



City of West Kelowna

Heat Response Plan



Heat Response Plan Summary

Background

In response to the 2021 heat dome, the Province created a BC Heat Committee to support the planning and response efforts related to heat events in British Columbia. Multiple levels of government, organizations, and agencies are now tasked with a variety of rolls and responsibilities to assist in supporting the response plan and recommendations created by the Province.

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the Public the Heat Response Plan that has been created for West Kelowna.

Introduction

The City of West Kelowna Heat Response Plan is a guiding document outlining the City's response to extreme heat events and provides additional support to the Province of British Columbia's Heat Alert Response System (HARS). This plan follows the key messaging and actions identified in the BC Heat Alert Response System and is intended to respond to heat warnings and declared emergencies at a basic local emergency level. The City acknowledges that extensive emergencies, such as large scale power loss, will be deferred to the Regional Emergency Operations Center for response.

It is recognized that several levels of government, organizations, and agencies play a significant roll outside or run concurrently with local City response efforts. For the safety of residents and staff, response efforts will stay within the City's recognized scopes of expertise with other necessary efforts falling to other agencies with the required expertise.

The City of West Kelowna Heat Response Plan will include a list of appendices showing additional operation documents that have been created by each individual department to support the City's Heat Response Plan. This list will be reviewed and updated as operations plans are amended over time.

Heat Alert Response System (HARS)

HARS is a two-tiered alert system initiated by the province, in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, intended to inform and guide all levels of government on how to respond to extreme heat events. Environment Canada issues notifications and alerts when moderate to extreme heat events are predicted. These alerts can be obtained by registering with [Public Weather Alerts for Canada](#), or with the [WeatherCAN app](#). Extreme heat event criteria is unique to individual regions within British Columbia including the BC interior and specifically the Central Okanagan.

See below link for additional information on the BC Heat Alert Response System:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Health-Environment/Provincial-Heat-Alerting-Response-System.pdf>

Heat Warning (Level 1)

A heat warning will be issued for West Kelowna when the following criteria is met:

A heat warning is a moderate public health risk.

- ✓ Two or more consecutive days in which daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach or exceed 35°C
- ✓ Nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to be above the regional temperature threshold of 18°C or warmer

Heat Emergency (Level 2)

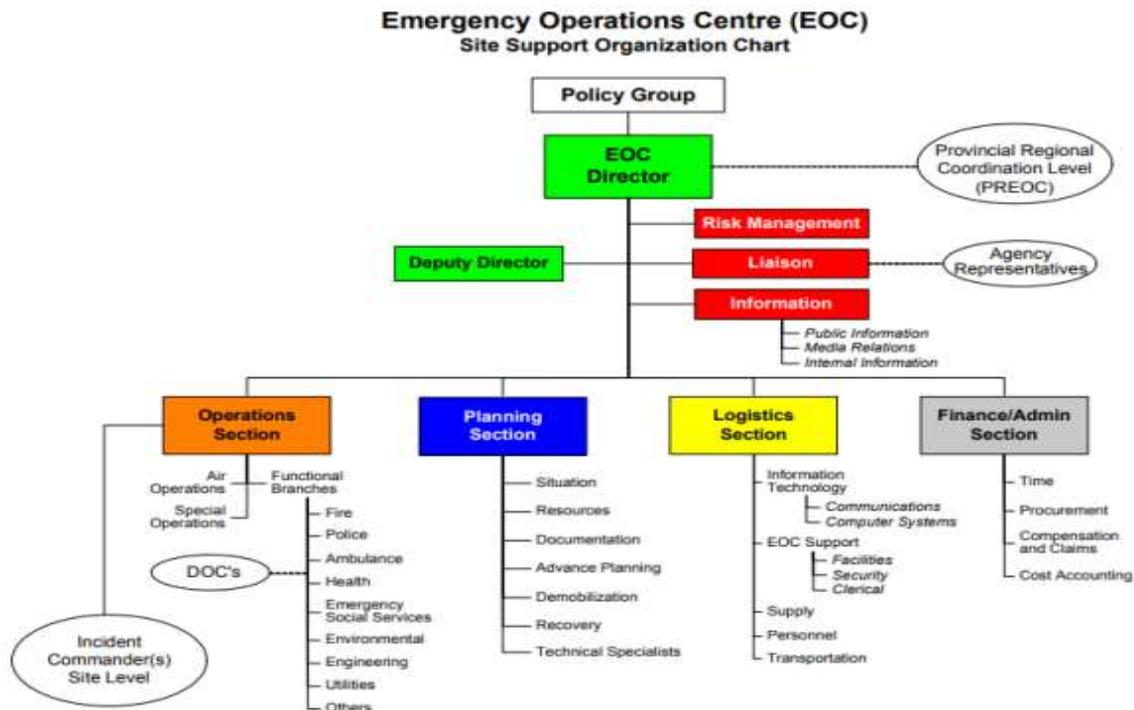
A heat emergency will be issued for West Kelowna when the following criteria is met:

A heat emergency is a public health risk.

- ✓ Heat warning criteria have been met
- ✓ Forecast indicates that daily highs will subsequently increase day-over-day for three or more consecutive days

Implementation and Response

City of West Kelowna staff have developed a Heat Response Committee that is structured and based on the BC Emergency Management System, as listed below:



The City’s Heat Response plan has a modified organizational structure consisting of program Chairman, Emergency Response Advisors, and key personnel to assist with all four levels of planning. The size of the committee will be staffed in line with the severity of the event and the needs of the activated heat response plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Environment Canada	<i>Initiates environmental heat warnings and emergencies</i>
Province of British Columbia	<i>Initiates Heat Alert Response System</i>
Interior Health Authority	<i>Public messaging and education</i>
Emergency Operating Centre (EOC)	<i>Public messaging, education, and support</i>
BC Housing	<i>Shelters for vulnerable population</i>
City of West Kelowna	<i>Public messaging, education, support, and local response plan</i>
BC Transit	<i>Transportation assistance</i>
School District #23	<i>Potential cooling center sites</i>
CWK Heat Planning Committee	<i>Oversee and implement plan as required</i>
CWK Liaison	<i>Liaison with partnering agencies</i>
CWK Communications	<i>Implement and adjust communication plans as needed</i>
CWK Operations	<i>Prepare and implement operational activities as needed</i>
CWK Finance	<i>Track/Monitor/Keep records of all costs.</i>
CWK Logistics	<i>Source/Purchase and see to the implementation of needed resources.</i>

Key Messaging and Action Plans

The issuing of a Heat Warning or Extreme Heat Emergency will activate a series of actions by different ministries, public health organizations, and levels of government, including the City of West Kelowna. It is recommended that key messaging and action plans follow the guidelines and suggestions as listed in the BC Heat Alert Response System.

The HARS document recommends four (4) different levels of planning during a heat season.

1. Pre-Season
2. Heat Warning
3. Heat Emergency
4. Post Season

Preseason Preparedness (Early Spring)

Committee members meet to discuss heat season planning. This meeting includes the discussion of a public statement to remind West Kelowna residents that our heat season is approaching. Preplanning of third-party outreach will take place during the preseason phase and includes reaching out to partnering agencies

such as the Emergency Operations Centre, Emergency Social Services, BC Housing, School District 23, BC Transit, churches, local businesses, etc.

During this time, committee members' individual responsibilities and roles will be reviewed. Additionally, the Heat Action Plan will be reviewed and any outstanding items will be updated.

Heat Warning (Level 1)

- The committee will meet when Environment Canada first forecasts heat warning conditions.
- Communications will advise the public by using the City's public education and notification tools for a Heat Warning.
- City staff will be reminded of 'Working in Heat' protocols and education reminders will be distributed.
- Committee will discuss strategies on key messaging and action plans associated with a Heat Warning, including how to assist the vulnerable populations and those at higher risk of serious illness or death.
- Other measures will be implemented if conditions warrant.

Heat Emergency (Level 2)

- The committee will meet when Environment Canada first forecasts Heat Emergency conditions.
- Communications will advise the public by using the City's public education and notification tools for a Heat Emergency.
- City staff will be reminded of 'Working in Heat' protocols and education reminders will be distributed.
- Committee will discuss strategies on key messaging and implement action plans associated with a Heat Emergency, including how to assist the vulnerable populations and those at higher risk of serious illness or death (homeless, seniors, or others as identified in the Heat Alert Response System)
- City to implement Heat Emergency Operation Plan that may include, but not be limited to the following:
 - o Seek funding approvals from the Emergency Operations Centre.
 - o Consider setting up Hydration stations.
 - o Consider opening a cooling center or centers.
 - o Consider third-party partnerships to provide additional assistance.
 - o Consider misting stations at various City locations.
 - o Implement strategy on ways to assist high risk and vulnerable populations.
 - o Pre planning behind heat related power loss.
 - o Consider adjusting park schedules to provide additional access to waterfront, spray parks, or other amenities that could assist with cooling opportunities.
 - o Adjusted work schedules for City employees to limit hours of work during peak heat hours of the day.
- Committee members will complete a daily debrief during each Heat Emergency event to enhance, refine, and continue to improve the plan, if required.
- Other measures will be developed and implemented as conditions warrant.

Post Season (debrief)

- The committee will meet after each heat season to examine the effectiveness of West Kelowna's Heat Response Plan and discuss potential changes or areas for improvement.
- The Heat Response Plan will be amended after each season, if necessary.
- Financial strategies for future planning will be discussed, in preparation for annual budget deliberations.