

Public Health and Safety

Climate change is already affecting the well-being of New Brunswickers. Preparing your home, community, and services can help keep everyone safe and healthy.

This summary draws on findings from [New Brunswick's Climate Change Risk Assessment](#), which looks at how climate change is impacting the province today and what we are likely to face going forward. The assessment identifies key issues of concern and opportunities for action.

What's the Risk?

The actions we take today to prepare and build resilience can help reduce the harm of future climate-related hazards like flooding, erosion, heatwaves, and wildfires.

Risks from the changing climate range from minimal disruptions to widespread and lasting disruptions. This can cause harm to health and safety, ecosystems, communities, economic sectors, or infrastructure.

By 2050, risks and the resulting impacts will increase significantly if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced and if we don't prepare for the impacts of climate change through adaptation. Emergency response, healthcare systems, and population health will likely experience increased challenges.

Health and Safety Risks

The top drivers of risks are wildfires, extreme heat, inland flooding, and warming seasonal temperatures. These are expected to cause increased:

- physical injuries during floods & wildfires
- respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, and heat exhaustion during heat waves
- long-term mental health challenges, like anxiety, trauma, and grief
- water-, food- and vector-borne illnesses (e.g., Lyme disease), and allergies
- strain on health, emergency, and social support services from overuse during disasters
- hospital visits and early death due to heat and extreme events

Those most likely heavily impacted include seniors and children, those with pre-existing health conditions, and people facing social or economic barriers that make it harder to get support.

Where people live also affects risk. People in **rural communities** often have fewer health and emergency services nearby, rely more on resource-based work, and live closer to forests and waterways. This can make injury, stress, and the need to evacuate more likely. People in **urban communities** often deal with poorer air quality and higher temperatures. This increases the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory problems. Urban areas also tend to have higher poverty rates, making it harder to prepare or recover from climate-related health impacts.



How Can We Adapt?

Climate change adaptation refers to actions that reduce the harm caused by climate change impacts.

ADAPTATION IN ACTION: HEAT ALERT AND RESPONSE SYSTEM (HARS)

Climate change is making New Brunswick warmer. The province is seeing more very hot days. Even cooler, coastal communities like Saint John are beginning to experience more frequent and extreme heat.

To keep people safe, the provincial government and Health Canada developed a Heat Alert and Response System for New Brunswick. It uses weather forecasts to warn communities when dangerous heat is expected. This helps people understand how to prepare for heat-health risks ahead of time and support vulnerable individuals.



In New Brunswick, we have improved emergency response protocols, public health services, early warning systems, and tools that track health impacts during extreme events. **However, not all communities have access to the same resources, technologies, and expertise.** Many programs rely on short-term funding, and staff may not receive enough training. To keep people safe as climate risks grow, New Brunswick will need to build stronger capacity across all regions, sectors, and communities so that health systems and emergency services are resilient, strong, fair, and support everyone.

Next Steps

- You can prepare for climate change at home and in your community by making an [emergency plan](#), subscribing to local health, air quality, and emergency alerts, and putting together a 72-hour emergency kit.
- Learn how the [New Brunswick Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) is helping the province understand current climate risks and how to prepare for the future.
- Explore climate change adaptation resources. [CLIMAtlantic.ca](#) offers tools, information, and services to get you started.
- Connect and get involved with local organizations through the [New Brunswick Environmental Network](#).



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