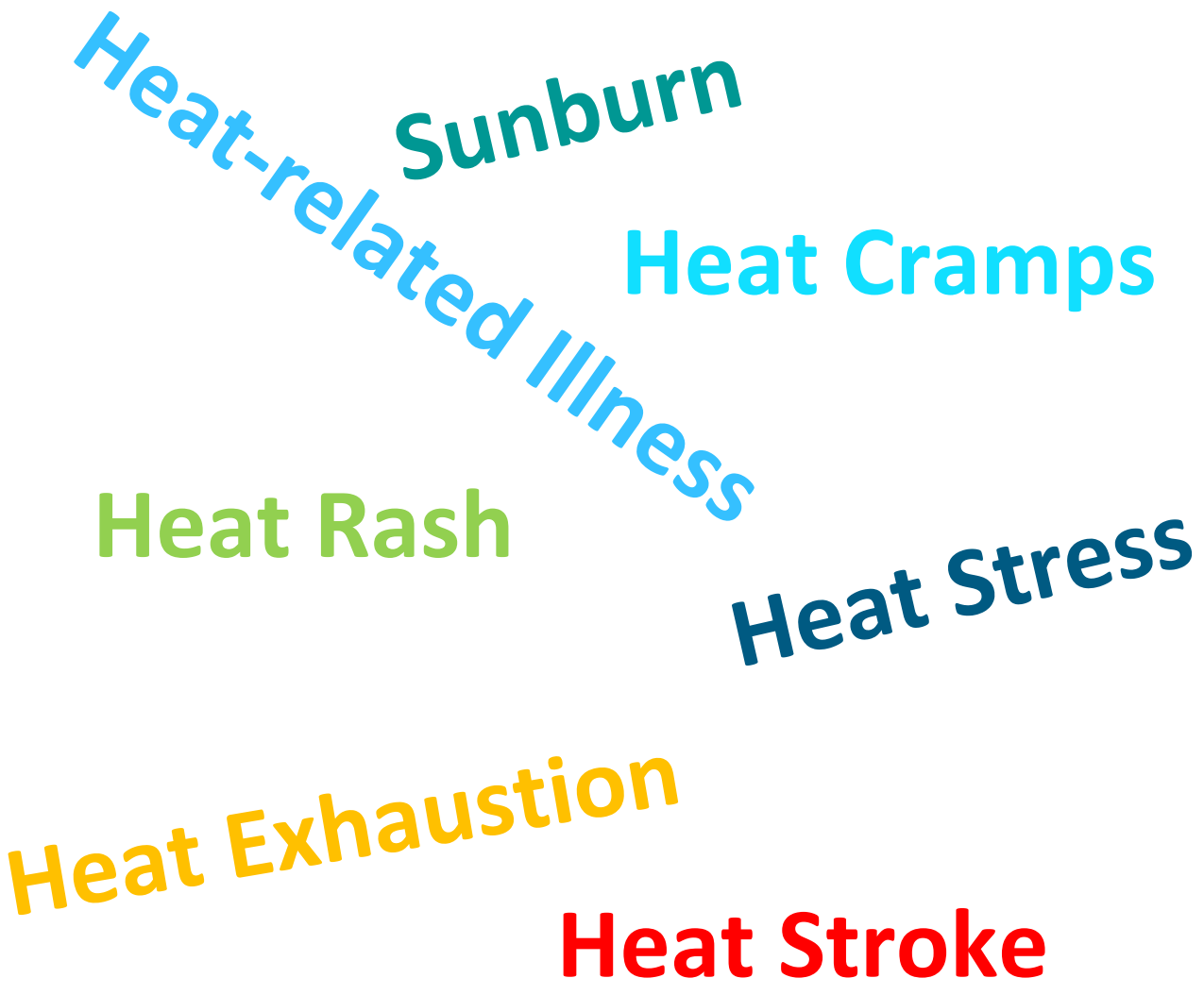
Demo Video: Introductions

Heat check-ins Step 2: Check the person

- Check for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.
- Listen to how they respond – does it sound like they are confused or having new challenges with coordination?
- For non-emergency questions or concerns, call 811 and ask the nurses at HealthlinkBC
- **If they show symptoms of heat stroke (medical emergency) call 9-1-1.**

What is heat-related illness?

An umbrella term for conditions caused by heat, such as heat rash, sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and, the most severe, heat stroke.



Heat Exhaustion Symptoms:

- Heavy Sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Rapid Breathing and Heartbeat
- Headache
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Muscle Cramps
- Extreme Thirst
- New Skin Rash
- Dark Urine & Decreased Urination
- Body temperature over 38 °C (100°F)

If possible, move them to a cooler location. Give them water. Cool the body with a cool shower, bath or wet their clothes.

Heat Stroke Symptoms:

- Body Temperature over 39 °C (102°F)
- Fainting or Drowsy
- Confusion
- Lack of Coordination
- Very Hot and Red Skin

HEAT STROKE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Seek medical attention immediately at an emergency room or urgent care centre. Call 911 if necessary. If possible, move them to a cooler location. Cool the body with a cool shower, bath or wet their clothes.

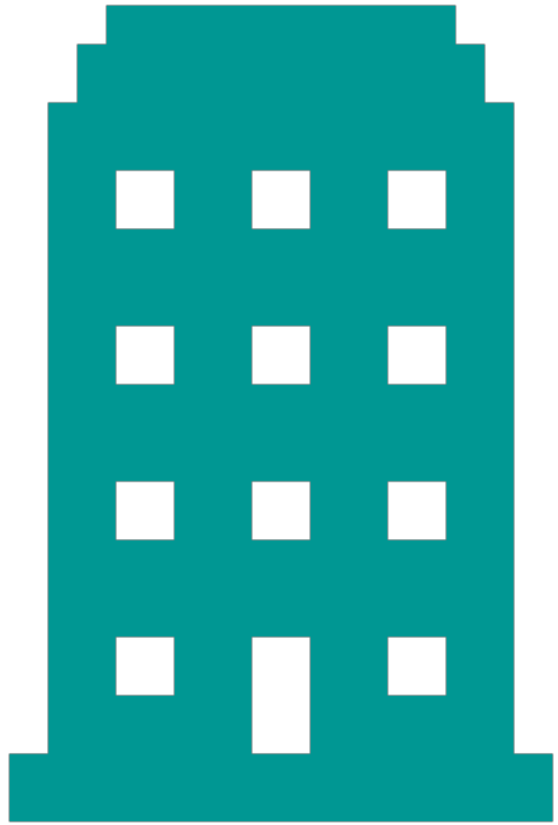
Cooling people

- Seek cooler indoor and outdoor spaces
- Use water: cool shower, bath or foot bath
- Wear a wet shirt or apply damp towels to your skin
- Drink plenty of water and other liquids to stay hydrated, even if not thirsty
- Wear loose and light-coloured breathable clothing
- Limit activity, especially hottest hours of the day (approx. 2pm to 4pm outdoors in BC, lasting longer indoors)

Demo Video: Checking the Person

Heat check-ins Step 3: Check the space

- Check or ask about indoor temperature (measured or perceived) and environmental risk factors.
- **Consistently high indoor temperatures can be life threatening. If in doubt, recommend that heat-vulnerable people go to a cooler space.**



Physical environment risk factors

- No mechanical cooling (A/C)
- Higher floors of buildings
- Directly under the roof
- South and/or west facing windows
- Large window surface area
- Single-pane windows
- No external window shading
- No evening cross breeze
- Low neighborhood greenness

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Cooling spaces

- If possible, put up outdoor shading or covers on windows
- Approx. 9-10am: close windows, pull shades or blinds to trap cooler air inside and block sun
- Approx. 9-10pm: open windows/ doors to let cooler overnight air inside
- Use multiple fans to help move cooler air into the home overnight (i.e. pointing in from windows)
- If the space has air conditioning, turn it on and aim for temperatures of 26C or cooler

Fans…

- **Fans do not directly cool the air and should not be used as the primary source of cooling for heat-vulnerable people in hot indoor environments.**

- At night, when outdoor temperatures are cooler, use fans to bring cool air inside. Kitchen and bathroom fans can vent to the outside of living spaces and may be used to move hot air outside.

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Demo Video: Checking the Space

Heat check-ins Step 4: Education

Education and resources you might share:

- How to cool people and spaces
- When to go to a cooler space
- When to seek medical attention
- Call 8-1-1 for non-emergency health questions and 9-1-1 for emergencies
- Do they have an emergency contact that can check on them or provide transportation?

Demo Video: Providing Education

Heat check-ins Step 5: Wrap up

Things you may check before ending the call:

- Do they have any questions?
- Do they know when you will call again?
- Does your organization share a call back number with them, in case they have questions or concerns?

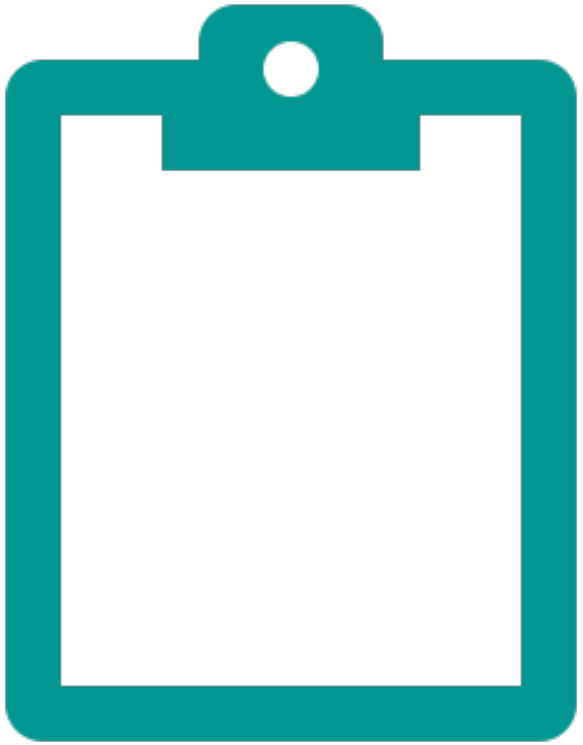
Demo Video: Wrapping Up the Check-In

Heat check-ins: Documentation

Find out how your facility is documenting calls. **How will private information be securely stored?**

Things it may be helpful to document:

- What they told you and what you recommended
- Concerns to monitor
- Medical conditions
- Environmental risk factors



Additional considerations and resources

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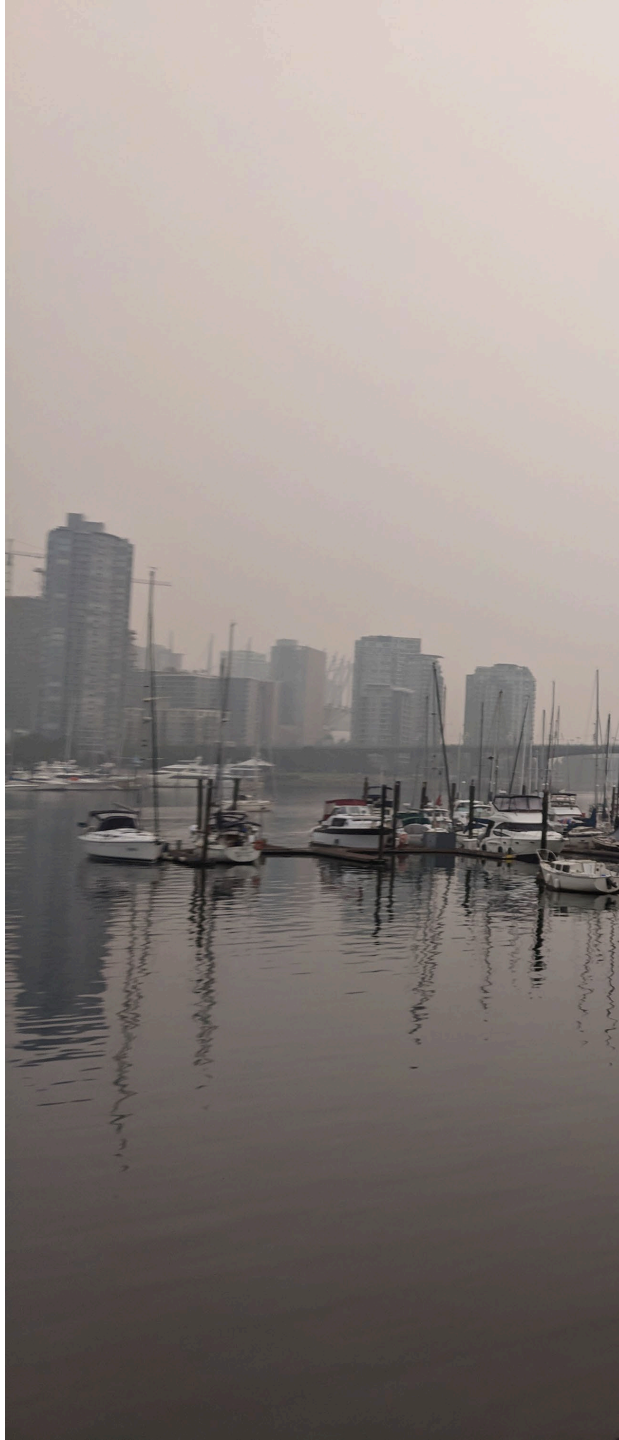
Considering heat and air quality together

Key for both heat and smoke events: **COOL** (A/C), **CLEAN** (HEPA Filter) indoor air

- Heat and air pollution affect your body in different ways and some people are susceptible to both
- **Heat is a greater immediate health risk than smoke for most people, so cooling should generally be prioritized (e.g. Open windows to cool hot spaces at night.)**
- Speak with a healthcare provider and check out the VCH Wildfire Smoke Webpage for more information



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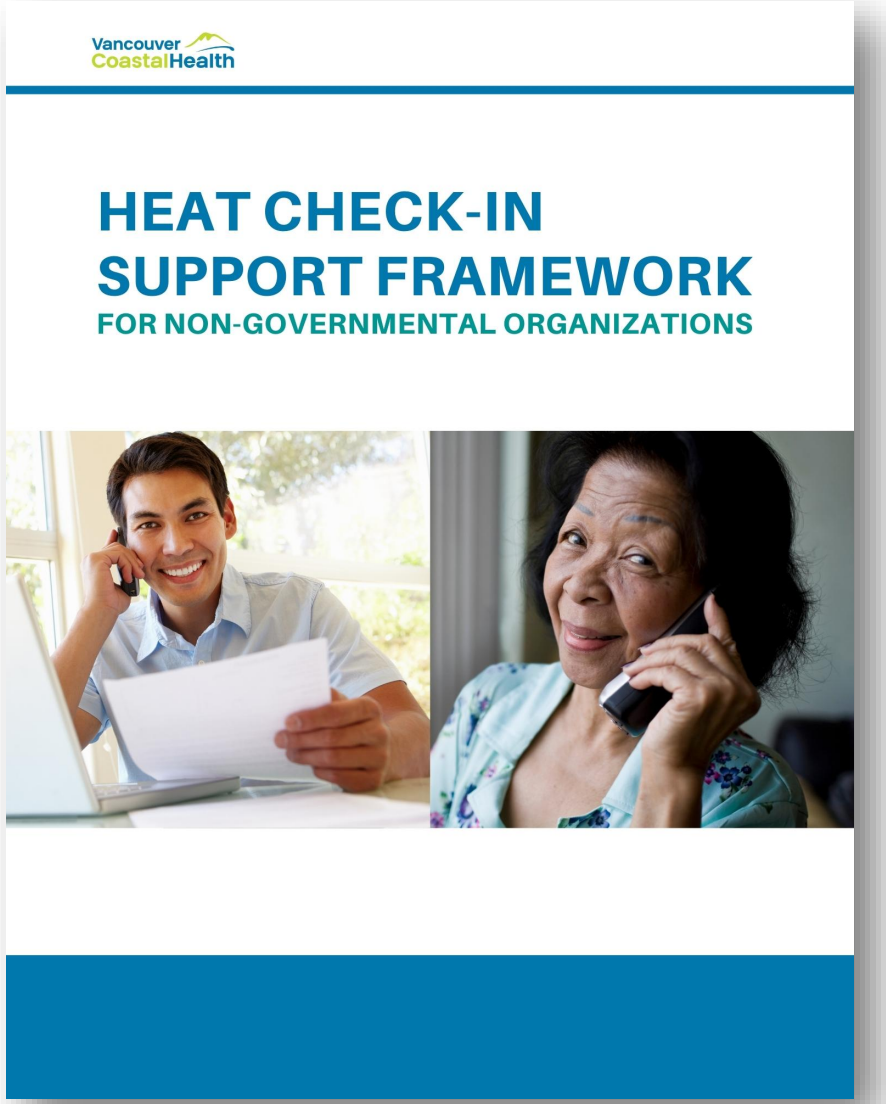
Official weather information

Environment and Climate Change Canada Resources:

- Public Weather Alerts for British Columbia
- WeatherCAN App
- Hello Weather – automated telephone service
  - English: 1-833-794-3556 or 1-833-79HELLO
  - French: 1-833-586-3836 or 1-833-58METEO

VCH heat check-in support framework

- 5 pages of Quick Facts with answers to common questions
- 2 pages of additional resources
- Equipment lists and staff safety tips
- Heat Check-In Workflow for NGOs
- Heat Check-In Example Script
- www.vch.ca/heat

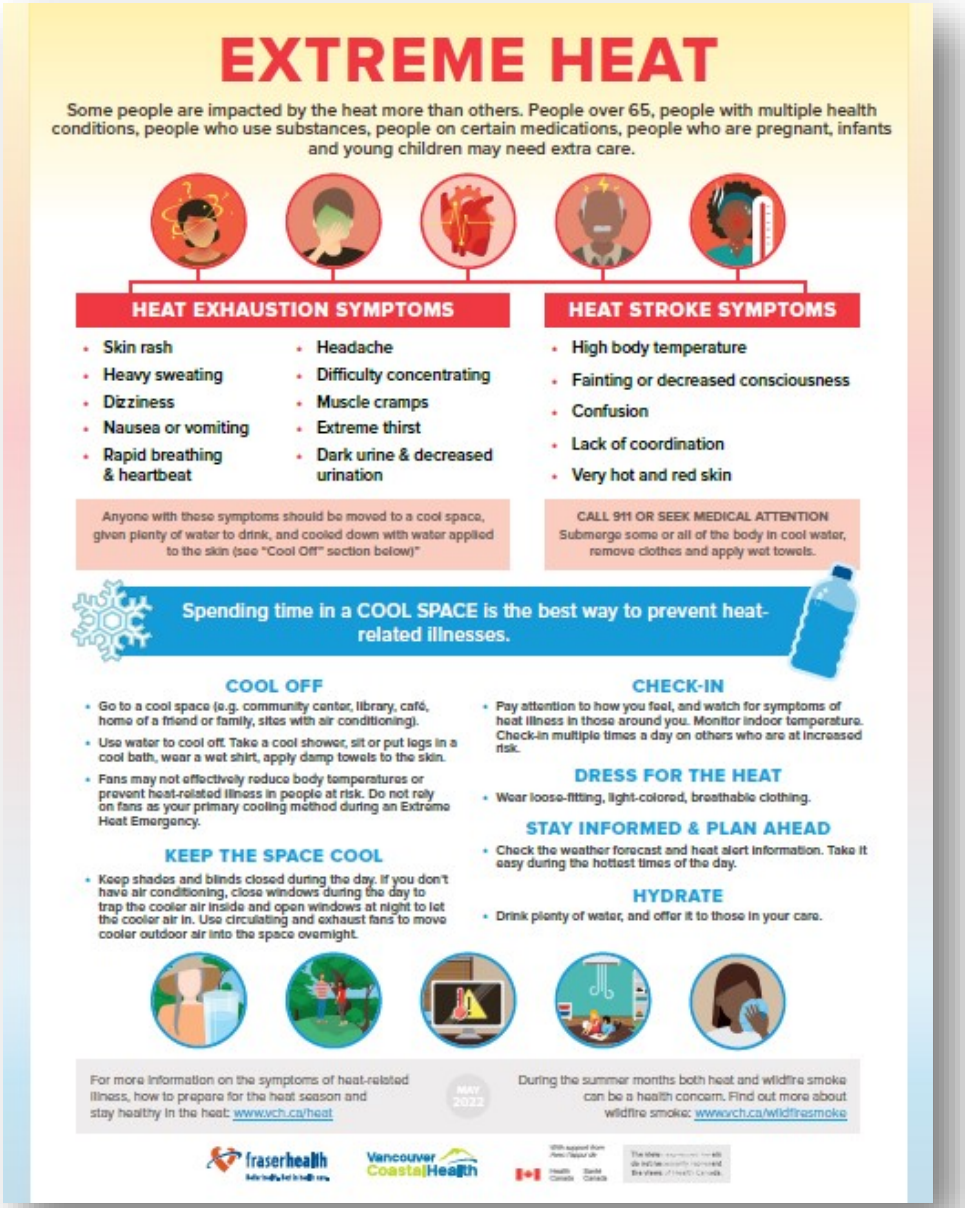


Additional resources

VCH heat webpage:
Resources for check-ins, community organizations, community care facilities, cooling spaces, special events, translated materials, etc.

Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society: Emergency Support for Seniors Framework
Excellent heat response examples from a Vancouver non-profit organization, including their materials and process.

MOSAIC Extreme Weather Check-Ins for Multilingual Seniors:
Heat check-in calls with an interpreter. Seniors can opt in or a community organization can refer seniors. Available in Metro Vancouver.



Key Messages

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Key Heat Messages

1. **Make a plan for heat and smoke season.**

2. **High indoor temperatures can be dangerous.** For people at higher risk, if the indoor temperature is 31 °C (88 °F) or higher, go somewhere cooler.

3. **Seek cool spaces under 26 °C / 78 °F and cool the body with water**, such as a cool bath, shower, foot bath or wearing wet clothing.

4. **Encourage community to check on family, friends and neighbours** who are at higher risk from heat.

Key Check-In Messages

1. If it was an emergency, **do you have enough information to help**? How will you keep personal information private and secure?

2. Clearly communicate procedures and ask what the check-in recipient prefers.

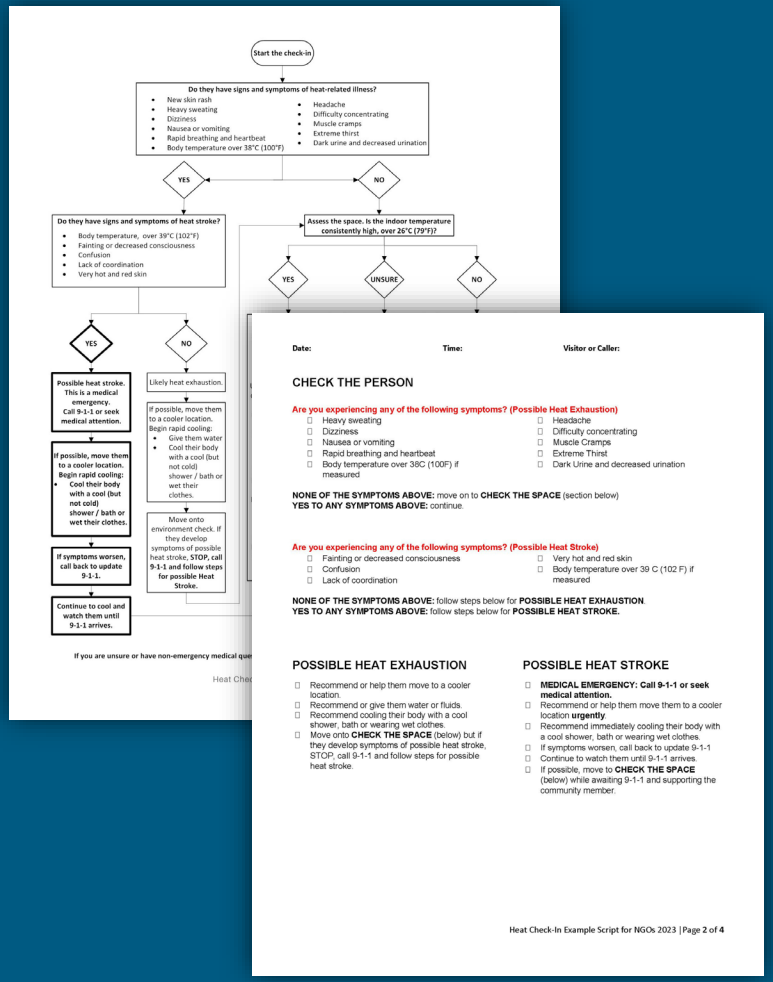
3. Heat-related illness can come on quickly and some people may not be able to recognize their body is overheating or dehydrated. **Check on people at higher risk at least once a day but ideally multiple times a day,** especially during an extreme heat emergency (level 2). Keep checking, even if they seem fine the first few days.

4. For non-urgent medical questions, direct the check-in recipient to a healthcare provider. **If you think the person has emergency symptoms, call 9-1-1.**

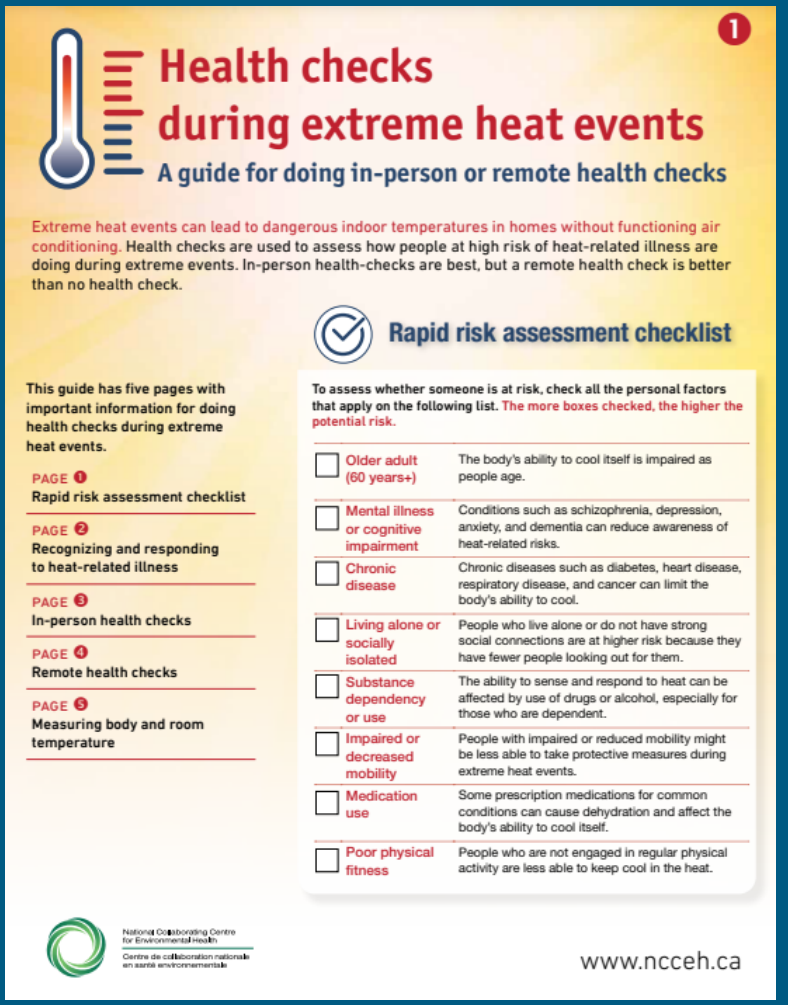
Heat check-in practice scenarios

Follow your facility protocols.

VCH and NCCEH have heat check-in tools available: www.vch.ca/heat



VCH Heat Check-In Support Framework



NCCEH Health Checks During Extreme Heat Events

Part 1 of heat check-in training is complete!

Please contact us with any questions:
healthy.environments@vch.ca
www.vch.ca/heat

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Question?

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