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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 7/3/2025 10:01:38 AM

Subject: Memo: Extreme Heat Plans - Summer 2025

Attachments: CMO-VEMA - Memo (Council) - Extreme Heat Plans - Summer 2025 (20 25-07-03).pdf

Good Morning Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a memo that provides an update on the City's extreme heat response plans for the summer of 2025. Key information includes:

- A brief history of the City's extreme heat plan overseen by VEMA
- Key components of heat readiness and response work for 2025 includes:
 - Coordination approach for Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies
 - Access to indoor cooling
 - Access to outdoor cooling and hydration
 - Communications and Public messaging
 - Community Partnerships – Resilient Neighbourhoods program
 - Wildfire smoke and Poor Air Quality

As the memo is focused on extreme heat response, it does not provide information related to the City's long-term climate adaption and urban tree canopy work.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and I'll work with Magnus Enfeldt, Chief Safety Officer to ensure a response through the weekly Q&A.

Thank you,

Sandra

Sandra Singh | Deputy City Manager

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selílwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

July 3, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief of External Relations
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Steve Jackson, GM, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Lon LaClaire, GM, Engineering Services
Margaret Wittgens, GM, Arts, Culture, and Community Services

FROM: Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: Overview of Extreme Heat Plans and Actions 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to update Mayor and Council on the City's extreme heat response plans for the summer of 2025. This memo builds on the briefing provided to Council on June 17, 2024.

BACKGROUND

Long range trends for the summer of 2025 are signalling the potential for warmer and drier than normal conditions. The City of Vancouver has had an extreme heat plan (Extreme Heat Initial Response Guide [IRG]) in place for 15 years. This plan is overseen by the Vancouver Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) with contributions and actions by several departments through identified department response leads.

Extreme heat is a complex challenge and requires collaboration and coordination across multiple levels of government, across agencies, and with community-based organizations. The key components of heat readiness and response work for 2025 include:

1. Coordination approach for Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies
2. Access to indoor cooling
3. Access to outdoor cooling and hydration
4. Communications and Public messaging
5. Community partnerships – Resilient Neighbourhoods program

6. Wildfire smoke and Poor Air Quality

Civic Engagement and Communication (CEC) will provide an additional memo with details of the public communications campaign for heat and wildfire smoke in 2025.

This memo does not include information related to the City's long-term climate adaptation and urban tree canopy work, which can be found in [2024 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#) and the [2025 Urban Forestry Strategy update](#).

DISCUSSION

2025 Plans and Actions

Each spring, VEMA convenes a Seasonal Readiness Coordination Call with public partners like Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), as well as representatives from all departments with operational roles in the Extreme Heat IRG. This session allows staff to hear about the anticipated forecast for the season and health impacts. Staff share information about departmental heat initiatives to ensure effective coordination throughout the summer. Below is an overview of the components of the heat readiness and response work for 2025.

1. Coordination approach for Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies

ECCC is responsible for issuing warnings for heat with input from the provincial Health Effects of Anomalous Temperatures (HEAT) committee. There are two levels of elevated heat that trigger escalating actions and coordination.

Level 1 - Heat Warning

A Heat Warning is triggered when the forecast at YVR Airport is at least 29°C for two consecutive days with a nighttime low of 16°C or higher or when the forecast at Abbotsford is at least 33°C for two consecutive days with a nighttime low of 17°C or higher. One to three of these Heat Warnings are expected each summer. The conditions are expected to be “very hot” and can lead to moderate (5%) increase in mortality.

- VEMA coordinates with City department leads and VCH via email notifications and regular coordination calls.
- VEMA coordinates with community partners through the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program.
- Cooling Centres are activated.
- Enhanced public communication is initiated to promote supports.
- CoV issues a “Heat warning supports advisory alert” via the Alertable app.

Level 2 – Extreme Heat Emergency

An Extreme Heat Emergency is triggered when the Heat Warning criteria have been met and the forecast indicates that daily highs will increase day-over-day for three or more consecutive days. One to two of these are expected per decade. The conditions are expected to be “dangerously hot” and can lead to very high (20%) increase in mortality. Additional actions and coordination are triggered as part of the response.

- The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is activated for enhanced response coordination.
- VFRS and VPD Department Operations Centres are activated.
- Staff participate in regional coordination calls led by the Province.

- CoV issues “Extreme heat emergency supports” advisory alert via the Alertable app
- The Province may issue a BC Emergency Alert (interrupts TV, radio; sent directly to cell phones).

2. Access to indoor Cooling

As per direction from [Vancouver Coastal Health](#), spending time in cool spaces is one of the primary measures to prevent heat-related illness. Access to indoor cooling is available at:

- **Cooling Centres:** Vancouver has designated 39 civic facilities (community centres and libraries) as cooling centres (See Appendix Table 1 for full list of locations). During Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies, the City pushes public messaging about these spaces to encourage people to spend time in a cool space. Cooling centres at community centres extend their hours and allow pets when activated. Cooling centre locations and hours are kept up-to-date on the City’s webpage: www.vancouver.ca/hotweather
- **Partner and Community Cooling Spaces:** In addition to civic cooling centres, staff are exploring partnership opportunities to include non-civic facilities as formal cooling centres. For 2025, a community partner cooling centre is available at the Chinatown Plaza mall. Additionally, Christ Church Cathedral will operate a cooling centre for Extreme Heat Emergencies staffed by Homelessness Services (ACCS), similar to arrangements for Warming Centres during extreme cold. Engagement with Neighbourhood Houses, Indigenous service agencies, cultural organizations, faith-based groups and seniors centres has demonstrated that many already provide informal cooling spaces to their users during heat events.
- **Supporting Residents of Non-Market Housing:** The City provides support to residents of City-owned and -operated Non-Market Housing by adding mechanical cooling in shared spaces, distributing information, and conducting checks on residents during Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies.
- **Supporting SROs:** The City connects with privately-owned SRO operators and the SRO-Collaborative (SRO-C) to provide heat safety information, encourage operators to check on heat-vulnerable residents and utilize community peer services as available. Between 2022 and 2024, the SRO-C received grants from the City to develop heat plans and protocols. In May, Council approved a grant of \$99,800 that will enable the SRO-C’s Heat Preparedness and Response program to operate from June to September 2025 in 41 SROs (2,078 rooms), including 10 buildings in Chinatown.
- **Cool Kits and Accessible Cooling Devices:** Cool Kits are low-tech supplies that people can use to identify when their home is dangerously hot, lower their body temperature and stay hydrated. Each kit contains an indoor thermometer, foot bath, cooling towel, spray bottle, cold packs, and reusable water bottle. Since 2022, the City has worked with partners to distribute 6,200 Cool Kits to seniors and older adults, people with disabilities, residents of SROs, homeless residents, and other groups who are at elevated risk of heat-related illness. Staff work with community partners including non-profit housing operators, drop-in centres, neighbourhood houses, seniors’ centres, and other organizations to distribute these kits.

In 2024, the City was awarded a [C40 Inclusive Climate Action grant](#) to distribute accessible cooling devices for people with disabilities. The City worked closely with Praxis Spinal Cord Institute and Technology for Living to identify appropriate cooling devices, in this case a cooling vest, and 155 were procured and distributed. Recipients cited physical and emotional benefits of receiving vests. In 2025, the City has awarded a grant to Technology for Living to procure and distribute additional cooling devices for people with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

3. Access to outdoor cooling and hydration

Staying cool while outdoors is critical to avoiding heat related illness. Access to cooler spaces outdoors and places to access water are available through the City at:

- **Shaded Spaces:** Residents who are outside can seek shade in parks, beaches, and other spaces under trees. Staff are working with select partners with parklets to explore how they can provide respite for communities during extreme heat response by, for example, putting up canopy tents and umbrellas in their parklets or providing access to water and health information. Staff continue to explore potential outdoor cooling options and new locations may come on-line in 2025 or in future years.
- **Water Features in Parks:** Water-based cooling is available at 15 spray parks (open May to September) and 12 wading pools (open July and August) across the City. The locations of these water features are available at: www.vancouver.ca/hotweather
- **Misting Stations, Fountains, and Handwashing Stations:** The City and Vancouver Park Board have deployed 31 misting stations in 2025, to be in place from May to September. Most misters are placed in parks and areas of greater need. The City has an extensive network of over 200 permanent drinking fountains with more deployed temporarily during the summer, in addition to handwashing stations that offer both hygiene and drinking functions. The locations of misting stations, fountains and handwashing stations are included in the map at: www.vancouver.ca/hotweather
- **Bottled Water Distribution:** Bottled water is provided to ACCS Community Centres, Ray-Cam, Park Rangers, Carnegie Outreach and Urban Issues Team to distribute to patrons without refillable water bottles who need support with hydration. The City is also working with the Atira Hub to connect them with donated water to distribute to community groups in the DTES.
- **Checking on people in outdoor public spaces:** While the majority of deaths from the June 2021 heat dome occurred inside, people in outdoor spaces are also at risk of heat-related illness and death. Park Rangers, outreach workers, and first responders check on people exhibiting signs of heat-related illness and direct them to cooling centres, water, and other support.

4. Communications and Public messaging

The City takes a proactive and multi-channel approach, aligned with partners, to increase awareness of extreme heat, health impacts, preparedness, and response plans, and to communicate key information in 12 languages before and during heat events. CEC will be providing a separate memo to Council with further details about this work.

For key resources including printable maps, translated material: [Stay safe in the summer heat translated resources | City of Vancouver](#)

For more hazard and risk information about extreme heat and wildfire smoke visit the Hazard & Risk Explorer on www.vancouver.ca/hazards

5. Community partnerships - Resilient Neighbourhoods Program

During emergencies, people go to the places they know and trust to meet their needs. Through the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program and building on the Spaces to Thrive Social Infrastructure Strategy and Resilient Vancouver Strategy, the City partners with community-based organizations to plan and deliver extreme heat supports.

In 2025, the City provided 13 organizations with grants to develop community-led extreme heat plans. Staff have connected with 60 other organizations to form a Resilience Amplifier Network that can share extreme heat information to communities not following formal City communication channels. Each spring, staff host seasonal readiness calls with these partners to share the City's plans, receive feedback, learn about partners' plans, and identify gaps. Since

2022, partners have conducted thousands of wellness checks on vulnerable residents, hosted multilingual heat workshops, and much more: see [2022 Community-led Extreme Heat Resilience](#).

6. Wildfire Smoke and Poor Air Quality

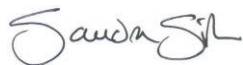
While wildfire smoke and poor air quality are not the focus of this memo, this is also the season for smoky skies. Below is a brief, high-level overview of some of the ways Vancouver is addressing wildfire smoke in conjunction with extreme heat.

- **Cleaner Air Spaces:** The City has 14 cleaner air spaces at community centres and libraries with high-performance air filtration systems to improve indoor air quality. Cleaner air spaces are available throughout the year during regular operating hours, and additional rooms are added when an air quality advisory is issued. Visit www.vancouver.ca/wildfiresmoke for a map of these locations.
- **DIY Air Cleaners:** Since 2023, the City has partnered with researchers from Simon Fraser University and the BC Lung Foundation to establish the [BREATHE Project](#) to improve equity and access to cleaner indoor air during wildfire smoke events. The City purchases materials and works with partners to host free workshops for residents to build their own air cleaners. To date 12 workshops in multiple languages have been held in Vancouver resulting in over 500 DIY air cleaners. For 2025 we anticipate five more workshops and 250 more DIY air cleaners. The City has translated all DIY air cleaner instructions into the 12 most-used languages in Vancouver, enabling people to build air cleaners at home.

FINAL REMARKS

Extreme heat is a complex challenge and requires collaboration and coordination across multiple levels of government, across agencies, and with community-based organizations. Since the 2021 heat dome, staff have worked diligently to respond to lessons learned and to foster strong relationships with partners to improve extreme heat plans, services, and cooling infrastructure. This work is ongoing and continues to evolve.

Thank you,



Sandra Singh
Deputy City Manager

APPENDIX

Table 1: Civic Cooling Centres Locations – 2025

VPB and ACCS Community Centres

1. Carnegie Community Centre
2. Champlain Heights Community Centre
3. Coal Harbour Community Centre
4. Evelyne Saller
5. Gathering Place
6. Hastings Community Centre
7. Hillcrest Community Centre
8. Kensington Community Centre
9. Kerrisdale Community Centre
10. Killarney Community Centre
11. Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre
12. Mount Pleasant Community Centre
13. RayCam Cooperative
14. Renfrew Park Community Centre
15. Roundhouse Community Centre
16. Sunset Community Centre
17. Thunderbird Community Centre
18. Trout Lake Community Centre
19. West End Community Centre

Libraries

1. Britannia Library
2. Carnegie Library
3. Central Library
4. Champlain Library
5. Collingwood Library
6. Dunbar Library
7. Firehall Library
8. Fraserview Library
9. Hastings Library
10. Joe Fortes Library
11. Kensington Library
12. Kitsilano Library
13. Marpole Library
14. Mount Pleasant Library
15. ná'c'a?mat ct Strathcona Library
16. Oakridge Library
17. Renfrew Library
18. South Hill Library
19. Terry Salman (Hillcrest) Library
20. West Point Grey Library

Note: Locations are subject to change. Any changes will be communicated on vancouver.ca and via other channels.