

Stefanie Golling

From: HPE Heat, Cold, Air Quality <HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca>
Sent: July 15, 2026 3:15 PM
To: HPE Heat, Cold, Air Quality
Subject: Heat and Air Quality Warning - Enhanced Programming Request

Hello Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Network Main Contacts,

Waterloo Region is currently experiencing a yellow level **Heat Warning** as well as an orange level **Air Quality Warning**.

Weather Forecast:

We expect maximum temperatures of 29 to 33 degrees Celsius, minimum temperatures of 18 to 21 degrees Celsius and Humidex values of 38 to 42 today. Temperatures should decrease below Heat Warning thresholds tomorrow. Smoke from wildfires in northwestern Ontario is causing very poor air quality and reduced visibility. The [AQHI](#) is currently in the very high risk category, and is expected to continue to be in the very high risk and high risk category until approximately Friday.

Health Messaging:

- See below for both heat and air quality e-Bulletin information.
- During heavy smoke conditions, everyone's health is at risk regardless of their age or health status. Limit time outdoors. Reschedule or cancel outdoor sports, activities and events.
- When there is an extreme heat event occurring with wildfire smoke, [prioritize keeping cool](#).

At this time, Public Health recommends moving into **Enhanced Programming for community heat and air quality response**.

Please reply to this email with an update of any additional supports that your organization is providing to the community to protect against heat and air quality related illness during this weather event. Public Health will share this information with the Network, Regional Council, and the public as relevant.

Additional Actions to Consider

As suggested in the Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Alert Response Plan, the following actions could be considered to provide additional community relief from extreme heat and poor air quality:

- Provide water (e.g., fountains, cups, water bottles)
- Extend opening hours for Warming, Cooling and Clean Air Spaces
- Extend hours for indoor pools
- Provide free swims for indoor pools
- Open facilities after regular business hours and/or on weekends
- Regularly checking on your neighbours
- Hydration / misting stations
- Chairs / welcome seating at Warming, Cooling and Clean Air Spaces
- Share Community Services Pocket Card, which lists information about shelter, drop-in, and street outreach services [Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing](#)
- Providing masks (e.g., N95 respirators) to high-risk groups (outside of the WCCA Spaces) – see below for additional information

WCCA Space Webpage Reminders

The [Warming, Cooling and Clean Air \(WCCA\) Space](#) webpage includes an interactive map that allows you to:

- Filter for spaces that provide access to water fountains
- Zoom in to view public pools and splash pads
- Zoom in to view transit routes and stops

Masks at WCCA Spaces

- Masks (e.g., N95 respirators) are available at WCCA Spaces for high-risk individuals (e.g., persons experiencing homelessness, persons who have chronic lung and heart conditions). Although masks are intended for high-risk individuals, no one asking for a mask is denied one.
- **WCCA Space providers:** to order additional respirators, email please email HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca.
 - Regional WCCA Space partners can receive masks/fact sheets by inter-office mail.
 - Non-Regional WCCA Space partners are asked to pick-up from 99 Regina St. S., Waterloo or 150 Main St. If this is not possible, please let us know and we can discuss alternate shipping arrangements.

E-Bulletins

NOTICE: Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has issued an ORANGE AIR QUALITY WARNING FOR WATERLOO REGION	
Weather Details from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) • Smoke from wildfires in northwestern Ontario is causing very poor air quality and reduced visibility. Conditions may improve Friday morning.	
<u>ECCC Colour Code Details</u>	
Yellow	 • Hazardous weather may cause damage, disruption, or health impacts • Impacts are moderate, localized, and/or short-term • Yellow alerts are the most common
Orange	 • Severe weather is likely to cause significant damage, disruption, or health impacts • Impacts are major, widespread, and/or may last a few days • Orange alerts are uncommon
Red	 • Very dangerous and possibly life-threatening weather, will cause extreme damage and disruption • Impacts are extensive, widespread, and prolonged • Red alerts are rare
<u>Wildfire Smoke Health Messaging</u>	
Take steps to protect your health from wildfire smoke.	
1. The best way to protect your health is to reduce your exposure to wildfire smoke. 2. Check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) to help you decide if you should change your outdoor plans. Air quality from wildfire smoke can change throughout the day as wildfire smoke moves in and out of the area. Download the free WeatherCAN app to check the AQHI regularly to help you plan your day and breathe easier. 3. Spend less time outside. Stay indoors and keep windows and doors closed. If it is too warm, turn on air conditioning or visit a Cooling and Clean Air Space. 4. Keep indoor air clean. Use the best quality air filter that your ventilation system can handle based on manufacturers' recommendations. Run the fan mode and put the system on recirculate. Use a portable air purifier or cleaner. 5. Do light activities only – avoid anything that makes you breathe hard. Avoid strenuous activities like jogging, yard work or lifting heavy things. 6. If you must spend time outdoors, a wear well-fitted respirator type mask (such as a NIOSH-certified N95 or equivalent respirator) that does not allow air to pass through small openings	

between the mask and face, to help reduce your exposure to the fine particles in smoke. The Public Health Agency of Canada has guidelines for [using a respirator during wildfire smoke events](#).

7. **If you work outdoors**, check with your [provincial occupational health and safety association](#) or your employer for safety information about wildfire smoke events.

Pay attention to how you feel.

- People respond differently to smoke. Mild irritation and discomfort are common and usually disappear when the smoke clears. **Mild symptoms** include eye and throat irritation, cough, runny nose and headaches. Drinking water can help your body cope with the smoke.
- **More severe symptoms** include dizziness, heart palpitations, chest pains, wheezing and difficulty breathing.
- **Stop or reduce your activity level if breathing becomes uncomfortable or you or someone in your care feel unwell.** Contact your health care provider if you develop severe symptoms.
- **Exposure to wildfire smoke can worsen health problems** like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure. If you start to feel unwell, take a break or contact your health care provider.

Some people are more at risk of health problems when exposed to wildfire smoke:

- Infants and young children
- Older adults
- Indigenous Peoples
- Pregnant people
- People who:
 - Smoke
 - Work outdoors, including wildland firefighters
 - Are involved in strenuous outdoor exercise
 - Live with lower income
 - Have lower education
 - Experience housing insecurity
 - Experiencing uncertain employment
- People with an existing illness or chronic health conditions, such as:
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Mental illness
 - Lung or heart conditions

Wildfires can impact mental health, especially for people who live close to a wildfire. People may experience worsening mental health impacts such as:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- General distress caused by natural disasters and climate change

Anyone having trouble coping with symptoms of stress, anxiety or depression should seek help from a health professional. Resources are available free of cost to anyone experiencing mental health problems. Don't be afraid to reach out if you need help:

- [Health 811](#)

- [Mental Health Support](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous peoples](#)

Community Supports

- **Clean Air Spaces** provide temporary relief from extreme weather at public spaces across Waterloo Region of Waterloo
 - Locations, hours, interactive map, and print link: regionofwaterloo.ca/CleanAirSpaces
 - Direct link to Clean Air Space PDF print options: <https://gis.regionofwaterloo.ca/WCCASpacesPDFs>.
 - Respirators (N95 masks) are available for free at [Clean Air Spaces](#) for individuals at higher risk of negative health impacts from poor air quality.
- See the [Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing](#) web page for information about supports and services available throughout the community, including meal programs, emergency shelters, and drop-in programs. This page is updated regularly.
- Visit alertwr.ca for a list of personal preparedness tips and tools. If you live, work, or play in Waterloo Region, you can sign up for personalized emergency notifications for up-to-date emergency information.

Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Network

- The Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Network (WRHCAN) is a collection of local partners that work together to improve the resilience of the community to the negative health effects of extreme heat, extreme cold and poor air quality. If your organization is interested in participating in this network, is interested in providing a Warming, Cooling and Clean Air Space to the community, or you would like to receive these notices directly, please contact HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Network Partners

- If you plan to offer any additional services to support the community during this air quality event, please email HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca. Public Health will share this information with the Network and public as relevant.
- Additional services could include distribution of additional N95 masks, extending Clean Air Space hours, et cetera.

Sign up for Customizable Weather Alerts from ECCC

- EC Alert Me email alerts: ecalertme.weather.gc.ca
- WeatherCAN mobile app with push notifications: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weather-general-tools-resources/weathercan.html>

Helpful Resources

- ROWPH Air Quality Webpage: regionofwaterloo.ca/airquality
- ROWPH Social Media:
 - X/Twitter: [@ROWPublicHealth](https://twitter.com/ROWPublicHealth)
 - Instagram: [@ROWPublicHealth](https://www.instagram.com/ROWPublicHealth)
 - Facebook: facebook.com/ROWPublicHealth

NOTICE: Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has issued an **YELLOW AIR QUALITY WARNING FOR WATERLOO REGION**

Weather Details:

- Heat beginning today (Monday) and continuing until at least Wednesday.
- Maximum temperatures of 30 to 37 degrees Celsius.
- Minimum temperatures of 20 to 24 degrees Celsius.
- Humidex values of 38 to 45.

[ECCC Colour Code Details](#)

Yellow



- Hazardous weather may cause damage, disruption, or health impacts
- Impacts are moderate, localized, and/or short-term
- Yellow alerts are the most common

Orange



- Severe weather is likely to cause significant damage, disruption, or health impacts
- Impacts are major, widespread, and/or may last a few days
- Orange alerts are uncommon

Red



- Very dangerous and possibly life-threatening weather, will cause extreme damage and disruption
- Impacts are extensive, widespread, and prolonged
- Red alerts are rare

Health Canada Heat Health Messaging

- Take action to protect yourself and others – extreme heat can affect everyone's health. Determine if you or others around you are at greater risk of heat illness. [Check on](#) older adults, those living alone and other at-risk people in-person or on the phone multiple times a day.
- Watch for the early signs of heat exhaustion in yourself and others. Signs may include headache, nausea, dizziness, thirst, dark urine and intense fatigue. Stop your activity and drink water.
- Heat stroke is a medical emergency! Call 9-1-1 or your emergency health provider if you, or someone around you, is showing signs of heat stroke which can include red and hot skin, dizziness, nausea, confusion and change in consciousness. While you wait for medical attention, try to cool the person by moving them to a cool place, removing extra clothing, applying cold water or ice packs around the body.
- Drink water often and before you feel thirsty to replace fluids.
- Close blinds, or shades and open windows if outside is cooler than inside.
- Turn on air conditioning, use a fan, or move to a cooler area of your living space. If your living space is hot, move to a cool public space such as a Cooling Space, shopping centre, or shaded park.
- Hot and humid air can also negatively impact air quality. Check the [Air Quality Health Index](#) to monitor local air quality regularly.

Community Supports

- **Cooling Spaces** provide temporary relief from extreme weather at public spaces across Waterloo Region of Waterloo
 - Locations, hours, interactive map, and print link: regionofwaterloo.ca/CoolingSpaces
 - Direct link to Cooling Space PDF print options: <https://gis.regionofwaterloo.ca/WCCASpacesPDFs>.
- See the [Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing](#) web page for information about supports and services available throughout the community, including meal programs, emergency shelters, and drop-in programs. This page is updated regularly.
- Visit alertwr.ca for a list of personal preparedness tips and tools. If you live, work, or play in Waterloo Region, you can sign up for personalized emergency notifications for up-to-date emergency information.

Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Network

- The Waterloo Region Heat, Cold and Air Quality Network is a collection of local partners that work together to improve the resilience of the community to the negative health effects of extreme weather. Focus areas include extreme heat, extreme cold, and poor air quality. If your organization is interested in participating in this network, in providing a Warming, Cooling and Clean Air Space to the community, or you would

like to receive these notices directly, please contact
HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Network Partners:

- If you plan to offer any additional services to support the community during this heat event, please email HeatColdAirQuality@regionofwaterloo.ca. Public Health will share this information with the Network and public as relevant.
- Additional services could include free swims, extended pool hours, misting stations, water distribution, extending Cooling Space hours, et cetera.

Sign up for Customizable Weather Alerts from ECCC

- EC Alert Me email alerts: ecalertme.weather.gc.ca
- WeatherCAN mobile app with push notifications:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weather-general-tools-resources/weathercan.html>

Helpful Resources

- Health Canada, [How to protect yourself from the health effects of extreme heat, Health risks and who is at risk of extreme heat events](#)
- National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, *Health Checks During Extreme Heat Events: A guide for doing in-person and remote health checks (available in 5 languages)*: nccceh.ca/resources/evidence-reviews/health-checks-during-extreme-heat-events
- ROWPH Social Media:
 - X/Twitter: [@ROWPublicHealth](https://twitter.com/ROWPublicHealth)
 - Instagram: [@ROWPublicHealth](https://www.instagram.com/ROWPublicHealth)
 - Facebook: facebook.com/ROWPublicHealth
- ROWPH Extreme Heat Webpage: regionofwaterloo.ca/extremeheat
- Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, *3 Steps to Cost-Effective Home Heat Protection* <https://www.intactcentreclimateadaptation.ca/climate-ready-infographics/#Extreme-heat>