

# Extreme Heat and Smoke Preparedness

Public Safety and Human Services Committee



# Extreme Heat & Wildfire Smoke Incident Operations Plan

- Annex to the city's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- Purpose - to enable a coordinated multidisciplinary, multi-departmental, and multijurisdictional response during heat and smoke events.
- Applicable to all City of Seattle (City) Departments
- Provides information to all partners that support or depend on City response.

# Plan Scope

- It aligns with the processes and structures described in the CEMP
- Provides additional detail on how the City would coordinate response response to heat and smoke events
- Includes actions for actions needed to heat related hazards in the Seattle Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (SHIVA)
  - Examples; power outages, infrastructure and structural failures, fire.
- Can be adapted to meet specific conditions at the time of response.

# Limitations

- City Departments will make every reasonable effort to respond to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and related hazards.
- Seattle's infrastructure is unprepared for extreme heat and wildfire smoke
  - More than half of Seattle homes do not have air conditioning or filtration systems
  - Historical architecture trends prioritized heat retention over cooling
  - Building owners assessing need and capability to install cooling and HVAC systems – changes require significant time and resources.
  - City has limited options for cooled spaces where it can direct people to go for relief from heat and poor air quality.
  - Some community members (elderly especially) are reluctant to use cooling centers

# Seattle Hazard Identification & Vulnerability Analysis (SHIVA)

- The consequences of Extreme heat and wildfire smoke fall into three categories: Health, Transportation and Infrastructure Hazards, and Weather and Climate Hazards.
- Many consequences are associated with each type.
- Annex identifies actions in all three categories.

# OEM is Plan Coordinator

- Primary Departments

- HSD
- SDPR
- SPU
- MO Communications
- SDOT
- FAS
- SCL

- Support Depts/Agencies

- PHSKC
- SPL
- SFD
- SPD
- ITD
- City Animal Shelter
- SDHR
- Seattle Center
- OIRA
- SPS
- KC Metro
- OED



# Extreme Heat Response Strategies

- Seattle City Light (SCL) monitors power system load and conditions during extreme heat events to ensure system failures are detected and resolved as quickly as possible.
- SDOT engages in extreme heat mitigation and responds to impacts on critical infrastructure.
  - SDOT focuses on water-cooling and inspecting designated roadways and bridges to a defined service level.
  - The SDOT Extreme Heat Readiness and Response Plan details this response.
- City worker safety: Departments may modify, reschedule, or cancel planned outdoor work during periods of extreme heat.

# Extreme Heat Response Strategies

- The City works with a number of partners to provide cooling locations. Identified cooling center strategies include:
  - Existing, open, public spaces with air-conditioning like libraries, community centers, and the Seattle Center Armory
  - Air-conditioned spaces that are not typically open to the public, but could be made available during extreme heat
  - Through SPR, SHA, and others, provide temporary cooling (portable air-conditioners) to existing spaces where vulnerable populations gather, such as senior centers
  - Promotion of commercial spaces with air-conditioning that are open to the public
  - Public messaging will leverage a wide variety of methods and platforms including media briefings, alert Seattle and leveraging existing networks .



# Response Strategies For Smoke

- During an extended, severe wildfire smoke event, the City may work with regional response partners to identify open indoor spaces with adequate air filtration systems and establish clean air spaces for the public.
- City departments may curtail outdoor work in accordance with their current plans and procedures
- The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) is in the rulemaking process for permanent Wildfire Smoke rules.



# Action Steps: Monitoring

- Several departments including OEM continuously monitor forecasts
- Typically there is 2-5 day advance notice of approaching hot weather or smoke.
- When those forecasts begin to indicate hot weather and/or poor air quality, OEM:
  - Will share that information with stakeholders using existing EOC email distribution groups.
  - Consider the need for a situation assessment conference call.



# Action Steps: Coordination Conference Call

- Conference calls will include key city departments along with Public Health and KCRHA. These calls will:
  - Review the latest weather forecasts from the NWS and/or smoke forecasts from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
  - Determine the current state of preparedness of the City
  - Assess potential impacts to city serves and the community including vulnerable populations.
  - Through a unity of effort, determine what actions the City needs to take.
  - Consider whether to activate the EOC –or– identify event-specific triggers for an activation

# Action Steps: Coordinating Using MS Teams

- In smaller events City departments and key stakeholders will coordinate using the MS Teams platform.
- Use of MS Teams will be combined with regular check-in via conference calls.



# Action Steps: Activation of the EOC

When the EOC is activated, key objectives include:

1. Collect information on the impact to City services, infrastructure and the community with emphasis on how vulnerable populations are effected.
2. Determine what actions city departments and the community need to take.
3. Assess the need for additional cooling and/or smoke free locations for the public.
4. Ensure that the community is kept informed through regular communications through traditional and social media.



# City of Seattle Heat and Smoke Website

- [Seattle.gov/heat](https://seattle.gov/heat)

[Summer Heat Safety | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/heat)



# Summary

- Plan based on input from internal and external stakeholders
- Includes input from community groups from focus groups
- Coordinated efforts of multiple city departments
- Response actions focused by city department work and needs of the community for each incident.
- Seattle OEM focus is to ensure unity of effort when managing the consequences from heat and smoke.

