



HEAT WATCH

Volunteer FAQs

What is the project?

A heat-mapping campaign will be conducted in your region this summer, with the purpose to better understand & address the distribution of heat at the human level. Data collected by volunteers will be used to develop a high-resolution, area-wide heat map using predictive modeling (see Seattle [example](#)).

Why are we conducting the campaign?

Urban areas are especially prone to high temperatures due to a combination of hard surfaces (buildings, roads), limited vegetation, and heat-producing factors like car use and industrial activity. This problem, known as the urban heat island effect, can create issues for human health, infrastructure, and quality of life. Understanding how temperatures vary based on qualities of the natural and built landscape can inform how we reduce the impacts of rising summer temperatures in our communities.

How are data collected?

Data are collected using a sensor (image right) mounted to the passenger side of a car (note: the sensor is held in place by the window; nothing is permanently affixed to the car or bike). The sensor records the ambient temperature, humidity, and GPS every one second as volunteers transport the device through pre-planned routes, or "traverses".

What do volunteers do?

Volunteers are needed to collect data at three times throughout the designated Campaign Day. Drivers, navigators (to help steer drivers), and bicyclists will be assigned to a pre-planned route or "traverse". Data collection times are typically 6-7 a.m., 3-4 p.m., and 7-8 p.m, though may vary by region. Drivers will ideally drive the same route for all three shifts, though may also switch-off with navigators or other teams.





Are there any requirements as a volunteer?

All volunteers (drivers AND navigators) will be required to sign a liability release waiver. Volunteers also need to participate in a volunteer orientation before the date of the campaign. Drivers will need a valid driver's license, access to a vehicle, and auto insurance.

Do I get to choose where I drive or help navigate?

More than likely, yes. Volunteers are asked to identify their preferred driving areas once confirmed as a participant. We will do our best to accommodate your preferences.

When are we conducting the campaign?

Data collection will occur on a day when the expected daily high temperature for your area is within the top 10% of annual averages, along with a low chance of precipitation, low cloud-cover and low wind speed. Forecasts and historical weather patterns will identify a tentative campaign date, which will be confirmed or altered with more accurate forecasts as the date approaches.

I am interested in volunteering, schedule permitting. Where can I sign up?

Please respond to the instructions in the email sent by your local campaign organizer. Because we have to wait for the heat—and the fact that summer is such a busy time—we need to assemble an “on-call” roster of several dozen drivers/navigators to cover the campaign day. Volunteers will be contacted regarding the next steps in preparing for the campaign.