



# **Saskatoon's Heat Response**

## **Summer 2021**

***A Community Plan to help Individuals and Families Experiencing  
Homelessness during Extreme Hot Temperatures***

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Saskatoon's Heat Response is managed by  
Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership in  
conjunction with the Cold Weather Strategy.



## Background

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Due to the extreme heatwaves experienced in Saskatoon during the summer of 2018, community partners of the Cold Weather Strategy convened to implement a City-wide Heat Response. The Heat Response exists to ensure designated cooling spaces are in place for Saskatoon's homeless population, greatly reducing their risk of heat exposure-related illnesses during the summer months.

This strategy is designed to work with existing services to ensure situational awareness and promote coordinated effort, so everyone has access to cooling areas during Saskatoon's extreme hot temperatures from May 1st to September 1st.

Saskatoon has been faced with many difficult challenges in 2021 such as COVID-19. COVID-19 has left supporting agencies no choice but to alter their services and hours of operations, which has raised obstacles for the Saskatoon's Heat Response. More collaboration is encouraged in order to ensure our vulnerable population is cared for during these challenging times.

## Principles

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While individual service providers make their own policies, they also collectively agreed to be flexible with their policies during extreme weather to ensure people are safe. **2021 brings an added complexity with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Agencies that provide cool down locations and water bottle distribution or water bottle filling, will need to collaborate this year to maintain physical distancing regulations while providing methods of reprieve from the heat. Partners and stakeholders will have to communicate on available services to clients in need and provide clear direction on how to access support in the heat.**

This strategy is guided by the following principles:

- Individual dignity must be respected even in emergency situations: each person should have access to water and the option to escape extreme hot temperatures in the summer,
- Everyone is allowed access to designated cooling places (such as shelter lobbies), including intoxicated persons or those previously placed on a “**do not admit**” list from shelters; and
- Cool, indoor spaces should be available as needed 24 hours a day.

## Hot Weather Alert

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A Hot Weather Alert Level 1 (Heat Warning) will be distributed by email from SHIP when the temperature reaches 30°C or greater. Community partners will be encouraged to put a special focus on water bottle distribution and access to “cooling locations.”

A **Hot Weather Alert Level 2** will be distributed through **notifynow** by the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) when the temperature reaches 32°C and greater criteria in Appendix B). If criteria are reached for a level 2 warning, focus will be on water bottle distribution and priority will be made to help vulnerable individuals access an indoor cooling location if needed. **Transportation options listed in Appendix D.**

A **Hot Weather Alert Level 3A** will be distributed through **notifynow** by the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) when the temperature reaches 32°C with an overnight of not less than 16°C or a humidex of 38°C (criteria in Appendix B). If criteria is reached for a level 3 warning focus will be on water bottle distribution and access to emergency shelter beds will be provided, including those on a “do not admit” list.

An **Air Quality Alert Level 3B** will be distributed through **notifynow** by the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) when the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reaches level 7 or higher (criteria in Appendix B). This will be determined by an air quality statement issued by Environment Canada. If criteria are reached for a **level 3B** warning, access to emergency shelter beds will be provided, including those on a “do not admit” list.

A **Level 4 Alert** will be distributed through **notifynow** by Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) when both Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reaches level 7 & combined temperature reaches criteria set out for a **Level 3A Alert**. (32°C with an overnight of no less than 16°C or a humidex of 38°C) In addition to water-bottle distribution, and shelter bed access, including those on a “do not admit” list, strategy partners, especially shelter staff, will liaison with the Saskatchewan Health Authority as clients need.

The purpose of the Hot Weather Alert is to provide all participants with a Continuity of Operations Plan within the existing Strategy. This plan provides the structure needed for multiple organizations to coordinate their response to unusual circumstances that would reduce the capacity, or effectiveness, of one or more organizations in the provision of designated cooling spaces during heatwaves in the summer months.

**Note: When a Hot Weather Alert Level 2 - 4 is issued, it remains active until there is a notification email/text that it has ended.**

When a **Hot Weather Alert** is in place, any front-line service provider who encounters a homeless person will be encouraged to take the extra step of ensuring that person has access to an indoor location for cooling down purposes.

**A Step-by-Step outline of the Hot Weather Alert process can be found in Appendix A**

## **Target Groups**

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A screening mechanism is currently in place to ensure that people are directed to the appropriate services. Strategies for helping some of the most vulnerable target populations are outlined in **Appendix C – List of Target Groups**.

## **Transportation**

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Housing insecure individuals and families who need heat response services may be too far away to walk so free transportation is necessary. **(A list of transportation providers is in Appendix D)**

## **Cool-Down Locations**

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Housing insecure individuals and families can cool-down at various locations listed in **Appendix E**.

## **Bottled Water Distribution**

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As part of the Heat Response, bottled water will be distributed to community partners between May 1st and September 1st to ensure vulnerable individuals stay hydrated. The stockpiled water will be stored at Saskatoon Housing Initiative (SHIP) 201-1120 20<sup>th</sup> St West.

## **Communication**

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Posters produced by Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership with information about free services available in Saskatoon will continue to be provided. It is important that individuals and families experiencing homelessness are informed of the options available. A communications strategy will be developed to increase awareness of the issue and the response. Posters listing “Cool Down” locations are in appendix E and will also be distributed by SHIP.

## **Strategy Evaluation and Feedback**

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Starting in 2020, the Heat Response Committee will meet annually, in October. In 2021 they will meet twice annually, in April and October. Heat Response Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the Cold Weather Strategy Committee meeting unless requested otherwise. The Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) will convene the meetings to review the implementation of the strategy and whether it has met the needs of Saskatoon’s homeless population.

## **Members of the Heat Response Committee**

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|---|--|
| ➤ City of Saskatoon – Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) | ➤ Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre |
| ➤ City of Saskatoon – Leisure Centres                       | ➤ Saskatoon Police Service                 |
| ➤ Community Support Officers (CSO)                          | ➤ Saskatoon Public Libraries               |
| ➤ CUMFI   | ➤ SWITCH                                   |
| ➤ EGADZ   | ➤ The Bridge on 20th Street                |
| ➤ Ministry of Social Services                               | ➤ The Lighthouse Supported Living          |
| ➤ The Salvation Army  | ➤ United Way of Saskatoon and Area         |
| ➤ Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service                     | ➤ Westside Community Clinic                |
| ➤ Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership                 | ➤ YWCA                                     |
|   | ➤ Prairie Harm Reduction                   |

## Become a Member of the Heat Response Advisory Team

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The EMO provides members of the Heat Response Team with information regarding alerts and status updates. This list is confirmed and/or updated at each team meeting. If your group wants to be added to the alert system, please email Priscilla Johnstone at [pjohnstone@shipyx.ca](mailto:pjohnstone@shipyx.ca) with updated contact information and preferred method of contact (alerts are typically sent out via text and email).

### Appendix A – Hot Weather Alert – Step by Step Monday to Friday

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Monday to Friday	The Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) will trigger a <b>Hot Weather Alert Level 2-4</b> to the CWA Team upon request using the criteria listed in Appendix B.
Weekends & Holidays	The Community Support Officers (CSO) will trigger a Hot Weather Alert (through Fire Dispatch) to the CWA Team using the criteria listed in Appendix B.
Note: Once a Hot Weather Alert Level 2-4 is issued, it remains active until there is a notification email/text that has ended, any partner can cancel the alert.	

When triggered, the Hot Weather Alert process will occur as follows:

- **A Hot Weather Alert Message will be sent:**
  - **TEXT/EMAIL TITLE:** Hot Weather Alert (**Level #**)
  - **TEXT SUBJECT:** Hot weather conditions. Follow instructions in the 2021 Heat Response. Check Email instructions
  - **EMAIL SUBJECT:** Hot weather conditions exist. **Follow instructions in the 2021 Heat Response.** If needed, check email for attachments. (The email will include the Assessment Form and the 2021 Heat Response with instructions on dialing into the coordination call.)
- **When you receive a Hot weather alert, submit the attached assessment form to: EMO.EOC@saskatoon.ca, **ONLY IF YOUR AGENCY IS HAVING AN ISSUE OR IS REQUESTING A CONFERENCE CALL. Fill out 401 or respond by email that your response is in place.****
- **Note: The following conference call procedure is only applicable during weekdays**
  - If there are no issues or requests for a call, a conference call **will NOT** take place.
  - Any agency can request EMO to initiate a conference call. If a call is required, agencies will be notified of a 4pm (1600h) conference call.
  - EMO will facilitate the conference call. Agencies will be expected to assign at least one person to participate and will be asked to share any relevant information.

For any other circumstances that require an alert (i.e., closure due to power outage, flood, etc.), contact the Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) 306-975-3030. Contact SHIP as manager of the Heat Response. ([pjohnstone@shipyx.ca](mailto:pjohnstone@shipyx.ca) & [lbrown@shipweb.ca](mailto:lbrown@shipweb.ca)) The agency initiating the alert will chair the call. Other emergency services will be included, as necessary.

## Appendix B – Hot Weather Alert Triggers

The Saskatoon Emergency Management Organization (EMO) the Community Support Officers (CSO), (or any member of the Hot Weather Strategy) will trigger a Hot Weather Alert to the CWA Team using any of the following criteria:

Trigger Type	Threshold Criteria	Alert Responsibility
<b>Level 1</b> Daytime Temperatures	When the air temperature is expected to reach 30°C according to the Environment Canada Website Hourly Forecast Page <a href="https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/hourly/sk-40_metric_e.html">https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/hourly/sk-40_metric_e.html</a>	SHIP Email
<b>Level 2</b> Daytime Temperatures	When the air temperature is expected to reach 32°C according to the Environment Canada Website Hourly Forecast Page <a href="https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/hourly/sk-40_metric_e.html">https://weather.gc.ca/forecast/hourly/sk-40_metric_e.html</a>	EMO through notifynow
<b>Level 3A</b> Extreme Hot Temperatures within a 24-hour Period	When the air temperature is expected to reach 32°C with an overnight of 15°C or a humidex of 38C	EMO through notifynow
<b>Level 3B</b> Air Quality Statement from Environment Canada	When the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reaches level 7 or higher. This will be determined by an air quality statement issued by Environment Canada ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index/understanding-messages.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index/understanding-messages.html</a> )	EMO through notifynow
<b>Level 4</b> Extreme Hot Temperatures combined with AQHI Statement	When the air temperature is expected to reach 32°C with an overnight of 16°C or a humidex of 38°C and when the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reaches level 7 or higher.	EMO through notifynow

**For any other circumstances that requires an alert and are not listed in the table above, any Heat Response Advisory Team agency can contact Fire Dispatch directly at (306) 975-3030 to request a Hot Weather Alert to be issued.**

**The City of Saskatoon Emergency Management Organization** provides a standardized and repeatable process through which all responding organizations, both inside and outside the City of Saskatoon, can quickly and effectively exchange information, accurately determine the top priorities, and plan an efficient, coordinated response. In the event of an extreme heat event in Saskatoon the EMO could activate the City of Saskatoon Emergency Measures Plan on a broader scale to ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens. Members of the Heat Response Committee could be involved in a larger scale coordinated response. The request to participate in a larger conversation will be initiated by an alert much the same as the alerts in the Extreme Weather Strategy.



## Appendix C – List of Target Groups

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In general, if individuals or families need assistance, contact:

<b>Monday-Friday (8:00am-5:00pm)</b>	<b>After MSS business hours, weekends &amp; holidays</b>
Ministry of Social Services (MSS) (306) 933-5960	The Salvation Army (306) 244-6280

The following screening mechanism is currently in place:

<b>SCREEN FOR LIGHTHOUSE</b>  <i>Client presentation...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Agreeing to service.</li><li>➤ Intoxicated.</li><li>➤ Coherent.</li><li>➤ Able to Communicate.</li><li>➤ Ambulatory – not confined to bed or wheelchair.</li></ul>	<b>SCREEN FOR POLICE</b>  <i>Client presentation...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Hostile.</li><li>➤ Violent.</li><li>➤ Requires Detainment – i.e., wanted person, court conditions, etc.</li></ul>
<b>SCREEN FOR EMS (CALL 9-1-1)</b>  <i>Client presentation...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ ABCD's (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Deadly Bleed).</li><li>➤ Unconscious/unresponsive.</li><li>➤ Significant trauma or illness.</li><li>➤ Semi-conscious, i.e., dazed &amp; confused, unable to stand or complete simple tasks, lack of coherency, etc.</li><li>➤ No or labored breathing.</li><li>➤ Suspected drug overdose.</li><li>➤ Extreme agitation/confusion.</li><li>➤ Experiencing hallucinations.</li><li>➤ Experiencing seizures.</li><li>➤ Vomiting or evidence of vomitus.</li></ul>	

## **People who are on a “Do Not Admit” List from Shelters**

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People placed on a “Do Not Admit” list at a shelter will be allowed to enter the designated cool-down location at partnering shelters. These people will be monitored, frisked for illegal substances, etc. as required. During **Level 3 and Level 4** alerts individuals on a “do not admit” list will be provided with a shelter bed.

## **People who choose not to access services.**

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An estimated 15-30 people choose to stay away from all government systems and assistance, staying outside. This group is particularly vulnerable and of concern.

This group of people are well known to each other. They self-monitor the whereabouts of other group members, alerting agencies like CUMFI or The Bridge when someone goes missing. In hot weather, some of these individuals find indoor accommodations with friends and family (both in Saskatoon and in their home communities), and some may use the shelter system. A more formal monitoring system was considered but deemed unworkable.

The Ministry of Social Services is working with The Lighthouse and The Salvation Army to identify feasible ways and support required to work with these individuals to build trust and, eventually, help them accept services. The principle behind this work is to ensure the health and safety of vulnerable individuals (stay hydrated, come in for meals, to use the washroom, and to take cool-down breaks).

## **Appendix D – List of Transportation Providers**

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Some individuals experiencing homelessness need hot weather services that may be too far away to walk, so free transportation is necessary. The following organizations should be contacted if an individual requires transportation:

**\*\*If an individual requires services above what staff at a City of Saskatoon Leisure Centre can provide, focus should be made to contact transportation providers listed below, however, if services are needed on-site, staff at Rec facilities can call **Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service: (306) 933-6200** as needed.**

SHIP during regular daytime office hours to ask for liaison to case-managers in housing programs.

### **Ministry of Social Services (MSS): (306) 933-5960**

- Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm.
- After MSS business hours, weekends and holidays.

### **Lighthouse Mobile Outreach (actively seeks people who may be at risk): (306) 653-0538**

- 10:00am – 10:00pm.

### **EGADZ Outreach Van: (306) 221-3719**

- 7 days a week from 5:00pm-1:00am.

### **Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service: (306) 933-6200**

- Available 24 hours a day and can help an individual experiencing homeless access transportation, shelter, food and other needs.

### **Saskatoon Transit: Safe Bus:**

➤ Developed in partnership with Child & Youth Friendly Saskatoon in June 2000, Safe Bus was designed to assist anyone, of any age, that needs immediate shelter or needs to contact emergency services. By simply and safely flagging down a bus or going to a parked bus, transit operators are required to immediately contact emergency services directly through the on-bus radio system and give the person in peril a safe place to wait.

You do not need to pay to use Safe Bus.

Flagging down a bus safely is as easy as standing at a stop or on a sidewalk and waving your hand in the air. The driver will recognize you as a person in need and stop for you. We remind parents to tell their child to never step onto the roadway to flag down a bus.

## Appendix E – List of Cool-Down Locations

# LIST OF COOL DOWN LOCATIONS

As part of Saskatoon's 2021 Heat Response  
Saskatoon Spray Parks and Paddling Pools are open and free

<b>PAVED ARTS</b> 424 20TH STREET WEST   (306) 652-5502	<b>HOURS:</b> TUE-FRI, 12:00PM-6:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>SALVATION ARMY (FOYER)</b> 339 AVENUE C SOUTH (306) 244-9111	<b>HOURS:</b> EVERYDAY, 24 HOURS
<b>OUTSASKATOON</b> 213 AVENUE C SOUTH   (306) 665-1224	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 9:00AM-5:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>MEADOW GREEN HOUSE FOR ALL NATIONS</b> 501 AVENUE W SOUTH   (306) 249-0515	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 9:30AM-4:30PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>THE LIGHTHOUSE</b> 304 2 AVENUE SOUTH   (306) 653-0538 **WATER DISTRIBUTION ONLY**	<b>HOURS:</b> EVERYDAY, 24 HOURS
<b>CUMFI</b> 315 AVENUE M SOUTH   (306) 975-9999 **WATER & FOOD DISTRIBUTION ONLY**	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 8:30AM-5:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST** **COOL DOWN TRAILER INCLUDED**
<b>PRAIRIE HARM REDUCTION (FORMERLY AIDS SASKATOON)</b> 1516 20TH STREET WEST   (306) 242-5005	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 10:00AM-4:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>PERSONS LIVING WITH AIDS NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN</b> 127C AVENUE D NORTH   (306) 373-7766	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-THU, 9:00AM-4:00PM FRI, 9:00AM-3:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>FRIENDSHIP INN</b> 619 20TH STREET WEST   (306) 242-5122 **WATER & FOOD DISTRIBUTION ONLY**	<b>HOURS:</b> EVERYDAY, 8:00AM-1:30PM CLOSED DAILY, 9:30AM-11:30AM
<b>STATION 20 WEST</b> 1120 20TH ST WEST   (306) 343-9378 **LIMITED CAPACITY**	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 9:00AM-4:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST AND JULY 2ND**
<b>EGADZ (YOUTH ONLY)</b> 485 1ST AVENUE NORTH   (306) 931-6644	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 8:00AM-9:00PM SAT. 1:00PM-9:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CLINIC</b> 1528 20TH STREET WEST   (306) 664-4310 **WATER DISTRIBUTION ONLY**	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 9:00AM-9:00PM SAT-SUN, 9:00AM-5:00PM CLOSED DAILY, 12:00PM-1:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**
<b>SASKATOON INDIAN &amp; METIS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE</b> 168 WALL STREET   (306) 244-0174 **WATER AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION ONLY**	<b>HOURS:</b> MON-FRI, 10:00AM-4:30PM SAT-SUN, 12:00PM-7:00PM **CLOSED FOR JULY 1ST**

**The Extreme Weather Strategy is Managed by Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership**

For questions about the strategy, please call (306) 979-6707.

[www.shipweb.ca](http://www.shipweb.ca)

