

WHO IS CLIMATE VULNERABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



SENIORS:



Seniors are more vulnerable to the health impacts associated with climate change-related weather events, such as heatwaves, and worsening air quality. They also may have reduced mobility, making evacuation during natural disasters, such as floods, windstorms and wildfires more challenging. During emergency situations, medical care may be impacted by power outages and supply chain issues.

As many seniors aren't as familiar with social media and technology, they may be unaware of emergency alerts and poor air quality warnings. Check-in frequently with your older loved ones and ensure you have an emergency evacuation plan for them!

PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS



Homeless people and people living in unstable housing are especially vulnerable to extreme weather events and slow-onset climate changes. Cold exposure, heat exhaustion and social isolation are some of the risks that rural homeless groups face. Those with unstable housing are also at increased risk of becoming homeless following a natural disaster.

Public cooling centres are a great option to provide refuge during heat waves, like the one Alberta experienced in June 2021. Additionally, social programs, food banks and shelters may help at risk groups get back on their feet.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS/NEW CANADIANS



People new to Canada may be more vulnerable during climate-related weather events due to:

- Language barriers: Exposure to news broadcasts, safety information and facts about workplace safety may be limited for ESL immigrants
- Smaller networks: New immigrants may lack a strong network of people to assist them during crisis events
- Socioeconomic status: Recent immigrants and refugees have lower socioeconomic status than other Canadians on average, a factor that impacts residential location, access to green space, and response to emergency situations.

You can help these groups by welcoming newcomers and helping them establish a network in their community.

PEOPLE WHO LIVE ALONE OR LONE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS



People who live alone, or parent alone, are especially at risk during extreme weather events, such as floods, heatwaves, and power outages. In addition, social isolation may lead to mental health crises.

You can help people you know in this group by supporting them through hard times and checking in on them during emergency events. This is especially important for those with health and mobility issues.



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Rural Indigenous communities may be especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to:

- Geographic remoteness: which may impact emergency response and critical supply shipments following a natural disaster
- Poor infrastructure: which may be vulnerable to failure with a heightened risk of more frequent extreme weather events
- Livelihoods and food security: a changing climate is predicted to shift ecozones and may impact subsistence practices, such as hunting and fishing

Reconciliation and improving housing for Indigenous communities will become even more important as climate change worsens

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS



Those with lung and heart conditions, such as asthma, COPD, and diabetes are at greater risk of developing severe or deadly symptoms from poor air quality, smoke exposure, and extreme heat. In addition, those with physical disabilities, limited mobility and people who require electricity for medical care may be at risk during evacuations, power outages and supply issues during disaster events.

What can you do?

- Check alerts and avoid going outside during times of poor air quality and heavy smoke
- Learn the symptoms of smoke exposure and heat stroke
- Visit a cooling centre in your area during a heatwave
- Check-in on those you know with health complications

PEOPLE WHO WORK OUTDOORS



Outdoor labourers, emergency responders, farm workers, and forest firefighters are at risk of:

- Extreme cold and heat conditions: dehydration, heat exhaustion, and variable weather
- Mental health challenges
- Repetitive strain injuries
- Poor work conditions
- Smoke inhalation

As the climate becomes more unpredictable and extreme, it is even more important that we improve the rights of people working outdoors

PEOPLE WITH LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



Youth, women, and racial minorities are more likely to hold low-wage, part-time, insecure jobs. Socioeconomic status affects housing choices and access to green space. Rural residents may have lower resilience to natural disasters, with fewer resources to help them recover, such as comprehensive home insurance, repair costs and flexible employment options.

This group can be supported through various social programs and supports, such as food banks, community closets and