



Collaborative Seasonal Planning for Community Health Partners and Local Governments

Island Health, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), and Health Emergency Management BC (HEMBC) work in partnership with communities to support readiness across all seasons. This letter recognizes the local knowledge, experience, and expertise already guiding community planning and response, and highlights partner contacts and resources that may support readiness for seasonal health and safety risks, such as:

- **Spring:** Flooding and landslides associated with heavy rainfall and snowmelt
- **Summer:** Extreme heat events, wildfires, wildfire smoke, and drought
- **Fall:** Storms, flooding, and landslides as weather patterns change
- **Winter:** Cold temperatures, snowfall, power outages, and carbon monoxide exposure

Communities that have recently experienced drought or wildfire may face additional risks during subsequent seasonal rains, such as weakened trees, unstable soils, rockfalls, and localized flooding.

This letter highlights seasonal readiness supports and resources available through partner organizations. Community needs will be distinct. As these supports continue to evolve, community input is welcomed to help guide our future planning. Communities are encouraged to connect with their local Medical Health Officer (MHO), HEMBC representative, and FNHA or Métis Nation British Columbia representatives.

Detailed seasonal hazard supports and resources are provided in Appendix A for reference.

Contacts and Coordination

For coordination, information sharing, or to request support for seasonal hazards and emergency events, communities are encouraged to connect using the pathways below.

Island Health

- **Medical Health Officers (MHOs):** Public health physicians who provide leadership to promote and protect population health and support coordinated public health communications.
Contact Information: [Medical Health Officers | Island Health](#)
- **Environmental Public Health (EPH):** Guidance on food and drinking water safety, wastewater disposal, shelter site reviews, and water quality advisories.
Contact information: [Environmental Public Health Locations | Island Health](#)
- **Public Health Nursing (PHN):** Health promotion, disease prevention, and support services for women, children, youth, and families. Outreach nursing may be available where resources allow.
Contact information: [Health Unit Locations | Island Health](#)

- **Community Virtual Care:** Virtual clinical care supports for vulnerable populations, including those sheltering in place during heat or wildfire smoke events.
Access services: [Accessing Services | Island Health](#)

Health Emergency Management BC (HEMBC)

Supports coordination of population health considerations during seasonal hazards and emergencies, including information sharing, situational awareness, and connection to appropriate Island Health teams.

- Non-urgent coordination: hembc@islandhealth.ca
- Emergency population health support during a declared emergency: **HEMBC 24/7 line: 250-370-8575**

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

As a partner in health and wellness, FNHA works with communities and partners to support First Nations health and emergency response activities.

- Environmental Public Health: environmental.health@fnha.ca or your FNHA Regional Office
- FNHA Vancouver Island EPHS contact: melissa.joe@fnha.ca
- Health Emergency Management: VI.HEM@fnha.ca
- FNHA Vancouver Island HEM contact: melissa.aird@fnha.ca
- After-hours emergencies: **1-844-666-0711** or eph.afterhours@fnha.ca
- Messages received after 10 p.m. are returned beginning at 6 a.m. the following day

Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)

MNBC works with Métis citizens and partners to support health, wellness, and emergency preparedness through programs and services.

- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Food Security: emergency@mnbc.ca
- MNBC Community Services: communityservices@mnbc.ca
- [Local Chartered Communities](#)
- [Regional Directors and democratically elected representatives](#)
- General Health enquiries: health@mnbc.ca

We appreciate the continued collaboration of our partners in supporting community seasonal readiness and look forward to working together to strengthen health, preparedness, and response.



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Appendix A: Seasonal Hazard Supports and Resources

Wildfire Events

Partners collaborate during all phases of wildfire events to support community readiness, response, and recovery through coordinated public health guidance, shared information, and access to resources.

- **Information and public health guidance:**
 - [Fnha.ca/wildfire](https://fnha.ca/wildfire) provides centralized information on emergency management, evacuation, and wildfire smoke-related supports for First Nations communities in B.C.
 - [Island Health Wildfires webpage](#) offers guidance on health risks from wildfire smoke and practical steps to protect individual and community health.
 - Further guidance on clean air shelters, wildfire smoke exposure, air quality considerations, and safely returning home following evacuation orders:
 - [Wildfire Smoke – Clean Air Shelters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - [Returning to Your Home after Wildfires](#) (FNHA guide)
- **Air purifiers** – units for FNHA community members who are more vulnerable to wildfire smoke and unable to travel to a clean air shelter.
 - The FNHA has a limited number of air purifiers for vulnerable community members that meet the criteria for [Air Purifier Support](#). Health leadership in your community should contact your Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to request an air purifier.
 - Vulnerable community members may be eligible for reimbursement if they meet the criteria for [Air Purifier Support](#). Email VI.HEM@fnha.ca with your reimbursement request for review by the regional team.

Heat Events

Partners work together across all phases of extreme heat events to support community planning, response, and public health messaging to reduce heat-related health impacts.

- The [Island Health Heat Safety webpage](#) provides practical guidance on preventing heat-related illness and staying safe during extreme heat events. Clients of Island Health’s Home Care Program or Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) Program may be eligible for a free portable air conditioner (AC). The [BC Hydro free portable air conditioners webpage](#) has information on eligibility criteria.
- Communities can refer to the BC Centre for Disease Control’s [Guidance for Community Cooling Centres During B.C.’s Restart Plan](#) for information on planning and setting up cooling centres.
- FNHA Environmental Public Health Services (EPHS) are available and can provide advice to First Nations communities on:
 - Cooling centre considerations
 - Reducing health impacts from extreme heat
 - Indoor air quality and related environmental health concerns

- For planning or response support during heat events (e.g., addressing specific environmental or health needs, educational resources, or engagement opportunities), First Nation communities can connect with their regional Health Emergency Management (HEM) Manager or email VI.HEM@fnha.ca.

Flooding and Landslides

- During storm, flood, and landslide events, partners support communities by sharing public health guidance and recovery information to reduce health risks, and support safe return and recovery. Resources include:
 - [Important Flood Safety Information](#)
 - [Assessment of Septic Systems after a Flood: A suggested approach with First Nations](#) (FNHA guide)
 - [Island Health Floods and Landslides webpage](#)

Cold Weather Safety

During periods of extreme cold, partners support communities by sharing public health guidance to reduce cold-related health risks and promote winter safety. Resources include:

- The [Island Health Cold Weather Safety webpage](#), which provides practical information on preventing cold-related illnesses and staying safe during extreme winter conditions.

Support for Evacuations

FNHA's role during evacuations is to support First Nations communities through:

- Ongoing communication and support to Leadership, Health Directors and Community Engagement Coordinators, relaying information where possible, coordination of counselling, traditional supports, and culturally safe spaces.
- Continued access to FNHA and FNHA-funded health services:
 - [First Nations Health Information for Evacuees](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - [First Nations Health Benefits](#) – call 1-888-305-1505 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Health Benefits can assist you with:
 - Refilling prescriptions
 - Patient travel services unrelated to evacuation orders (e.g. travel to dialysis and other appointments)
 - Medical supplies and equipment (Including oxygen tanks) and eyewear
 - Dental items (e.g. dentures)
 - Mental health and wellness counselling

Mental Health and Wellness Supports

Partners recognize the importance of mental health, wellness, and social connection during and after emergency events. Available supports include the following:

- Those who live alone or are otherwise socially isolated are encouraged to sign up for the [Red Cross Friendly Calls Program](#), which matches community members with a trained Red Cross volunteer to provide day-to-day connection, support, and informational resources.
- Island Health's [Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#) (MHSU): Regional mental health and substance use supports, including wraparound services and support accessing warming centres or emergency shelters.
- FNHA [Mental Health and Wellness Supports](#):
 - Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of where individuals reside in the province.
 - KUU-US 24-Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717)
 - Indian Residential School Survivors Society: 1-800-721-0066
 - Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum: 1-888-403-3123
 - [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#): Doctors are available seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to provide medical advice, prescriptions, and referrals via Zoom video conference or phone. The service is culturally safe and open to all Indigenous people in B.C. and their family members. Call 1-855-344-3800 for an appointment.
 - [First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service](#): This service requires a referral from a health and wellness provider, such as a doctor, nurse, mental health counsellor, traditional healer, or the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day. Specialists in addictions medicine and psychiatry are available weekdays to support individuals and family members with more complex mental health and addiction needs.
 - [Mental Health and Wellness Supports](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - [Recognizing and Addressing Trauma and Anxiety During Disasters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
 - [Recognizing and Resolving Trauma in Children During Disasters](#) (FNHA fact sheet)
- Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC): MNBC presents a monthly, seasonally specific Emergency Preparedness Webinar Series. These webinars are aimed at Métis community members to listen and chat with experts in emergency and health emergency management. For more information on MNBC programs and services, individuals are encouraged to connect with their local Métis Nation representative.
- For those who identify as Métis:
 - Health-care navigation support can be accessed via healthservicerequest@mNBC.ca
 - Mental Health navigation support can be accessed via mentalwellnesscoordination@mNBC.ca
 - For 24/7 Métis Crisis Line call 1-833-Metis-BC (1-833-638-4722)