

These scenarios are designed to stimulate conversations within organisations and networks of what may need to be considered in a variety of different emergency situations. Please feel welcome to use these scenarios in staff meetings or emergency planning workshops to increase awareness of organisational procedures and potentially identify gaps in planning.

For further information and advice please contact your local emergency planning committee through your council or local emergency services.

Practice Scenario: Extreme Heat.

The Bureau of Meteorology are predicting maximum temperatures exceeding 38.7 degrees with overnight minimum temperatures of 25.4 degrees for at least the next 5 days.

There have been warnings issued of an increased likelihood of rolling blackouts and interruptions to public transport. Local councils will be limiting some services such as outdoor work and community transport, with essential works to be conducted in the early morning to avoid the higher temperatures.

Certain public venues will extend their opening hours to provide respite from the heat for those without sufficient cooling in their homes.

The fire danger rating is listed as 'severe'.

For your workplace, consider the following:

- What advice and duties will you be giving your staff?
- What messages will you be communicating to your clients/ customers/ community members and when?
- Do you work with people who will be at risk from the heat wave? What will be done to maintain your duty of care both to staff and those they work with?
- What services will be critical to maintain? Are there any services that will be cancelled or reduced?
- If services will be cancelled or reduced, what impact will this have on clients/ members/ customers/ community?
- How will fatigue be managed?

In the case of a heat wave, remember that:

- Extreme heat causes more deaths and hospitalisations in Australia than all other natural disasters combined.
- Heatwaves are a particular risk for those with health issues, the elderly, children, outdoor workers and those with disabilities. But anyone can be at risk if they don't take precautions to keep hydrated and cool, even if they are fit and healthy.
- Infrastructure such as electricity, transport networks and communications can be at a heightened risk of breakdown during heat waves.
- Increased demands on ambulances and hospitals can be expected.
- Outdoor work will cease and agriculture will be impacted reducing productivity and potentially leading to food shortages.

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- Climate change will lead to more frequent and more extreme heat waves in the future.
- Built up areas are likely to experience higher temperatures due to the additional reflective surfaces, dark colours and lack of vegetation. This may mean that surface temperatures far exceed the forecast temperatures.



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