Heat Safety Planning Recommendations for Outdoor Events

Throughout the summer there remains a potential for high temperatures resulting in heat warnings. Overheating, which occurs when the body gains heat faster than it can cool itself down, can cause several heat-related illnesses while UV exposure may cause sunburn. Below are suggestions for event organizers on how to reduce heat exposure and avoid heat injuries at outdoor events.

Event organizers and staff should know the signs of Heat related illness and what actions to take:

Severity	Mild to Moderate Heat-related Illness	Severe Heat-related Illness
Symptoms	Heavy sweating, headache, muscle cramps, extreme thirst, dark urine	High body temperature, confusion, dizziness/fainting and flushed skin with no sweating, no urination
Actions	Move to a cooler environment, drink plenty of water, and use water to cool the person's body. Wear a wet shirt or apply damp towels to cool the person's skin.	This is a medical emergency – call 911. While waiting for help, cool the person right away by moving them to a cool place and apply cold water or ice packs to large areas of the skin.

With respect to both heat-related illness and sunburn the best course of action is **PREVENTION**.

Event organizers should consider **implementing** the following:

- For your own planning purposes, consider developing a heat response plan if one isn't already part of your overall event strategy (tool provided).
- Provide access to free, cool, potable drinking water.
- Ensure that there is sufficient access to shade (natural or through shade structures) and seating in cool areas.
- Consider adding cooling features like misting stations (using potable water).
- Creating a dedicated cooling area where heat-stressed individuals can receive First Aid. The cooling area should have shade and cooling equipment such as a misting device, cold water, icepacks, etc.
- First Aid staff should be trained to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and know when to seek emergency assistance.
- Consider adjusting event schedules to avoid the hottest times of day. (typically, 12pm – 4pm)
- Monitor weather/heat conditions, via WeatherCAN app.
- Arrange breaks for staff in cool, shaded areas.

Event participants should be encouraged both before and during event to:

- Stay in the shade as much as possible.
- Drink water or use sports drinks to stay hydrated and eat regularly to maintain electrolytes.
- Limit alcohol and be aware that substances such as MDMA can further increase body temperature.
- Be aware that infants, young children, older adults and those with chronic illnesses are more vulnerable to extreme heat.
- Check the UV index regularly and protect themselves with UV-resistant clothing, a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and sunscreen that is SPF 30 or higher.
- Seek medical attention for severe heat-related symptoms.

For additional public health guidance on outdoor events, please see:

- Major Planned Events Guidelines (BC Ministry of Health), which addresses food and water safety, sanitation and waste management, and opioid use and harm reduction.
- Wildfire Smoke and Outdoor Event Planning (BCCDC), which provides guidance on decision-making during smoky conditions.

Heat Response Planning Tool

This Heat Response Planning tool is for **planning purposes only and does not need to be submitted**. It outlines key considerations to help protect the health and well-being of your attendees during the summer months.

- All events held during the summer months should include the components outlined in the Operational Plan (e.g., shade), particularly if a Yellow, Orange or Red Heat Alert is in effect.
- If a Red Heat Alert is declared (i.e., substantial health impacts are expected), consider re-scheduling the event.
- For information on BC HARS alert levels and associated criteria, refer to the **BC Heat Alert and Response System (BC HARS).**

DATE(S) EVENT:	TIME OF EVENT:
EVENT INFORMATION	
NAME OF EVENT:	LOCATION OF EVENT (e.g. NAME OF PARK):
EVENT PHYSICAL ADDRESS (STREET / CITY):	
NAME OF EVENT COORDINATOR:	PHONE NUMBER/ E-MAIL:

OPERATIONAL PLAN		
	Criteria	**How will this be accomplished? List equipment used**
Shade	Sufficient access to shade (either natural or through shade structures) and ability for attendees to sit in cool area	
Misting Station(s)	Misting stations (using potable water) set up where appropriate at event site	
Water Station(s)	Access to free, potable drinking water; water station needs to be maintained and clean	
Cooling Area	Area where heat-stressed individuals can receive First Aid. The cooling area should have shade and be stocked with cooling equipment (water, icepacks, etc.)	
First Aid & emergency response	First Aid staff who are trained in recognizing the signs of heat-related illness and understand when to seek emergency assistance	
Risk communication	Messaging/signage/announcements for attendees about heat safety and the location of heat safety resources	
Event Schedule	Consider adjusting event schedules to avoid the hottest times of day	
Site Map	It is recommended to attach a site map of the event, highlighting the locations of amenities and heat safety resources	

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