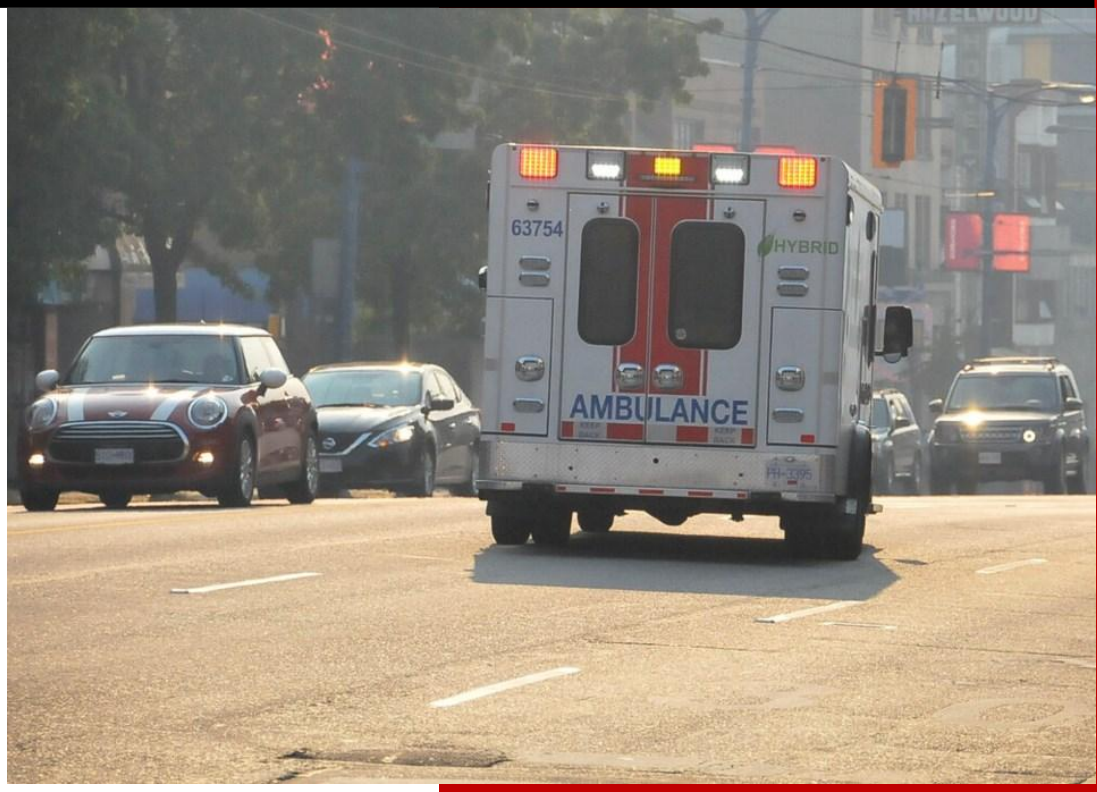
2026

Extreme Heat Impact Mitigation Policy



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1.0 Policy Context

Heat-related deaths and illness have been increasing in the last decade as record-breaking extreme heat events (EHEs) increase in frequency and severity, such as the 2021 Heat Dome in B.C. Large urban centres are particularly susceptible due to the urban heat island effect. Mortality rates are higher for people aged 65+, low-income individuals, and those who live alone or are isolated from the community. Low-income individuals tend to be more susceptible due to housing being primarily older and outdated, not constructed with the current climate in mind. The primary clients of this problem are the individuals that fall into the previously mentioned categories. Stakeholders in this problem include the healthcare system, as the strain on this system is high during these events, and the City of Vancouver to address this issue.

2.0 Policy Description

The policy is an addition to the City of Vancouver's Climate Adaptation Strategy under 'adapting to extreme heat'. It seeks to complement current policies by addressing the unmet need for community outreach during EHEs. This pilot program works by contacting residents via phone, who have signed up in advance, when an extreme heat emergency has been declared to do a wellness check. Social workers reach out to these residents to ascertain if they need help accessing resources, require medical assistance, or if a welfare check is needed for unresponsive residents.

3.0 Policy Goal

The goal of this policy is to reduce death and serious illness among previously identified vulnerable populations during extreme heat events that are projected to increase in frequency and severity due to the worsening effects of climate change.

4.0 Definitions and Interpretations

Term	Definition
Extreme Heat Event[i]	A period of excessively high temperature over a prolonged duration, uncharacteristic of the area. Commonly known as 'heat waves' or 'heat dome'. Typically 2 or more consecutive days.
Urban Heat Island[ii]	Refers to heat being relatively hotter in urban vs. surrounding rural areas due differences in the built environment trapping heat.
Low-income	An annual household income of $45K or less. This measure is a general reference and will not be used to screen out the target population.

Seniors	Individuals aged 65+
Socially isolated	Individuals that either live alone or are isolated from their wider community.
Provincial heat warning for Southwest B.C.[iii]	BC Heat Alert and Response System issued when two or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 29 degrees or warmer and nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to fall 16 or warmer.
Extreme Heat Emergency[iv]	Issued by BC Heat Operations Subcommittee when consensus for Heat Warning criteria has been met and there is high certainty that temperatures will increase substantially day-over-day for three or more consecutive days.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 Identify and Engage Stakeholders

Stakeholders pertinent to this policy are primarily those who are vulnerable to extreme heat events such as seniors and those who reside in low-income neighbourhoods. While this is the target population for this program and will be the focus of advertising efforts, engagement, and design of the program, it is open to all. Additional stakeholders include those who are integral to the operation of the program including social workers, the City of Vancouver, and the BC Centre for Disease control.

Stakeholder	Engagement level	Description
Seniors, low-income, and socially isolated residents	Involve	Hold a workshop prior to program beginning to inform residents of this program and work directly with the public to ensure public concerns and needs are reflected in the policy.
Social workers	Collaborate	Regularly meet with social workers who are knowledgeable of the issue and can provide insight into implementation feasibility.
B.C. Centre for Disease Control	Consult	Consult with the BC CDC to ensure policy meets the best practices set out in the

		Municipal heat response planning.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Program Coordinator	Oversee the coordination of the program and ensure that necessary staffing, supplies, and tools are in place when a Extreme Heat Emergency is issued.
Coordination team	Support the coordinator in ensuring the above tasks are complete. Contact callers when a provincial warning or emergency is issued to coordinate availability and scheduling.
Outreach callers	Report to the coordination team for availability when notification of provincial emergency is received. Contact program participants and go over the heat event checklist to ascertain need; sending unresponsive participants to Outreach Supervisors.
Outreach supervisors	Provide necessary training for outreach workers including creation of the 'heat event checklist'. Reach out to proper authority for a welfare check for unresponsive participants.
Communications team	Advertise the program to residents. Creation of promotional materials such as flyers, website, social media posts, etc.
Engagement team	Conducting the stakeholder engagement and providing 'What We Heard' report summarizing themes and providing recommendations to incorporate into the policy.

5.3 Implementation

Phase 1 of implementing the policy is focused on preparing the program and necessary staff to operate the program:

1) Identify stakeholders to involve in policy implementation
2) Establish policy goals, objectives, and KPIs
3) Prepare necessary tools and allocate staff
    a) Website outlining policy information, target population, and necessary portals

    b) Allocate coordination, communications, and engagement teams
4) Advertise program and public engagement opportunities
    a) Launch resident sign-up portal
5) Hold stakeholder engagement for public stakeholders (seniors etc.)
6) Prepare 'What We Heard' report and incorporate public feedback into policy
7) Prepare necessary implementation materials and staff
    a) Hiring of Outreach Supervisors/Callers
    b) Creation of 'Heat Event Checklist' to be used by outreach callers
    c) Hold heat warning training for Outreach Callers

Phase 2 consists of the policy 'in action':

1) Provincial Extreme Heat Emergency declared
2) The coordination team contacts Outreach workers for availability and scheduling
3) Outreach workers make contact with participants
    a) Initial contact with residents
    b) Walk through the checklist
    c) No contact, call again
    d) If still no contact, call emergency contact to reach out to participant
    e) If still no contact, bump to supervisor
4) Supervisor check-in
    a) If outreach workers are unable to make contact with residents or their emergency contact then the supervisor calls emergency contact. If still no contact then a welfare check is completed
5) Repeat everyday of Extreme Heat Emergency
6) Post Extreme Heat Emergency, contact residents on their experience with the policy

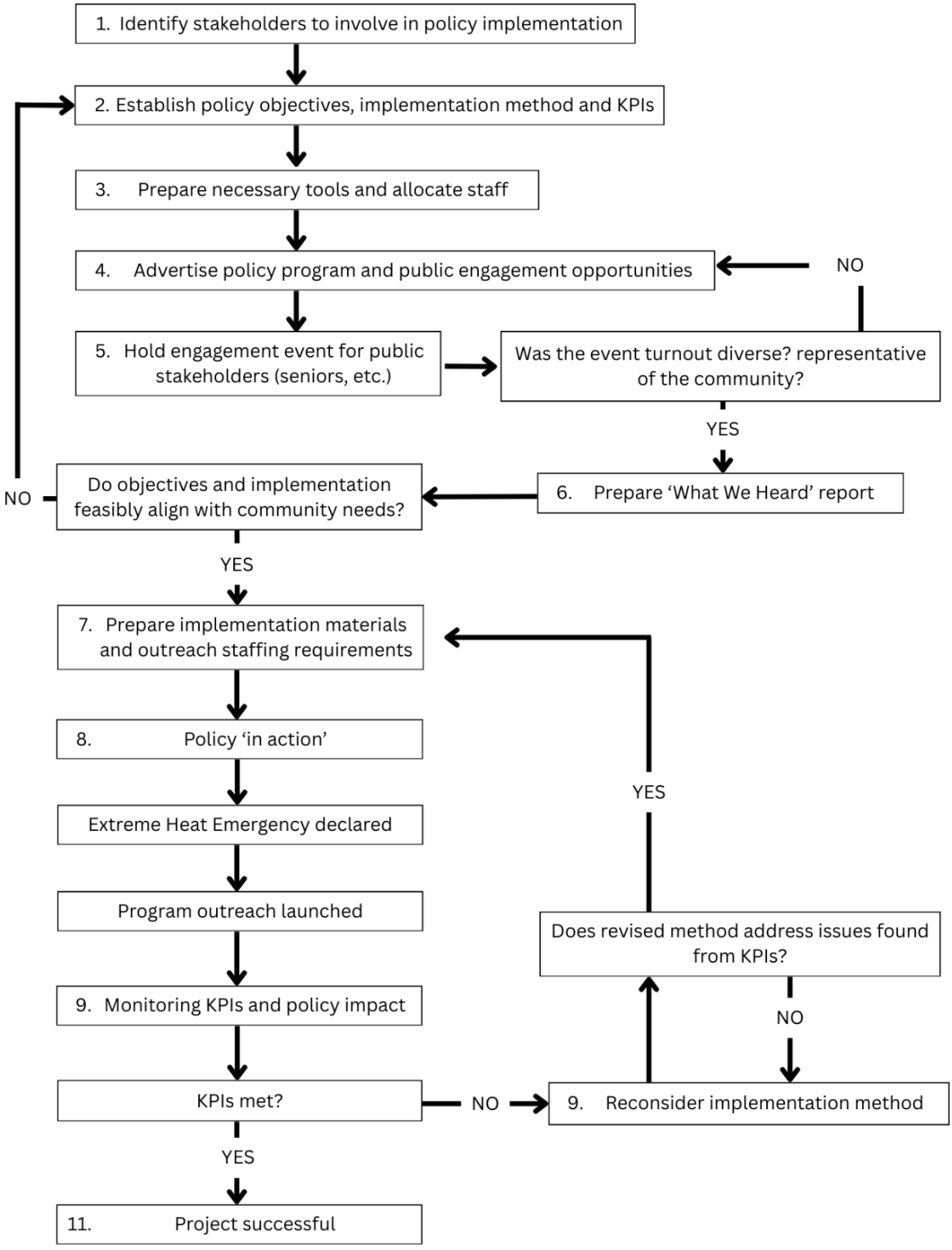
Phase 3 Monitoring and KPIs

To monitor the efficacy of this policy, the following data can be collected to compare pre-and-post EHE to gauge the potential impact of the policy:

- Track mortality and morbidity rates during heatwave by neighbourhood address
- Track emergency service calls
- Track hospital admissions by neighbourhood address
- Follow-up with residents post EHE

These metrics are directly and indirectly linked to the policy goal of decreasing deaths and serious illness. In particular, following-up with residents who participated in the program will provide insight into the impact of the program from residents point of view.

5.4 Procedure flowchart/diagram



[i] https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/extreme-heat-events.html
[ii] https://climateatlas.ca/urban-heat-island-effect

[iii] https://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/heat-event-response-planning

[iv] https://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/heat-event-response-planning