



**King County**  
Emergency Management

# King County Summer Hazards: Wildfire, Smoke, and Heat

**Brendan McCluskey**

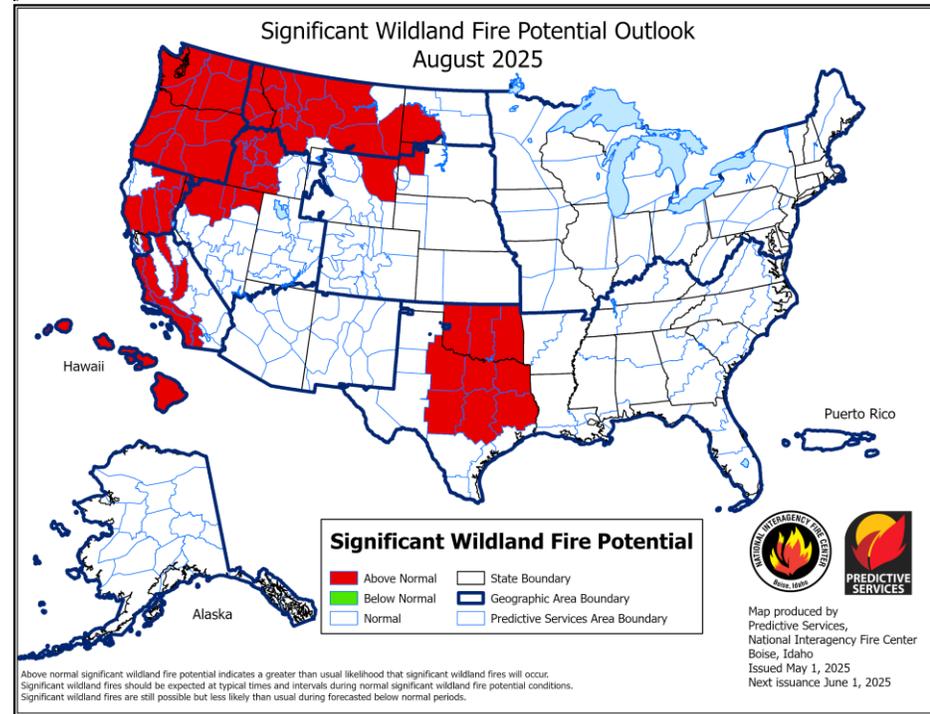
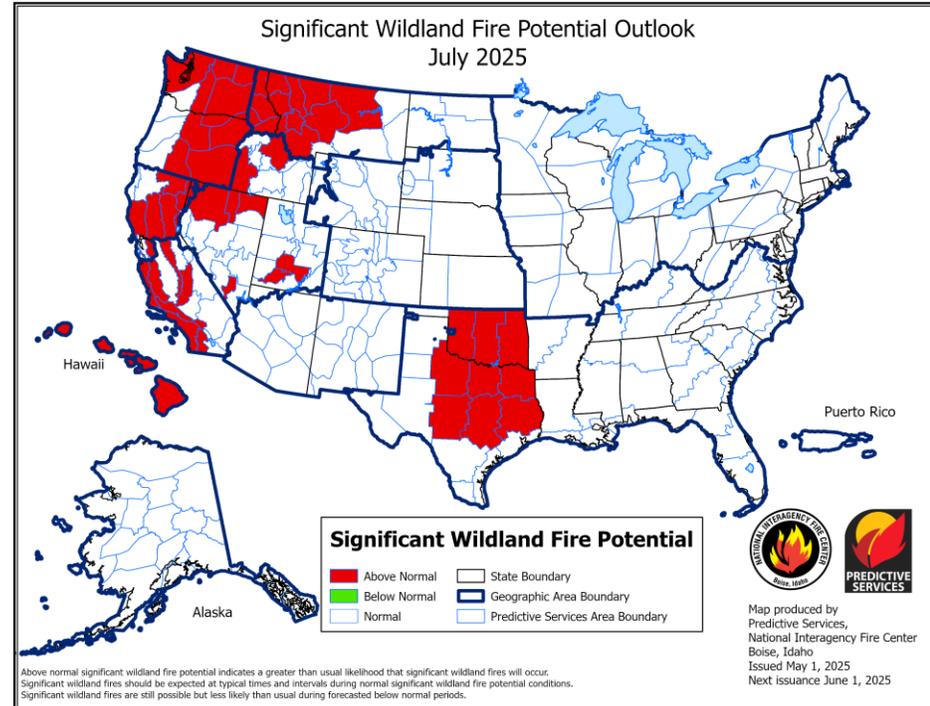
Director

King County Emergency Management

Bolt Creek Fire, 2022  
(Source: Inciweb)

# Wildfire in Western Washington

- Current outlook indicates normal wildfire risk through June, with elevated risk in July and August
- Risk is seasonally dependent (highest from ~August-October)
- The Bolt Creek Fire and two other significant wildfires ignited in September and burned into October in 2022
  - Burn scars have lasting effects and increased risk for those areas
- Working with utilities and regulatory agencies for pre-emptive Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)



# Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

- **What is a CWPP?**
  - Collaborative plan that identifies & prioritizes ways to reduce risk of destructive wildfire
- **What will be included?**
  - Wildfire hazard assessment map
  - An analysis of local wildfire history
  - Risk reduction strategies and action plan
  - Recommendations for King County residents
  - Localized chapters for jurisdictions/fire districts (optional)
- **Who is involved?**
  - **Subject matter experts** → Core Planning Team
  - **Local leaders** → Mitigation Workshops (launching May 1)
  - **Community members** → CWPP survey, direct outreach & engagement

## Estimated CWPP Planning Timeline



# Work So Far:

- ✓ Assembled Core Planning Team
- ✓ Drafted Goals & Objectives
- ✓ Developed Wildfire Hazard Map
- ✓ Drafted CWPP Planning Areas
- Engaging partners
- Public outreach



# Work Remaining:

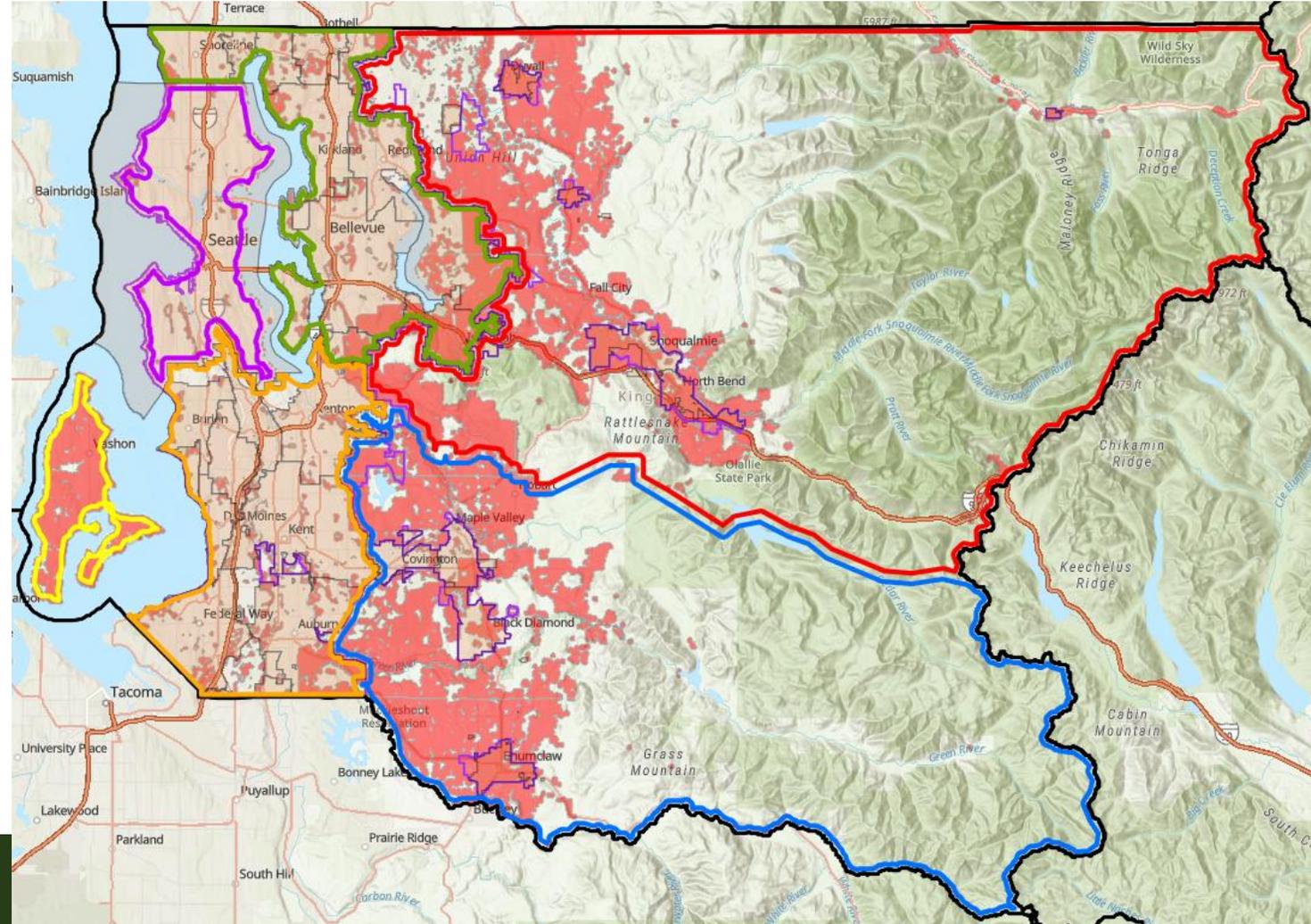
-  Assessing input and identifying actions
-  Create prioritized risk reduction plan
-  Support jurisdiction annex development
-  Final plan completed and approved
-  Plan socialization and implementation



# Where does this plan apply?

Planning Areas for King County CWPP

- **Wildland Urban Interface Areas**
  - Areas with highest vulnerability to a wildfire
- **Jurisdictional Annexes**
  - Local communities/fire districts can create a chapter of the CWPP
- **Countywide Plan**
  - In a fire-adapted community, everyone has a responsibility
  - Priorities and actions will differ across planning areas



# What Community Members Can do to Prepare

- **Preparedness**

- Make emergency plans, assemble go-kits, get to know neighbors
- Consider evacuation route options

- **Awareness**

- Sign up for ALERT King County ([kingcounty.gov/ALERT](https://kingcounty.gov/ALERT))
- Pay attention to Red Flag Warnings and burn bans (over 85% percent of fires in WA are human caused)

- **Involvement in CWPP**

- Survey responses will inform plan development

- **Prevention**

- Follow best practices for home protection from embers
  - 5+ ft non-flammable space around home
  - Fire-resistant building materials and landscaping
- DNR Community Resources: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire/wildfire-preparedness>

- **Wildfire Landing Page**

- <https://kingcounty.gov/wildfire>

## Reducing wildfire risk in King County

Learn about King County's work to reduce wildfire risk and prevent health impacts from wildfire smoke.

↓ [FOREST AND LAND STEWARDSHIP](#)

↓ [HEALTH AND WILDFIRE SMOKE](#)

↓ [WILDFIRE PLANNING AND RESPONSE](#)

↓ [NEWS AND UPDATES](#)

# Ready, Set, Go!

- King County's all-hazard evacuation messaging campaign:
  - **Level 1: Ready** - Possible evacuation
  - **Level 2: Set** - Short notice evacuation likely
  - **Level 3: Go!** - Evacuate immediately
- Depending on the urgency of the situation, may skip steps
- Community members encouraged to have their own plans, be prepared, and stay aware
- King County Emergency Management is partnering with 12 counties across Western Washington to align Ready, Set, Go! messaging

**KING COUNTY**  
WILDFIRE EVACUATION LEVELS 1 2 3

**LEVEL 1 READY** *Possible evacuation in your area*

**Be aware of the danger in your area and start preparing to evacuate**

- Monitor local media and check on neighbors
- Update your GO! kit
- Review your plan - check evacuation routes and shelter locations
- Prepare both the inside and outside of your home
- Leave if you feel unsafe

**LEVEL 2 SET** *Short notice evacuation likely in your area*

**Be prepared for sudden evacuation - leave now if you need extra time**

- Ensure your evacuation checklist is complete
- Ensure your GO! kit is in your evacuation vehicle
- Continue to monitor local media
- Leave if you feel unsafe

**LEVEL 3 GO!** *Evacuate immediately from your area*

**Leave now! Danger in your area**

- Follow directions from police or fire departments
- Do not return home until officials have determined it is safe

**GO! KIT** *Learn more about the supplies and tools you'll need to evacuate at [WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/WILDFIRE](http://WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/WILDFIRE)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Personal documents, photos, and valuables	<input type="checkbox"/> Child and pet care supplies
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered weather radio	<input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights and extra batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone and chargers
<input type="checkbox"/> Three-day supply of food and water (one gallon of water per person per day)	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothing
<input type="checkbox"/> Medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tool kit
	<input type="checkbox"/> Important contact numbers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort or entertainment items

**ALERT King County**  
Be alert and stay informed. Sign up to receive emergency alerts on a phone or email.  
[WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/ALERT](http://WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/ALERT)

**King County Emergency Blog**  
Find up-to-date information on emergencies  
[WWW.KCEMERGENCY.COM](http://WWW.KCEMERGENCY.COM)

# Public Survey

## We want to hear from you about **wildfire.**

King County is developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to help reduce our risk of destructive wildfire, and we need your input.

If you live, work, or play in King County, please take our 5-minute survey.



**King County**  
Emergency Management

Take our 5-min survey:



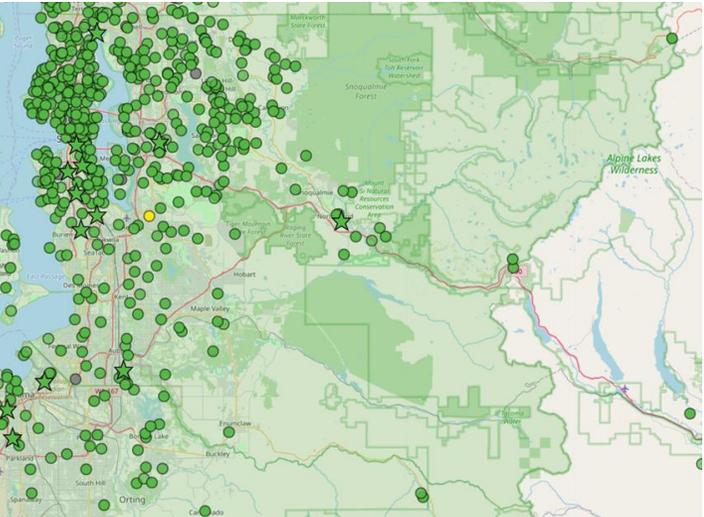
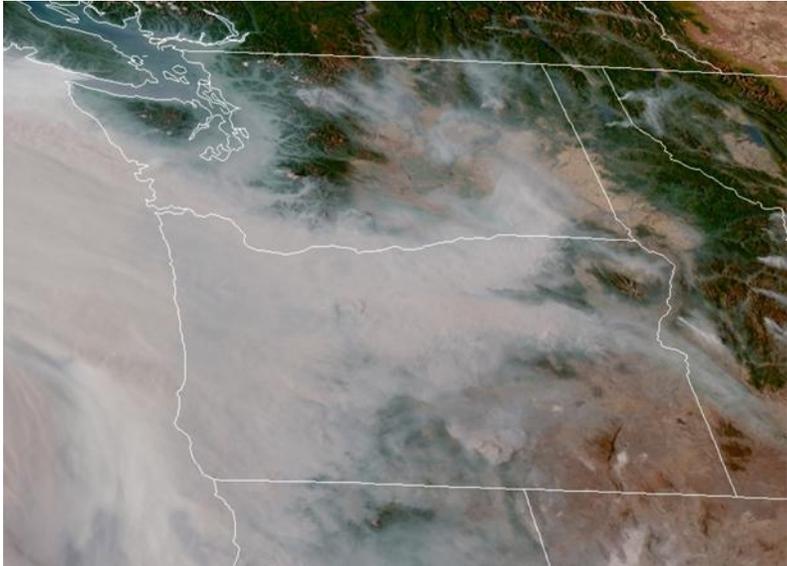
Scan the QR code or visit  
[Publicinput.com/kingcoCWPP](https://publicinput.com/kingcoCWPP)



# Wildfire Smoke

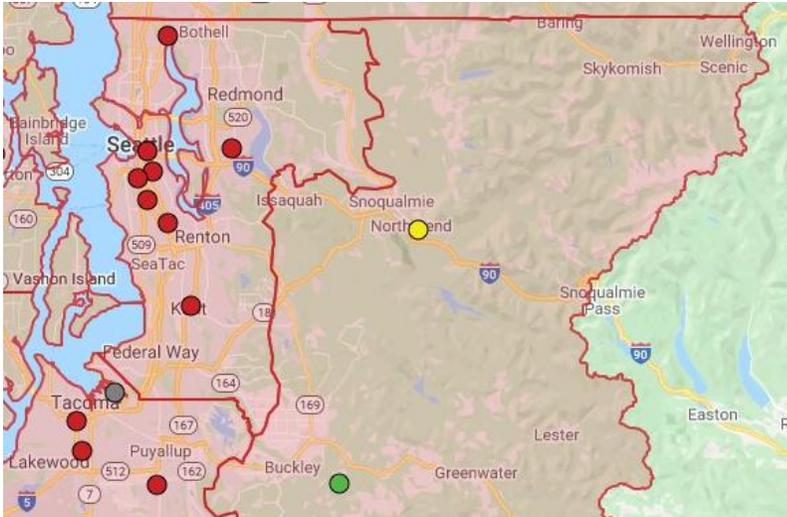
- Washington Department of Ecology: wildfire smoke is the largest source of particle pollution in Washington
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency monitors air quality for the region
- Ecology and other partners provide situational awareness during fire season

Satellite imagery from 9/11/2020



Map current as of 5/16/2025

Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.



Map on 9/11/2020

# Wildfire Smoke

- California and Oregon wildfires (September 2020)
- Bolt Creek Fire (2022)



# Heat

- Heat is the leading weather-related killer in the United States
- Higher temperatures lead to increased mortality, stress on ecosystems, impacts to the economy, and exacerbation of inequalities
- CDC Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/about/index.html>

## Heat Impacts: Vulnerable Populations

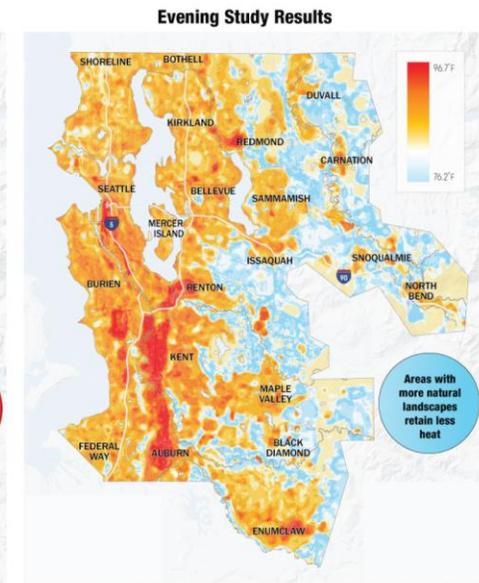
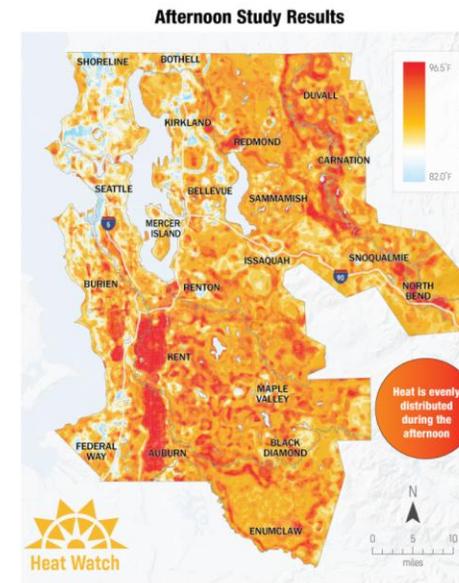


**PREGNANT** **NEWBORNS** **CHILDREN** **ELDERLY** **CHRONIC ILLNESS**

Everyone is at risk from the dangers of extreme heat, but these groups are more vulnerable than most. Age and certain conditions make the body less able to regulate temperature.

- ⚠️ NEVER leave anyone alone in a closed car
- 💧 Drink plenty of water, even if not thirsty
- ❄️ Use air conditioners and stay in the shade
- 👕 Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing

weather.gov 

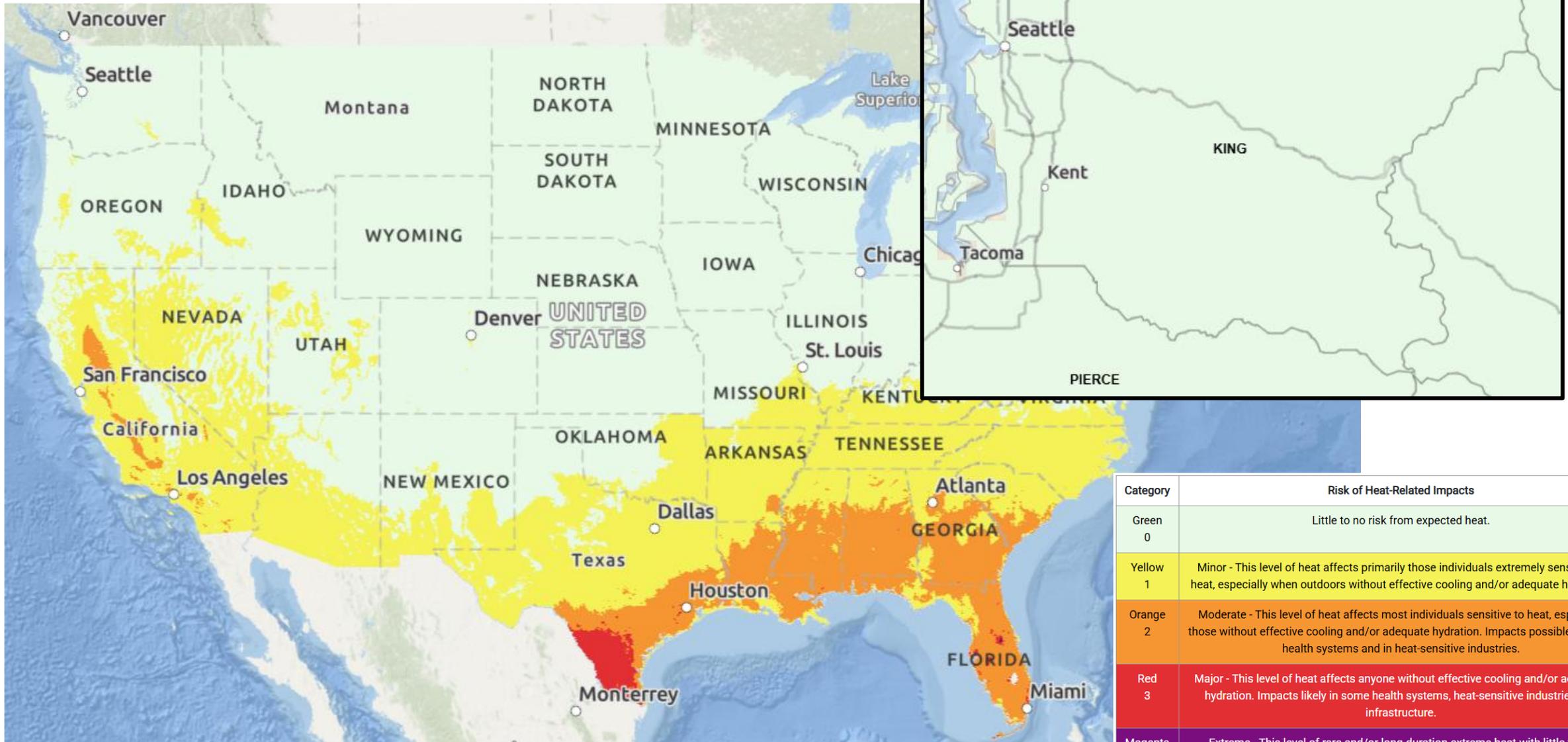


# King County Heat Mitigation Strategy

- Published July 2024
- 20 actions in 6 categories



# HeatRisk

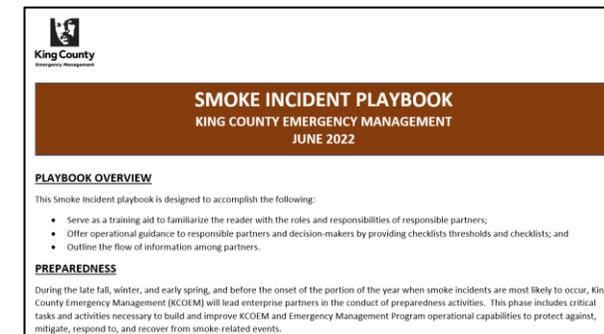
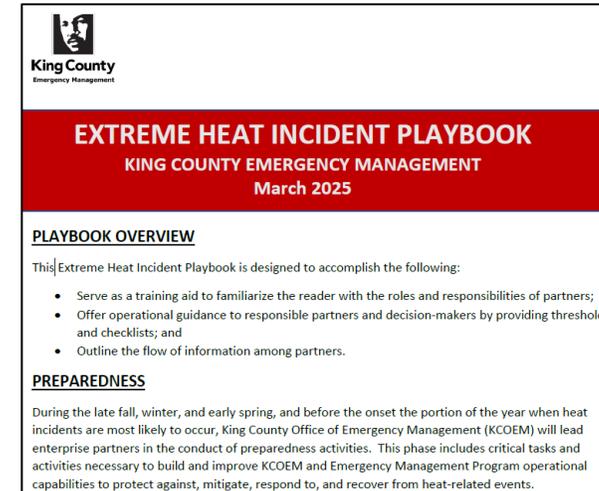


Category	Risk of Heat-Related Impacts
Green 0	Little to no risk from expected heat.
Yellow 1	Minor - This level of heat affects primarily those individuals extremely sensitive to heat, especially when outdoors without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration.
Orange 2	Moderate - This level of heat affects most individuals sensitive to heat, especially those without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration. Impacts possible in some health systems and in heat-sensitive industries.
Red 3	Major - This level of heat affects anyone without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration. Impacts likely in some health systems, heat-sensitive industries and infrastructure.
Magenta 4	Extreme - This level of rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with little to no overnight relief affects anyone without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration. Impacts likely in most health systems, heat-sensitive industries and infrastructure.

Map for 5/20/2025 (current as of 5/16/2025)

# Emergency Management Role

- Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP) includes extreme wildfire, smoke, and heat
- Public outreach and community education
- Extreme Weather Center/Sheltering Guide
- Incident Playbooks
  - Pre-season planning session for professionals
  - Review of documents and plans
  - When conditions are met
    - Messaging to partners
    - Convene PIO and partners calls
    - Activate King County Regional Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
    - Emergency Blog posts and updates
    - Work with partners on response operations



# NOAA/NWS Heat Tabletop Exercise

- May 14-15 at the King County Regional Emergency Operations Center
- Better understand extreme heat, HeatRisk, including potential for a mass fatality event
- Evaluate the roles and responsibilities, emphasizing cross-county collaboration and effective resource allocation
- Develop action plan of interventions and remediations for both short- (0-4 years) and longer-term (5-10 years) aimed to reduce area-specific extreme heat vulnerabilities
- Test readiness for accommodating global visitors during high profile events, such as the FIFA World Cup in 2026





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**Brendan McCluskey**

Director

King County Emergency Management

206-205-4060

[brendan.mccluskey@kingcounty.gov](mailto:brendan.mccluskey@kingcounty.gov)

**Questions?**