



A motorhome sits amid the burnt debris in the Village of Lytton, B.C. on Friday, July 9, nine days after a wildfire ripped through the town destroying 90 per cent of it. (Jenna Hauck/ Chilliwack Progress)

Deadly heat dome brought record-high temperatures

June 28 marked last of 3 back-to-back, record-breaking high temperature days at a sizzling 43 C

Jenna Hauck
The Progress

Chilliwack experienced the hottest temperatures ever recorded during this summer's heat wave.

The extreme heat was deadly with more than 20 fatalities in Chilliwack where temperatures reached a blistering 43 C on Monday, June 28 – the hottest day ever recorded in Chilliwack.

That day marked the last of three back-to-back, record-breaking high temperature days.

Records for the community

go back 140 years, to 1881. In all those years, the hottest day recorded previously was July 29, 2009 when it reached 38.3 C.

That record was initially broken on Saturday, June 26 when the mercury reached 40.9 C. But that record-breaking temperature didn't last long as the next day (June 27) it got even hotter with a high of 42.2 C. Chilliwack's record-high temperature

was beat again when June 28 reached a sweltering 43 C.

Those three days were part of the week-long 'heat dome' that hit much of B.C.

According to the Royal Meteorological Society, "a heat dome is created when an area of high pressure stays over the same area for days or even weeks, trapping very warm air underneath – rather like a lid on a pot."

It happened during the first week of summer vacation for kids. It was eerily quiet as the typical sounds of children playing outside was replaced with the hum of air conditioners and fans running non-stop.

Fraser Health issued an "extreme heat alert" as the risk of heat-related illness rose with the mercury and was especially dangerous for: "the young, the elderly, those working or exercising in the

**Top 2021
Stories**



Two-year-old Lennox Douglas plays in the water at Cheam Centre Spray Park on Tuesday, June 29. Temperatures dropped to 35.6 C that day, down from a record-setting 43 C on Monday, June 28. (Jenna Hauck/ Chilliwack Progress)

heat, persons with chronic heart and lung conditions, persons with mental illness, people living alone and people experiencing homelessness."

BC Coroners Service report-

ed that 595 people in B.C. died between June 18 and Aug. 12, with the largest number of heat fatalities – 526, or 88 per cent – occurring during the 'heat dome' period between June 25

and July 1.

Chilliwack was one of the hardest hit with 22 deaths, the sixth highest among all the cities. Vancouver saw the most deaths (99), followed by Surrey

(67), Burnaby (63), New Westminster (28) and Langley (23).

The community here rallied to help vulnerable people stay hydrated and cool.

There were cases of bottled water crowdfunded and handed out by Griffin Security to anyone in need, but especially to those living on the streets.

Eight cooling centres opened – including an outdoor misting station at the visitor centre – set up by City of Chilliwack and local churches, with volunteer drivers to transport seniors to them.

While Chilliwack topped out at 43 C on June 28, it was the two days that followed for the Village of Lytton that made international headlines.

On June 29, the community gained the record for the hottest place ever recorded in Canada at 49.6 C, nearly 24 C higher than normal. One day later on June 30, the entire village was on fire within minutes as a massive wildfire ripped through Lytton, destroying 90 per cent of it and killing two people.