Town of Creston
238 10th Ave N
Creston BC, V0B 1G0
250 428 2214

Town of Creston
Extreme Weather Response Plan
2025

Town of Creston Contact Information

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Introduction

B.C.'s climate is changing. Summers are longer and hotter, and heat waves are more intense and frequent. The changing climate also means more unpredictable weather events year-round. Winter storms and extreme cold temperatures are harder to predict and can be more dangerous.

Preparing for extreme weather is an essential step in building resilient communities. This plan is intended to provide guidelines for responding to extreme weather events, as defined in this plan, that occur within the Town of Creston.

Objective

To provide resources or temporary refuge for residents of Creston during periods of extreme weather that threaten health and safety. Cooling and warming centres will accommodate people of all ages and backgrounds.

Projected Outcomes

1. Reduction in health and safety risks for at-risk individuals in Creston during extreme weather events.
2. Increased public awareness and knowledge of extreme weather risks and preparedness measures.

Background

Creston, BC is a small town located on the unceded traditional territory of the yaqan nu?kiy within the k'tunaxa Nations. It is the largest community in the Creston Valley, with a population

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of approximately 5,500. It serves as the economic hub to Erickson, Lister, Canyon, Wynndel, and other surrounding communities.

Creston has an aging population with the average age being 51.7, and 39% of the population is over 65.

57% of homes in Creston were built before 1980, which has the potential for increased energy costs or fewer amenities to protect from extreme weather events. There is also a small, unhoused population.

Weather

Creston is situated in the southeastern area of British Columbia and experiences four distinct seasons.

From 1993-2025 the highest temperature recorded at the Creston Campbell Scientific weather station was 38.8°C and the lowest was -27.2°C. The average snow cover on the ground in January from 2000-2024 was 15cm.

Health Implications

Extreme Cold

When the temperature falls below 10°C and a person is unable to be sufficiently protected from exposure to the cold air for prolonged periods, an individual's body temperature can drop and cause hypothermia. In some instances, hypothermia can even occur at temperatures warmer than 10°C when combined with prolonged exposure to wet and windy weather (British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, 2023).

Anyone can experience cold-related injuries, but the risk is higher for certain people, including:

- People experiencing homelessness (unsheltered, unhoused, or living in places not meant for permanent habitation)
- People who use substances, including alcohol, which can impair their ability to sense or respond to cold
- Individuals who spend extended periods outdoors for work or recreation
- People living in housing without adequate insulation or without the ability to generate enough heat
- Individuals with disabilities, limited mobility, or medical conditions such as:
    - Diabetes
    - Peripheral neuropathy (muscle weakness, tingling, numbness)
    - Diseases affecting blood vessels
- People taking certain medications, such as beta-blockers

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- Older adults (60+), infants, and young children

Extreme Heat

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) defines a heat wave as "a period where local excess heat accumulates over a sequence of unusually hot days and nights." Extreme heat is the leading cause of illness and death from weather-related hazards in Canada. Prolonged exposure to indoor temperatures over 31° C (87.8° F) can create stress on the body that can be deadly for susceptible individuals.

Susceptibility to heat-increased-risk-of-injury is influenced by both physiological factors, such as age and health status, and exposure factors such as occupation and socio-economic conditions. Heat waves are associated with increases in mortality, particularly among older adults, those with chronic illnesses, those with specific mental illness, and disproportionally impacts those who are materially and socially disadvantaged (British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, 2025).

Health Impacts of Poor Air

Air pollution increases the risk of mortality, even at low ambient concentrations.

- Health Canada estimates that 17,400 deaths can be attributed to ambient air pollution in Canada in 2018.
- Individuals impacted the most by air pollution are people aged 65 and older (Health Canada, 2018)

Health Impacts of Humidity

The body attempts to maintain a constant internal temperature of 37°C at all times. In hot weather, the body produces sweat, which cools the body as it evaporates. As the humidity or moisture content in the air increases, sweat does not evaporate as readily. Sweat evaporation stops entirely when the relative humidity reaches about 90 percent. Under these circumstances, the body temperature rises and may cause illness (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2024).

Authorities & Legislation

Emergency & Disaster Management Act (EDMA)

The *EDMA,* Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation, designates that a local authority (i.e., Town of Creston) is responsible for establishing and maintaining an emergency management program. This includes the responsibility of:

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- Identifying hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities within their jurisdictional area and,
- Creating plans for these hazards.
- Notifying the public of impending hazards,
- Identifying the procedures by which emergency resources, including, with limitation, personnel, equipment, facilities, and financial resources, may be obtained from sources within or outside of the jurisdictional area for which the local authority has responsibility.

Hazard Identified: Extreme Weather

Extreme weather is a hazard that can negatively impact health, or further, lead to death for at-risk individuals.

Assumptions

Emergency response is a dynamic process that requires room for flexibility, improvisation, and collaboration. The nature of emergencies is such that not all aspects can be planned for. The structures and systems described in the plan should be viewed as guidelines that can be adjusted and adapted by those responsible for enacting the plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

Weather forecasts and alerts, including air quality, will be issued by the ECCC.

RCMP

The RCMP will be notified if the Town responds to an extreme weather event by opening a cooling or warming centre.

Town of Creston

The Town of Creston has created this plan under the Emergency Management Program and will issue or cancel extreme weather alerts as prescribed in this document, followed by the activation of an extreme warming or cooling centre.

Staff of Cooling or Warming Centre (if required)

Setting up, operating, and demobilizing an extreme warming or cooling centre while ensuring the safety, comfort, and support of all visitors.

Daytime staff requirements

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- At least one person certified in Standard First Aid and CPR on duty at all times.
- Satisfactory Criminal Record Check including a vulnerable sector check
- WHMIS certificate

Overnight staff requirements:

- At least one person certified in Standard First Aid and CPR on duty
- At least one person Food Safe certified on duty
- Satisfactory Criminal Record Check including a vulnerable sector check
- At least one person with a de-escalation training on duty OR a trained security guard available on site
- WHMIS certificate
- Naloxone training

Location

Warming Centre

The Town of Creston's primary warming centre will be located at:

1. 138 10th Ave N, Creston BC, V0B 1G0

The following locations will be considered as alternate options should the primary option be unavailable:

- Armitage Centre foyer, 121 NW Blvd, Creston BC, V0B 1G4
- Council Chambers at Town Hall, 138 10th Ave N, Creston BC, V0B 1G0

Cooling Centre

The Town of Creston cooling centre will be located outside of the Creston Emergency Services Building at 1505 Cook Street, Creston BC, V0B 1G4. A passively monitored tent will be available for public use with access to cold water and a misting fan.

CRESTON VALLEY
TOWN of CRESTON

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Activation Criteria

Table 1. Activation Criteria Extreme Cold

	Criteria	Town Actions
Pre-season	• N/A	• Staff participate in exercises and forums to discuss/improve collective response to extreme cold • Educational materials such as cold health information are shared
Extreme Cold Activation	• Environment Canada forecasts temperatures at or below 0°C; AND any one of the following conditions: • Significant snow accumulation or sleet/freezing rain conditions; • Significant windstorms that may present danger to persons living in wooded areas and/or makeshift shelters (tents); • Rainfall of at least 50mm in a 24-hour period or periods of extended heavy rain creating conditions of ground saturation; • Weather Alerts are issued by Environment Canada – wind warnings, excessive rain, snowfall warnings, storm surges in tidal areas, etc. OR • Environment Canada forecasts temperatures at or below -10°C	• Task # requested from EMCR • Expenditure Authorization Forms (EAF) submitted to PREOC • Town staff, RCMP, and Centre Staff notified • Warming centre supplies purchased • Public is notified via social media, web, and E-News • Warming centre is opened
Deactivation	• Any of the prescribed conditions are no longer met.	• Safely shut down and clean facilities. • Inventory and secure supplies and equipment. • Apply for cost reimbursement through EMCR

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Table 1. Activation Criteria Extreme Heat

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<tr><td>Pre-season</td><td>N/A</td><td>• Staff participate in exercises and forums to discuss/improve collective response to extreme heat
• Educational materials such as heat health information are shared</td></tr>
<tr><td>Extreme Heat Warning and Activation</td><td>Environment Canada forecasts temperatures for 2 or more consecutive days at 35°C or warmer during daytime and 18°C or warmer at nighttime.

OR

Environment Canada forecasts temperatures for 2 or more consecutive days of any one of the below criteria:

<table>
<tr><th>Daytime Max</th><th>Nighttime Min</th><th>Additional Condition</th></tr>
<tr><td>33°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Air Quality Health Index 7 or higher</td></tr>
<tr><td>29°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative Humidity 100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>30°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative humidity 90%</td></tr>
<tr><td>31°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative humidity 80%</td></tr>
<tr><td>32°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative humidity 70%</td></tr>
<tr><td>33°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative humidity 65%</td></tr>
<tr><td>34°C</td><td>18°C</td><td>Relative humidity 60%</td></tr>
</table></td><td>• Task # requested from EMCR
• Expenditure Authorization Forms (EAF) submitted to PREOC
• Town staff, RCMP, and Centre Staff notified
• Cooling centre supplies purchased
• Public is notified via social media, web, and E-News
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References

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. (2025). *BC Provincial Heat Alert and Response System: Third update*. BC Centre for Disease Control. Retrieved from http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Health-Environment/Provincial-Heat-Alerting-Response-System.pdf

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. (2023). *Public health recommendations to reduce the impacts of exposure to winter weather on people experiencing homelessness in British Columbia* [PDF]. Retrieved from http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Health-Environment/Recommendations_Exposure_Winter_Weather_People_Experiencing_Homelessness.pdf

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