



West Nipissing Ouest

Heat Relief

PUBLIC RESPONSE PLAN

Municipality of West Nipissing

Joie de vivre

westnipissingouest.ca

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Organizations – Glossary of Acronyms

CSWBP	Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (West Nipissing)
DNSSAB	District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada (Environment Canada)
ECG	Emergency Control Group (Municipality of West Nipissing)
HWIS	Harmonized Heat Warning and Information System (Ontario)
NBPS	North Bay Parry Sound (District Health Unit)
OPP	Ontario Provincial Police (West Nipissing Detachment)



1.0 Introduction

1.1 General

The Municipality of West Nipissing's Heat Relief – Public Response Plan (Heat Relief Plan) outlines the organization's protocol during extreme weather events pertaining to heat or humidity. The heat season begins in early May and ends in late September, although there may be occasions where periods of heat events fall outside of this range.

The West Nipissing Emergency Control Group is responsible for developing, monitoring and coordinating West Nipissing's response to hot weather events and heat emergencies. The group consists of municipal administration, officials from the West Nipissing Fire and Emergency Service and community partner organizations who provide direct services as part of the Municipality's critical services and emergency response.

1.2 Purpose

The Heat Relief Plan outlines the hot weather response activities coordinated by the Municipal Emergency Control Group with a focus on providing targeted relief for the most vulnerable populations at higher risk of negative health outcomes due to extreme heat. The Heat Relief Plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

1.3 Scope

The plan outlines the responsibilities and protocol of the Emergency Control Group in providing community-wide heat relief services.

Circumstances in which a Heat Warning reaches a level of severity or duration that exceeds the capacity of heat relief services is referred to as a "Heat Emergency" and may require additional actions implemented at a community or corporate level under the provisions of the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit or the Municipality of West Nipissing's Emergency Plan.



2.0 Heat and Humidity

Source: North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

2.1 Health Impacts and Vulnerable Populations

Everyone is vulnerable to the effects of heat and humidity, but certain groups of people are more at risk than others. Extreme heat and humidity events can pose a significant health risk to vulnerable individuals.

2.2 Heat-Vulnerable Populations

- Infants and young children
- Older adults
- People who are pregnant
- People who work outdoors
- People with pre-existing health conditions (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease)
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with reduced mobility
- People experiencing mental illness
- People without access to air conditioning
- People living alone or socially isolated
- People with lower income and fewer resources

2.3 Heat-Related Illnesses

Extreme heat is associated with a number of health impacts, such as sunburns, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke or more serious effects, such as cardiovascular-related disease and, in some cases, death.

2.4 Prevention Measures

In most cases, heat-related illnesses can be prevented by:

- Staying hydrated
- Recognizing the symptoms of sunburn, dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- Staying out of the heat and/or finding shade
- Wearing light/loose clothing and sun protective gear
- Keeping homes cool, closing blinds and curtains
- Never leaving children or animals unattended in a parked vehicle
- Talking to a care provider about how exposure to heat may affect certain medications
- Taking health-appropriate work breaks and discussing needs with employers



3.0 Heat Warnings

Source: Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

3.1 Defined Triggers for Northern Ontario Heat Warning

Heat Warnings are issued by Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC) when the following conditions are met for a two-day period:

- Daytime high forecasted to be greater than or equal to 29°C; and
- Overnight low temperature forecasted to be greater than or equal to 18°C; or
- Humidex is forecasted to be greater than or equal to 36

3.1 Warning Process

When conditions are likely to meet two days or more of warning criteria, ECCC issues a public **Heat Warning**. When a Heat Warning continues beyond two days, ECCC issues an **Extended Heat Warning**.

3.2 Monitoring

Members of the West Nipissing Emergency Control Group (ECG) and municipal Communications Department regularly monitor weather forecasts and early notification messaging issued by Environment Canada and by Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) via the ECAAlertMe system.

During Heat Warnings, Municipal staff who serve as the first point of contact with the public are to report to their supervisor any persistent heat-related concerns expressed by members of the community. This allows the Municipality to respond appropriately or to alert the proper response team.



4.0 Heat Relief

4.1 Publicly Accessible Cool Spaces

Publicly accessible facilities across the municipality may provide air-conditioning, shade, respite from heat, and other forms of cooling.

- Public Libraries
- Public Municipal Facilities (i.e. Town Hall, Verner Municipal Building)
- Beaches
- Public parks and other shaded green spaces
- Public Splash Parks

4.2 Designated Cooling Centres

These air-conditioned locations could be assigned and declared as ‘Cooling Centres’ in the event of an extended heat event or heat emergency.

Locations can include:

- Public Libraries (5 locations – Sturgeon Falls, Cache Bay, Verner, Field, River Valley)
- Municipal Buildings (2 locations – Sturgeon Falls and Verner)
- Arenas (2 locations – Sturgeon Falls and Verner)
- Community Centres and Halls (Lavigne, Monetville, Cache Bay, Marcel Noël Hall)

These facilities may be available during regular hours of operation or extended business hours, as needed. Cooling centre locations and hours are announced via public notice and are posted on the municipal website and social media channels.

4.3 Other Resources and Support

The [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit](#) offers heat-related information and advice.

For non-urgent health advice, members of the public can contact [Health811](#) to get connected to a registered nurse day or night, at no cost.

Those in need of shelter can contact the [Crisis Centre North Bay](#).

5.0 Public Communication

As per the Ontario Harmonized Heat Warning and Information System (HWIS), effectively coordinated heat-health communication campaigns can be strengthened through broad dissemination. The use of consistent and standardized messaging is integral.

The Municipality's Heat Relief public messaging and education plan includes the publishing and management of the [Safety Tips During Extreme Heat](#) page on the municipal website.

During and before Heat Warnings, relevant information is shared with the public and media using a multi-faceted communication approach to increase public awareness of:

- Environment Canada's Heat Warning status
- Notices by the NBPS District Health Unit or by Public Health
- Locations and operating hours of public cool spaces and cooling centres, when applicable
- Available supports and services and how to access them
- Signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and what to do if they occur
- Preventive measures from the effects of heat-related health risks

Municipal communication channels include:

- The municipal website
- Municipal social media channels
- Local newspaper via Public Notice
- Local radio stations via Public Notice
- Email (internal and external communications)
- Public-facing municipal personnel

Public Notices from the Municipality are published on the municipal website and shared using social media channels. Local news outlets, members of the municipal council and personnel receive Public Notices by email.

6.0 Response and Community Outreach

During or before a Heat Warning, the ECG works with community partners to coordinate community responses and communication efforts. Partners can include the NBPS District Health Unit, the Community Safety and Well-Being advisory committee, the local OPP detachment, DNSSAB, local health care organizations, emergency response agencies, municipal by-law enforcement, and other groups who work with at-risk populations. The response and outreach efforts are in place to:

- Increase public access to spaces where people can stay cool.
- Open well-identified, accessible community cooling centres and/or extend hours of operation of certain facilities/services.
- Modify, cancel or reschedule sports and outdoor events hosted by the Municipality or held at municipal facilities.
- Assess and plan for hydration solutions, such as portable water stations, drinking fountains at public facilities or distribution of drinking water.
- Link with health care partners regarding strategies for hospital activation, community care centres, and long-term care services.
- Maintain a “wellness check” approach within the community and with partner organizations.

7.0 Related Resources

[Environment Canada – West Nipissing Forecast](#)

[Government of Canada – Weather Alerts Map](#)

[Government of Canada – Fact Sheet: Staying Healthy in the Heat](#)

[Government of Canada – Extreme Heat Events: How to Protect Yourself](#)

[Government of Ontario – Extreme Heat: Safety Tips](#)

[NBPS District Health Unit – Heat and Humidity : Safety Tips](#)

[Homelessness – No More Tears West Nipissing \(CAN Access Point\)](#)

[Homelessness – Crisis Centre North Bay](#)

[Homelessness – DNSSAB Coordinated Access Network \(CAN\)](#)