

PATHWAYS ABILITIES SOCIETY

POLICY: EXTREME HEAT

Applies To: All Personnel, Volunteers, Persons Served, Families, Advocates, Caregivers, Tenants, Stakeholders and Funding Body

Original Approval Date: July 26, 2022

Date Board Approved: July 27, 2022

Replaces Policy Dated: NA

Board Member's Signature

PREAMBLE

An Extreme Heat Emergency is when daytime and nighttime temperatures get hotter every day and are well above seasonal norms.

Extreme heat is dangerous for the health and wellbeing of our communities and is responsible for the highest number of weather-related deaths annually.

Our bodies naturally maintain a temperature between 36°C and 38°C. Sweating cools our bodies down, but if you work in a hot environment this might not be enough. If your body heats up faster than it can cool itself, you experience heat stress. This can lead to serious heat disorders and potential injury.

Be on the lookout for any symptoms of heat-related illness or conditions.

Tips to beat the heat:

- Keep hydrated – consume plenty of water.
- Limit non-essential strenuous activity.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine as they can make dehydration worse.
- Be cool, stay indoors, and make use of fans and air conditioners.
- Soak, take a cool shower or bath to help you cool down.
- Rest.
- Use window coverings to reduce heat.
- Seek shade.
- Dress down by wearing lightweight clothing and use sunscreen.
- Check on others.

Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are painful, involuntary muscle spasms that usually occur during physical exertion in hot environments. Signs and symptoms include heavy sweating during intense exercise and muscle pain or spasms. When experiencing heat cramps, you should stop the physical activity and move to a cool place, drink water/sports drinks, and wait for the cramps to subside before you do any more physical

activity. Seek medical attention if cramps last longer than one hour or if you have heart issues.

Heat Rash: This is a rash that looks like red clusters of small pimple-like blisters on the skin usually located on the neck, chest, groin, or in the elbow creases. You should seek a cool place and keep the rash dry.

Heat Exhaustion: This is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Signs and symptoms include heavy sweating, cold, pale, and clammy skin, fast/ weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, tiredness or weakness, dizziness, headache, and/or fainting. If you are experiencing these symptoms, you should move to a cool place, get your clothes wet or take a cool bath and drink water. If symptoms persist for longer than an hour or get worse, you should seek medical attention.

Heat Stroke: Is the most serious heat-related illness and occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. Signs and symptoms include a high body temperature (39.4°C/ 103°F), hot, red, dry, or damp skin, fast, strong pulse, headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and/or loss of consciousness. Heat stroke is a medical emergency, and you should move to a cooler place and call 911. You can help lower their body temperature by using cool cloths or a cool bath. Do not give the person anything to drink.

POLICY

The threshold to trigger a heat warning in the Southeast/Interior region of British Columbia is when daytime temperatures exceed 35 degrees and nighttime lows of 18 degrees occur for 2 days therefore society facilities or worksites that do not have cooling systems will operate on a modified work schedule. This may include altering the hours of work, and/or increased rest periods. Pathways will attempt to eliminate the hazard by substituting the environment that employees are working in or put into place engineering controls such as fans or air conditioning to reduce exposure.

Pathways employees will not work alone while working in an environment with extreme heat conditions.