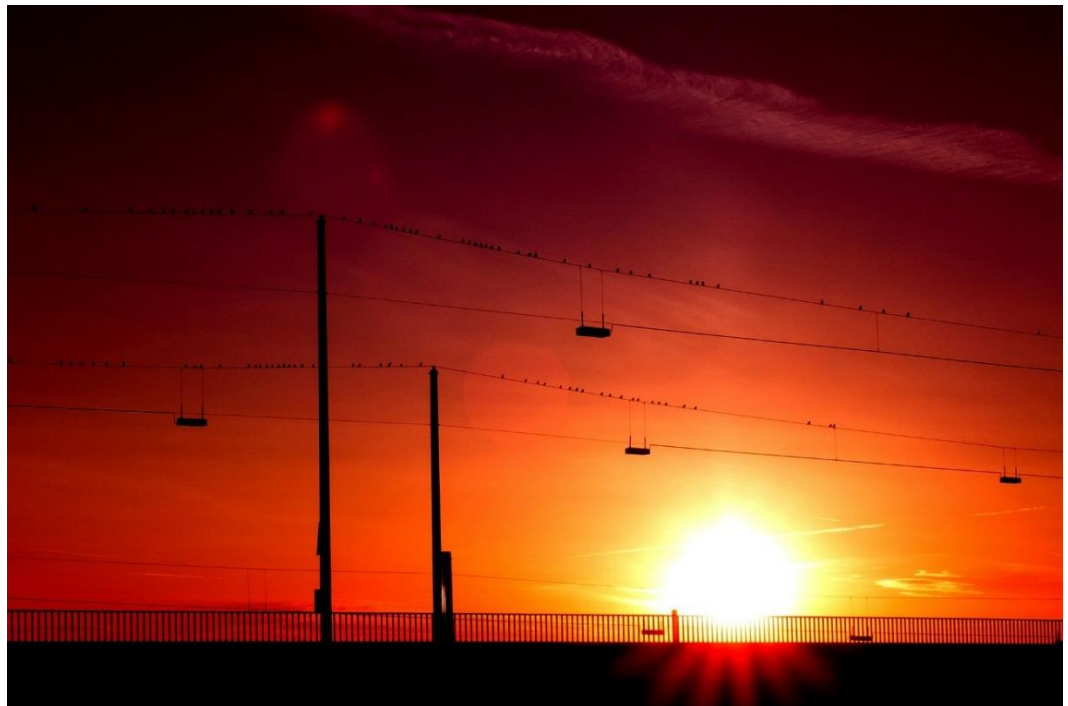


EXTREME HEAT RESPONSE PLAN:

A homeless-centered guide to keep Winnipeggers safe during extreme heat



JUNE 2020



This guide is created as a collaborative effort with the Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee. See Appendix I for a full list of committee members.

For more information regarding the Extreme Heat Response Plan, please contact

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What is Extreme Heat?

Extreme Heat is a period of unseasonably high temperatures, often accompanied by high humidity and lack of nighttime cooling. Extreme Heat can last for several days and can be more dangerous if accompanied by poor air quality (e.g. during wildland fire smoke episodes or urban 'smog').

In Southern Manitoba, a heat warning is issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) when the forecast for **at least two days** includes temperature **highs of 32° C and lows of 16° C or a humidex of 38.**

Periods of extreme heat can occur before a heat warning is issued by ECCC, and additional precautions may be needed. It is important to stay aware of announcements from the City of Winnipeg or Manitoba Health for notices.

Why an Extreme Heat Response Plan?

The *Extreme Heat Response Plan* aims to prevent harmful health impacts of extreme hot weather on the people experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg and coordinate resources to respond.

This resource provides education on heat, how to prepare, and respond to reduce the negative health impacts of extreme hot weather conditions.

The main objectives during extreme heat are to:

- Alert those most vulnerable that extreme hot weather conditions are either expected or currently exist;
- Enable those most vulnerable to take appropriate precautions;
- Trigger response actions by agencies that provide services, or alter operations to protect vulnerable people from extreme heat.

Extreme Heat and Homelessness

People experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to health impacts of extreme hot weather. They can be at high risk because they are likely to spend long periods of time outside, and have less access to indoor spaces to cool off, resulting in increased exposure.

Many problems faced by people experiencing homelessness, including inadequate clothing, lack of shelter from the sun, or malnutrition, can increase the risk of extreme hot-weather injuries. Some medical conditions, such as heart conditions, diabetes, or breathing problems can be made worse in too much heat. Chronic heat exhaustion, sleep disturbances and susceptibility to minor injuries and sicknesses have all been attributed to the possible effects of prolonged exposure to heat.

COVID-19

The summer of 2020 also includes monitoring and adjusting services to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In context of the pandemic precautions the approach to extreme heat safety will create dual challenges for 2020.

Since the onset of the pandemic in the spring, community agencies and public facilities have temporarily closed. Manitoba has entered [Phase 2 of restoring safe services](#) as of June 1, 2020, and [Phase 3](#) expected for late June. These phases outline public health directives on how to safely open and adjust services. Precautions include maximum number of people in spaces, continuing to follow physical distancing, increased cleaning, adjusting food services, and more.

Access up-to-date information on COVID-19 by visiting the following websites:

- Province of Manitoba: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html>
- City of Winnipeg: <https://www.winnipeg.ca/emergweb/covid-19/default.stm>

The Province of Manitoba has also released a Public Health Factsheet for Community Serving Agencies and Outreach work to consider safe operating and reopening procedures:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-community-agencies-outreach-work.pdf

End Homelessness Winnipeg's website has compiled local and national resources related to COVID-19 that may be relevant to homeless-serving agencies. Resources include public health guidance and how to prevent the spread of COVID-19; when and how to use personal protective equipment (PPE); how to educate community members on COVID-19 and screen for symptoms; as well as resources and referrals in place:

<https://endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca/covid-19-resources-winnipegs-homeless-serving-sector/>

Recognizing & Responding to Heat-Related Illness

Heat-related illnesses can result from too much exposure to heat, along with not having enough water to drink. Heat illnesses can include:

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat cramps (muscle cramps)
- Heat syncope (fainting)
- Heat edema (swelling of hands, feet, ankles)
- Heat rash
- Heat stroke (this is a **medical emergency**; more information below)

Signs of heat illness can include:

- Extreme thirst
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Pale and clammy skin
- Fainting, dizziness, weakness, tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Decreased urination with dark yellow urine color

If individuals show early signs of heat-related symptoms above, they are at risk for more severe symptoms. They should be brought somewhere cooler, out of the sun, given water to drink or sponged on the skin, and allowed to rest. Monitor these individuals for worsening signs.

If someone is having early heat-related symptoms, you can:







- Move the person to a cooler environment, ideally with circulating air.
- Remove or loosen as much clothing as possible and apply cool, wet cloths or towels to the skin. Fanning or spraying the person with water also can help.
- If the person is conscious, give small amounts of a cool fluid such as a commercial sports drink or fruit juice to restore fluids and electrolytes. Milk or water may also be given. Give about 4 ounces of fluid every 15 minutes.
- If they are having heat cramps, lightly stretch the affected muscle and gently massage the area.
- If the person's condition does not improve or if they refuse water, have a change in consciousness, or vomits, call 911.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately. During heat stroke, a person has a core body temperature above 40° C (105° F).

Signs of heat stroke include:

- Red, hot, and dry skin;
- No sweating;
- Dizziness and confusion;
- Complete or partial loss of consciousness;
- Headache;
- Nausea;
- Rapid pulse;

If someone is experiencing these symptoms, call 911. While you wait, move the person out of the heat. Cool them down as much as possible by sponging water on skin or fanning them. You can sponge the person with ice-water towels or cover the person with bags of ice. The longer a person's body is above 40° C, the greater likelihood of permanent effects or death.

| HEAT EXHAUSTION | OR | HEAT STROKE |
|---|---|---|
| Faint or dizzy |  | Throbbing headache |
| Excessive sweating |  | No sweating |
| Cool, pale, clammy skin |  | Body temp. above 40° C Red, hot, dry skin |
| Nausea or vomiting |  | Nausea or vomiting |
| Rapid, weak pulse |  | Rapid, strong pulse |
| Muscle cramps |  | May lose consciousness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get to a cooler, air conditioned place, and rest• Drink water if fully conscious• Take a cool shower or use cold compresses | | CALL 911 • Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives <small>Adapted with permission from SacramentoReady.org</small> |

Preventing Heat Illness Before It Happens

Recommendations for keeping cool to prevent heat illness include:

- Prevent dehydration. People need to drink more water and more frequently in hot weather.
- Look for spaces that are out of the heat and reduce activities particularly at hottest times of the day. While this can be challenging for people experiencing homelessness, it can include seeking shaded areas or indoor spaces in air-conditioning during the day. If you can't spend the whole day inside, be sure to take breaks from being outside during the day. See Appendix II for resources.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- If indoors, close windows and blinds during the hottest part of the day and open windows and blinds when it is cooler in the evening.

To learn more about the effects of extreme heat, please visit Manitoba Health's "Heat and Your Health" website:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/heat.html>.

Extreme Heat Notifications

Heat Warnings are issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) based on forecasted maximum and minimum daily temperatures, humidity, and the number of days expected to last.

In Southern Manitoba the following temperature/humidex thresholds must be met for at least 2 consecutive days:

| Temperature MAX | Temperature MIN | OR | Humidex MAX |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-------------|
| 32° Celsius | 16° Celsius | | 38 |

The Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee ('The Committee') recognizes that periods of extreme heat can occur when temperatures remain high (29°C and warmer) and do not dip below 16° Celsius for several days. Precautions may be needed before a heat warning is issued by ECCC.

The City of Winnipeg does not have a specific temperature that triggers their response but will watch the weather and community needs to assess formal responses. The City of Winnipeg will notify The Committee when a response is triggered.

Additional unofficial Weather Notifications may be provided by ECCC 2-4 days in advance of a potential heat event. These are only shared with stakeholders and not the general public.

The Chief Provincial Public Health Officer (CPPHO) of Manitoba may release a Heat Advisory, most likely linked to a Heat Warning, for an event that will last more than 2 days. These are done at the discretion of Manitoba Public Health and are meant to reinforce safety messaging in the Warnings.

To receive ECCC official alerts by email, sign up at <https://ecalertme.weather.gc.ca/> or download the official ECCC WeatherCAN app.

Winnipeg's Extreme Heat Response for the Homeless-Serving Sector

People experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to health impacts of extreme hot weather. They can be at high risk because they are likely to spend long periods of time outside, have less access to indoor spaces to cool off, resulting in increased exposure.

Winnipeg's Response Plan includes the following key elements:

- ✓ Coordinate resources across the community to ensure indoor spaces, such as drop-in facilities are open during the day throughout the summer for cooling off.
- ✓ As needed, add specific cooling centres during heat events.
- ✓ Ensure cooling centres, agencies, and outreach workers are distributing drinking water.
- ✓ During extreme heat warnings, explore access to water cooling stations and additional supports, as needed.

Stakeholder Roles

The Extreme Heat Responses Committee is made up of stakeholders including agencies who provide direct services to people who are experiencing homelessness, End Homelessness Winnipeg, City of Winnipeg Departments, and Manitoba Housing representatives. See Appendix I for a full list of Committee Members.

In early Spring, the Committee coordinates planned response activities, ensuring there are enough resources for the community throughout the summer, and during extreme heat events.

End Homelessness Winnipeg will:

- Co-chair the Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee & call monthly meetings.

- Monitor the e-mail list of The Committee, ensuring all stakeholders receive up-to-date information on plans.
- Communicate to the public, stakeholders and partner organizations by:
 - Issuing media releases and preparing communications, as necessary, sharing plans for extreme heat, resources available and/or changes to planned responses;
 - Post the Extreme Heat Weather Response Plan on EHW website, social media, and through all stakeholders.
- Monitor the forecast and sign up to receive ECCC weather alerts at <https://ecalertme.weather.gc.ca/> or through the WeatherCan app.
- Liaise with the City of Winnipeg when additional responses are necessary.
- Coordinate evaluation of the season's response.

Other stakeholders and partners will:

- Attend Extreme Weather Response Committee Meetings and coordinate responses during the summer and for extreme heat events.
- Monitor the forecast and sign up to receive ECCC weather alerts at <https://ecalertme.weather.gc.ca/> or through the WeatherCan app.
- Develop their own plans for responding to such warnings.

The annual cycle for Winnipeg Extreme Heat Response is divided into three stages:

- **The Green Stage** is in effect from November 1 to April 16, when plans are developed for the upcoming summer, and the previous season's response is evaluated.
- **The Yellow Stage** is in effect April 17 to October 31, when ECCC's 24-hour forecast normally calls for temperatures of 15°C or warmer, except when a heat warning is issued.
- **The Red Stage** is in effect when a **heat warning** has been issued by Environment Canada, **or The Committee decides a coordinated response is needed, taking lead from the City of Winnipeg's actions.**

| STAGE: GREEN | | | PRIOR TO ONSET OF WARM WEATHER (November 1 - April 16) | | |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| End Homelessness Winnipeg | City of Winnipeg | Shelters and Community Agencies | End Homelessness Winnipeg | City of Winnipeg | Shelters and Community Agencies |
| <p>Convene Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee stakeholders to evaluate the prior heat season response, prepare for the upcoming heat season.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders to identify gaps in response.</p> <p>Draft response plan for upcoming season.</p> | <p>Unless stated otherwise, the City's lead is the Winnipeg Emergency Management Coordinator (WEMC).</p> <p>Attend Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Review City of Winnipeg plans for extreme heat.</p> <p>Monitor email updates from EHW.</p> | <p>Attend Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Provide community members with information about the risks of extreme heat and how they can protect themselves.</p> <p>Prepare messages to advise staff, volunteers, clients, and partners about the agency's response to extreme heat warnings.</p> <p>Review internal operating plans for extreme heat to include provisions for additional staffing and supplies, as needed.</p> <p>Educate staff and volunteers about operating plans for extreme heat.</p> | | | |

| STAGE: YELLOW | | | WARM WEATHER OPERATIONS IN EFFECT (April 17-October 31) | | |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| End Homelessness Winnipeg | City of Winnipeg | Shelters and Community Agencies | End Homelessness Winnipeg | City of Winnipeg | Shelters and Community Agencies |
| <p>Convene Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee to develop plans and troubleshoot responses.</p> <p>Finalize Extreme Heat Response Plan with partners and release.</p> <p>Sign up to receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended.</p> <p>Coordinate media strategy with Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee.</p> | <p>Unless stated otherwise, the City's lead is the Winnipeg Emergency Management Coordinator (WEMC).</p> <p>Sign up to receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended.</p> <p>Participate in Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Prepare to activate internal operating plans for extreme heat if needed.</p> | <p>Sign up to receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended.</p> <p>Participate in Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Prepare to activate internal operating plans for extreme heat if needed.</p> <p>Prepare messages to advise staff, volunteers, clients, and partners about the agency's response to extreme heat warnings.</p> <p>Coordinate resources to ensure high-risk or vulnerable clients are monitored and safe.</p> | | | |

| STAGE: RED | | | HEAT WARNING | | |
|--|--|---|--------------|--|--|
| End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW) | City of Winnipeg | Shelters and Community Agencies | | | |
| Receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended. | Unless stated otherwise, the city's lead is the Winnipeg emergency management coordinator (WEMC). | Receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended. | | | |
| Convene Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings to coordinate responses and solve problems. | Receive notices from ECCC that a heat warning is in effect or ended. | Activate extreme heat response plans. | | | |
| Communicate updates or changes in responses. | Open additional cooling centers if required. | Provide outreach to high-risk or vulnerable clients and arrange for additional services/care if needed. | | | |
| | Extend operating hours for cooling areas | Coordinate resources to ensure high-risk or vulnerable clients are monitored and safe. | | | |
| | Issue media messages to citizens in consultation with Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee. | If capacity is reached at centres: Contact the City of Winnipeg's emergency preparedness coordinator to assess the need for additional cooling centres to be opened. | | | |
| | If a local state of emergency is declared: | Participate in Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings. | | | |
| | Use winnipeg.ca home page as "EmergWeb." | | | | |
| | Participate in Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee meetings. | | | | |
| | Deliver water tanks to shelters if requested and available. | | | | |

APPENDIX I: Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee Members (2020)

The following organizations and groups participate in the Extreme Weather Response Steering Committee:

1JustCity - Just a Warm Sleep (Augustine United Church)
City of Winnipeg (Community Services Department, Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service, Office of Emergency Management, Winnipeg Police Service)
Downtown Winnipeg BIZ - CHAT
End Homelessness Winnipeg
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Health Sciences Centre
Macdonald Youth Services
Main Street Project
Manitoba Housing
Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc.
North Point Douglas Women's Centre - Mama Bear Clan
Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY)
Salvation Army Centre of Hope
Siloam Mission
Spence Neighbourhood Association (& West End 24/7)
West Central Women's Resource Centre
Winnipeg Outreach Network
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

APPENDIX II: Resources available during Extreme Heat

* Subject to change due to COVID-19 and other factors. This list was prepared June 23, 2020

| Organization | Hours | Age | Daytime drop-in / cooling option | Wash-rooms | Water | Other resources available |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------|--|
| Main Street Project 190 Disraeli 204-306-8378 | 24/7 | Men and women 18+ | √ | √ | √ | Food, daytime sleeping |
| Salvation Army - Weetamah 324 Logan Avenue 204-946-9490 | 7 days 9:00 am - 4:00 pm | Open to all | √ <i>note: no A/C</i> | √ | √ | Computer access |
| Siloam Mission 303 Stanley St. 204-956-4344 ext. 2423 | 7 days 7am-8pm | Open to all | Only while accessing programs | √ | √ | Food, computer access, phones |
| WRHA Access Downtown 640 Main Street | Mon-Fri 8:45-4:30 | Open to all | Only while accessing resources | √ | √ | Phones |
| Macdonald Youth Services - Youth Resource Centre 159 Mayfair 204-477-1804 | 24/7 | Youth under 21 | √ | √ | √ | Emergency youth shelter, first-aid, counselling, food, phones, hygiene |
| 1 Just City - St. Matthews Maryland 365 McGee St. 204-774-3957 | M/T/Th/Fri 1:30-4pm | Open to all | √ | √ | √ | Meals and toiletries |
| 1 Just City - Oak Table 109 Pulford St. 204-416-2240 | Mon-Thurs 12:30-3pm | Open to all | √ | √ | √ | Meals and toiletries |
| Rossbrook House 658 Ross Ave. 204-494-4090 | 24/7 | Youth under 24 | √ | √ | √ | Activities & entertainment, meals, and safe rides home |

City of Winnipeg - Spray pads are open including: **Freight House (200 Isabel St.)**

For more details of what's open & closed at the City, visit:

<https://www.winnipeg.ca/emergweb/covid-19/default.stm>

Outreach Teams

**Schedules subject to change. This list was prepared June 23, 2020.*

| Organization | Hours of Operation | Contact Information |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Main Street Project | 24/7 | 204-232-5217 |
| Street Connections | Everyday except Sunday 6pm-11:30pm | 204-981-0742 |
| Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata | Wed - Sat 9pm to 7am | 204-330-3300 |
| Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. | Sun - Wed 11am to 2am | 204-781-2691 |
| Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) | Mon - Wed 4pm-9pm Thurs 12pm-4pm | 204-391-2209 |
| St. Boniface Street Links | Mon - Sat 8am - 4pm & 8pm -10pm Sunday 12pm-4pm | 204-228-2369 |
| Sage House | Mon-Fri 12pm-8pm | 204-582-2311 |
| CHAT Team (Downtown BIZ) | Monday - Saturday 8am-4pm | 204-806-5095 |
| West Central Women's Resource Centre | Mon - Fri 2pm-6pm | 204-774-8975 |

Resource Guides

The resource guides below outline a wider range of services & supports available.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>211 Manitoba http://mb.211.ca/</p> | <p>An online database of health, government, and social services available across Manitoba.</p> |
| <p>HelpSeeker https://helpseeker.org/ or Download the App</p> | <p>An online, geo-located outline of services for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Update and list your organization for free or use it to find available supports.</p> <p>Available online or as an App.</p> |
| <p>Winnipeg Outreach Network Resource Guide https://endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/20190924-WON-GUIDE.pdf</p> | <p>Resource guide outlining local supports for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Viewable online or printed pocket-size pamphlet.</p> <p><i>*NOTE: many services are out-of-date due to COVID-19.</i></p> |