

Extreme Weather Response Community Plan Burnaby 2017-2018

1. Introduction

The Burnaby Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Plan sets the framework for creating temporary sheltering resources for homeless persons to prevent hardships due to extreme winter weather conditions within the municipality of Burnaby. Since November 2009, the Plan also authorizes the police, under The Assistance to Shelter Act, to transport to sheltering locations any person who is deemed at risk of or suffering physical harm because of their lack of shelter during an Extreme Weather Alert. The expected outcome of the EWR is to reduce the health and safety risks to homeless people related to exposure from extreme weather.

The Burnaby Extreme Weather Response Work Group, a subcommittee of the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness (The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby), spearheads Burnaby's Extreme Weather Response and is responsible for its operation. Other communities in Metro Vancouver also have EWR Plans, and all are coordinated by the Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy which provides support and planning assistance. BC Housing, since 2007, has provided support, including funding, for the operation of Extreme Weather Responses in BC. The community members involved in Burnaby's Extreme Weather Response represent a broad array of organizations and the community homeless planning table: The Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness.

For statistics on Burnaby's EWR over the years, please see <http://burnabyhomeless.org/burnaby-extreme-weather-response/>

Extreme Weather Response Community Members

- Fatima Sunderji, Lookout Housing and Health Society: EWR Co-Lead
- Pastor Norman Oldham, The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby: EWR Co-Lead
- Hayley Sinclair, Lookout Housing and Health Society, back up to Fatima & Sunday Co-Lead
- Hannah Han, Lookout Housing and Health Society: back up to Hayley & Saturday Co-Lead
- Rebecca Bell, Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator, Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy
- Kevan Oxley, Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy
- Norm DeVos, Burnaby Alliance Church
- Marianne Buesink, Westminster Bible Chapel
- Kathy Baugh, Westminster Bible Chapel
- Wanda Mulholland, The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby
- Karen O'Shannacery, The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby
- Carla Schuk, City of Burnaby
- Daisy Stapleton, BC Housing

Community Organizations

- Lookout Housing and Health Society
- Westminster Bible Chapel
- Burnaby Alliance Church
- City of Burnaby

- Progressive Housing Society
- The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby (The Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness) & members
- RCMP – Southeast Office
- BC Housing

The Extreme Weather Response Plan

The Extreme Weather Response Plan must meet the needs of a wide range of homeless people (e.g. men, women, youth, seniors and families) in the community and be flexible enough to deal with a varying number of people including individuals who may be coping with challenging issues such as disabilities, mental illness, addictions and other health issues. The sheltering site(s) will provide EWR regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The EWR will endeavour to house those with physical disabilities to the extent that it is safe for the individual. To meet these criteria, the following response has been developed.

1. Extreme Weather Alert – Weather Conditions

Extreme Weather is defined as conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life and/or health of homeless persons such as any or combination of the following weather patterns:

- Temperatures at or below 2° Celsius; temperatures are not absolute and are flexible to other weather conditions;
- Wind chill that reduces the temperature to 2° Celsius;
- Snow accumulation;
- During times of extended rainfall that make it difficult or impossible for individuals to remain dry;
- Freezing rain and/or sleet;
- Severe wind and severe wind warning

2. Timeframe

The Extreme Weather Response Program operates:

- Between October 15 and March 31;
- Intermittently opening as required by weather conditions;
- When alternate shelters within Vancouver and New Westminster are unable to meet the need

Should severe weather conditions occur outside of the above time frame, the EWR Alert team will discuss opening with the Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator and BC Housing.

3. Hours of Operation

- Overnight operations, generally opening 12 to 14 hours per day, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

4. Capacity

- Primary Site - Westminster Bible Chapel, located at 7540-6th Street in Burnaby:
 - Ability to accommodate 27 individuals;
 - Within the lower basement hall area

- Alternate Site - Burnaby Alliance Church, located at 8611 Armstrong Avenue, Burnaby:
 - Ability to accommodate 20 individuals;
 - Utilized when the primary site is unavailable or has reached/exceeded the maximum accommodation

5. Activation Team

The following individuals (or designated back-ups) will be available throughout the duration of the identified months of Extreme Weather Response operations to collaborate and determine when there is an identified need to activate an Extreme Weather Response Alert, ensuring that the sole determining factors include: anticipated need to ensure accessibility/availability to shelter and local weather reports.

- Fatima Sunderji, Lookout Housing and Health Society
 - Hayley Sinclair, Lookout Housing and Health Society, (back up to Fatima)
 - Hannah Han, Lookout Housing and Health Society (back up to Hayley)
- Pastor Norman Oldham, The Society To End Homelessness In Burnaby: EWR Work Group
 - Wanda Mulholland, The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby (Back up to Norman)

During the EWR season, they, or their back-ups, must be available 7 days/week to call an alert.

6. Assistance to Shelter Act

Upon issuance of an Extreme Weather Response Alert, the Assistance to Shelter is activated throughout the duration of the alert, ensuring that members of the local law enforcement agencies' have the authority to assist/transport absolutely homeless individuals to local shelter(s).

7. Notifications

Following the unified decision to activate the Extreme Weather Alert, notifications will apply as follows to ensure awareness regarding the severity of impending weather patterns in the attempts to preserve the life and health of individuals who are living with homelessness:

- Lookout Housing and Health Society, New Westminster - assumes full responsibility of the prompt and accurate distribution of alert notifications via the means of email communication(s) to the various Notification Lists;
- All parties from the pre-determined notification list will be alerted regarding the response;
 - Mandatory separate notifications must be made to: The Minister of Housing, BC Housing, and local law enforcement agencies and must follow the outlined and approved format provided by BC Housing.
- Individuals and organizations notified of an Alert will ensure that their respective staff and clientele are aware of all available resources;
- Organizations will ensure collaborative communication regarding the distribution of blankets, outerwear, and donated clothing to the homeless population, as available;
- Progressive Housing Society will direct Outreach services to provide services to homeless individuals within the community as schedule and availability dictate;
- The Extreme Weather Response Work Group ensures responsibility for diligently updating and maintaining the Notification Lists and providing same to Lookout;

8. Media Inquiries

Upon any EWR enquiry made by local media, working collaboratively, the following procedures are to be adhered to:

- Enquiries are to be directed to:
 - Fatima Sunderji, Lookout Housing and Health Society (Burnaby EWR)
 - Wanda Mulholland, Burnaby Task Force On Homelessness (Burnaby Homelessness)
 - Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator, Rebecca Bell (regional EWR program)
- Notification of enquiry to:
 - Each of the above persons
 - BC Housing
 - Westminster Bible Chapel/Burnaby Alliance Church
- To respect the privacy of any homeless persons, the media will be restricted from the site whenever a homeless person is present. Media footage may include sheltering location, the setting up of the space, signage, donations, work done by staff and willing volunteers, and similar, non-intrusive activities.

9. Activation Response

Upon activation of an Extreme Weather Response Alert, responses include but are not limited to:

- Collaboration between Fatima Sunderji and Norman Oldham will determine activation;
- Lookout Housing and Health Society will ensure all individuals identified within the Notification Lists are contacted no later than 1100hrs;
- That wherever possible required items will be stored/re-stocked within the host location(s) to ensure prompt service delivery;
- Appropriate referral and resources will be made available to all individuals accessing services;
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development will be immediately notified of the presence of youth under the age of nineteen (19) years of age who are requiring and/or requesting to utilize shelter services;
- The Shelter(s) will ensure service provision without discrimination, ensuring that:
 - Trained shelter staff will provide close monitoring and supervision of the space;
 - Men and women will be kept in separate spaces away from the opposite sex and that close supervision ensures no inappropriate access between the two spaces;
 - Attempts will be made to ensure couples are accommodated within the same space;
 - Belongings are stored securely;
 - Privacy and confidentiality are strictly observed
- Meal provisions will be provided with the support from community and faith groups to ensure: nightly meals, snacks, coffee and breakfast;
- A stock of emergency food supplies will be ensured to avoid disruption to meal provision;
- Where possible, Progressive Housing will provide additional support

- Lookout Housing and Health Society will:
 - Ensure a total of two (2) Shelter Resource Worker(s) on a nightly basis;
 - Ensure the training and coordination of volunteers (through use of the GVSS Extreme Weather Response Committee as available), as well as keeping records of a detailed volunteer database;

- Ensure an appropriate quantity of required essentials are supplied, including but not limited to: mats, blankets, pillows, first aid supplies, harm reduction supplies, health and safety requirements, cleaning supplies, hygiene supplies, food supplies, clothing, and administrative items for the purposes of data/information collection and reporting;
 - Provide bus tickets for critical appointments, shelter, housing and, as needed, to get to/from the sheltering place as determined by distance, mobility and weather conditions;
 - provide all transportation of goods and materials to and from the site location(s) as needed and/or required;
- The Society To End Homelessness in Burnaby will, through its Extreme Weather Work Group:
 - Ensure community space is available for the EWR sheltering space
 - Recruit volunteers to assist in Shelter operations including volunteer tasks such as:
 - Set up and take down of sleeping areas;
 - Daily cleaning and sanitizing of all areas;
 - Meal preparation, service and provision;
 - Clothing distribution;
 - Donation organization and distribution;
 - Supports to Shelter Staff as needed and/or required
 - Update the Notification Lists annually and notify Lookout of changes it becomes aware of during the EWR season.
 - Update the Extreme Weather Plan annually
 - Conduct an annual review/debrief of the sheltering operation as part of the Metro Vancouver annual evaluation
 - Keep the community informed of the outcomes of the EWR sheltering space

10. Collection of Information

Data and information will be collected for the use of statistical purposes and aggregate reporting to the Extreme Weather Work Group and Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness and funder:

- All personal information will be treated as confidential;
- Information and data collection will include:
 - Individual – Name (where possible), Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Home Community, City of Origin, Length of Homelessness;
 - Shelter – number of individual served, number of nights open
 - Volunteers – Name, Contact Information, Number of Hours Served per night
 - Additional – Critical Incidents, Turnaways, success stories
- Nightly occupancy reports shall be supplied by 1100hrs each day directly following any night open;
- Invoicing shall be submitted to BC Housing on the 2nd and 17th of each month;
- All non-identifying information and data collection will be shared with:
 - Members of the Burnaby Extreme Weather Response Work Group
 - Burnaby Task Force On Homelessness
 - BC Housing
 - Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy

11. Deactivation

Upon sufficient evidence to the Activation Team that the weather no longer represents a substantial threat to the health and safety of homeless people in Burnaby, the Extreme Weather Alert will be deactivated.

- All individuals utilizing Extreme Weather Shelter services will be notified of the deactivation:
- Lookout Housing and Health Society will be responsible to distribute the deactivation notice utilizing the same Notification process;
- Lookout Housing and Health Society will post closure notices on the EWR doors.

12. Notification Lists

As outlined in Clause 7 above, the Extreme Weather Response Work Group maintains the Burnaby Notification Lists to ensure they remain current. Notifications are provided to a wide range of homeless serving groups as well as community and government contacts to ensure that people without a roof over their head actually receive the critical information of opening Extreme Weather sheltering site(s). The Notification List contains private information such as personal phone numbers to facilitate good communication and are shared on a need-to-know basis with those individuals responsible for the notification of the Extreme Weather Alerts. The Notification Lists are provided to Lookout annually and are updated in real time.