

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC
BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION**

TO: Madeline Maley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations Branch,
Emergency Management BC

ISSUE: *EMBC heatwave supports to First Nations and Local Government*

BACKGROUND:

- Historically, EMBC has supported First Nations and Local Governments in severe weather emergencies with a compounding factor (stranded travelers, prolonged power outage, etc.) but has not supported eligibility for extreme heat or cold, except on a case-by-case basis.
- A long duration heatwave caused by an exceptionally strong ridge of high pressure impacted the Province beginning on June 23, 2021. Though most regions have returned to seasonal normal, heat warnings persist in the Okanagan and Fraser Canyon areas.
- EMBC regions distribute Environment and Climate Change Canada Severe Weather Notifications and Warnings to all First Nations and Local Governments as a standard operating practice. Additionally, all EMBC regions provided heat wave briefings to Local Governments and First Nations through specific coordination calls, or through already scheduled wildfire/freshet/COVID-19 coordination calls.
- On June 25, 2021, EMBC Regional Offices/Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centers (PREOCS) noted a significant increase in calls from First Nations and Local Government to support the activation of cooling centers.
- EMBC authorized incremental cost reimbursement for staffing of cooling centres, bottled water supplied to cooling centres, and facility rental where no appropriate Local Government or First Nations-owned facility was available. EMBC engaged with Health Authority (including First Nations Health Authority) and federal partners to share information and consider additional supports required.

- On June 28, 2021, as the severity of the heat wave impacts became apparent through discussions with First Nations and Local Government, EMBC adapted by making the cost of transporting individuals to and from cooling centers where scheduled public transportation was unavailable (rural and remote areas), as well as those costs incurred in supporting the Health system at a local level. The EMBC Southwest Regional office in Surrey had also phoned their community Emergency Program Coordinators in the communities to let them know reimbursements would continue to be supported.
- EMBC will continue to reimburse incremental costs for 72 hours following the downgrade of the Environment Canada Heat Warning Alert. EMBC continues to adapt our approach based on community needs.
- Key messages include:
 - EMBC shares messaging from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). British Columbians can also sign up for ECCC weather updates and it's up to Local Governments to activate their emergency plans.
 - EMBC has provided significant support to First Nations and Local Government during this heat wave, and has expanded eligibility to include transportation and assistance to the Health system.
 - EMBC has supported the addition of surge medical response capacity for fire departments.
 - EMBC continues to work closely with local Emergency Operations Centers to ensure supports are well understood, and to address specific needs that are not clearly covered under established reimbursement eligibility.
 - EMBC continues to work with other Ministries (spec. Health), First Nations organizations, and federal partners to adapt to the emergent needs of communities in this unparalleled event.
 - EMBC has committed to working with all response partners to ensure a robust Provincial extreme weather plan exists for anticipated future events driven by climate change.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSIDERATIONS:

- EMBC has worked provincially and locally with First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and Indigenous Services Canada to provide wrap-around and culturally appropriate coverage for the needs of indigenous communities during this event, and has provided pathways through response partners for costs not eligible under EMBC's funding frameworks.

OTHER MINISTRIES IMPACTED/CONSULTED:

- Health

PREPARED BY:

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REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM		
ADM	MM	Jul 5
ED	PB	Jul 5
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