

**Langley**  
**Extreme Weather Response Plan**  
**2017-2018**

**Introduction:**

The Langley Extreme Weather Response Plan provides a framework for expanding resources to people who are homeless to reduce hardships associated with extreme winter weather in the Langley's.

The development of this plan is a collaboration amongst various community and social service organizations involved in assisting, either directly or indirectly, the homeless population of the Langley's.

These include:

**Community and Social Service Organizations**

- Stepping Stone Community Services
- The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope
- Friends Langley Vineyard

**Municipal**

- City of Langley
- Township of Langley
- RCMP

**Provincial**

- BC Housing
- Langley Health Services
- Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy (GVSS)

**Purpose**

Currently, The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope is the only provider of an emergency shelter program which serves the population in the City and Township of Langley. Started in 2009, The Gateway of Hope provides shelter space for 22 men and 10 women and often runs at over 100% capacity all year round with an increasing number of turnaways.

Langley's communities have experienced a rise in individuals needing shelter and low-cost, affordable housing with a decrease in the availability.

Most recently the Gateway of Hope, in partnership with BC Housing and the City of Langley, opened up an additional 30 mat temporary shelter to accommodate the Nicomekl floodplain homeless camp.

This plan's purpose is to develop an operating structure which provides up to 15 additional temporary mat spaces for the vulnerable during cases of extreme weather. The plan offers a seasonal response that is aimed at reducing hardships for the homeless, over and above the current emergency shelter services.

### **Extreme Weather Alert Criteria:**

The Extreme Weather Response Plan meets the diverse needs of the homeless population (men, women, youth over 18, persons with disabilities, seniors & LGBTQ). The plan anticipates demand for service and ensures that facilities are open during extreme winter weather conditions. The plan ensures that adequate staffing, safeguards and other resources are in place.

### **Extreme Weather is defined as:**

Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of vulnerable individuals.

- Temperatures at, or below -2 degrees Celsius or `feels like` -2 degrees with the wind chill
- Significant snow accumulation
- Extensive days of rain creating conditions where it is difficult for people to keep dry; (these conditions would necessitate the activation of an alert for only one night. After that night, more days of rain would have to occur prior to the activation of a similar alert)
- 50mm of rain in a 24-hour period
- Freezing rain
- Severe wind warning
- Significant windstorms that may present danger to persons living in wooded areas and/or makeshift shelters (cardboard boxes or lean-tos).

Websites and resources such as, Environment Canada, The Weather Network, local radio, and Spotwx.com will be used to determine when an alert will be called.

### **Limitations of the Extreme Weather Alert:**

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) will be located in The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope at 5787 Langley Bypass, in the City of Langley.

- The EWR is a mat program that will utilize the common area in the regular emergency shelter (a large open space).
- Dividers will separate male & female.
- Individuals will be provided with: three meals (breakfast, lunch & dinner), snacks, hot beverages, laundry services and dry clothing (if needed/available).

No one is excluded from the EWR unless they are on a full property ban, which would be for reasons of recent violence against guests and/or staff. Guests are expected to follow simple rules designed to create a safe environment for all, but still recognizing the nature of a low barrier mat program.

Referrals to the emergency shelter will occur based on bed availability.

### **Activating & Deactivating an Alert:**

All activation & deactivations will follow the Assistance to Shelter Act (ASA) activation procedures.

Tiffany Sawatzky (Gateway of Hope), Fraser Holland (Stepping Stone Outreach), Leith White (Friends of Langley Vineyard) Raminder Uppal and Dave Selvage (Langley City Bylaw) will be responsible for determining if an activation or deactivation is to be called.

Tiffany Sawatzky and Cristina Sanders (Gateway of Hope) will be responsible for all notifications.

Where possible, an alert will be activated prior to 10am on the day of the alert in order to give sufficient time to mobilize staffing, food services and Gateway maintenance. An alert can be called for up to three days in advance if the weather reports indicate continued adverse conditions but will be reviewed the following day.

Due to differences or variations in weather conditions across the area, an alert can be called in Langley even if an alert is not called in neighboring municipalities or elsewhere in the region. When an alert is called, weather conditions will be documented at the time of the alert for accountability purposes.

The BC Housing template for activating, deactivating, and announcing an alert will be used to make the notifications.

### **Notification to Agencies and Organizations:**

The agencies and organizations identified in the Activation Contact list will be notified in the event of EWR activation/deactivation.

The purpose of the notification is to raise awareness regarding the severity of the weather conditions and the potential impact on people who are homeless, and to inform outreach workers, RCMP, & supporting agencies of the additional shelter space.

### **Time Frame**

EWR program runs between November 1st 2017 through until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018

### **Hours of Operation**

EWR program will be open at 7pm until 10am the following morning

## **Media Inquiries**

Media inquiries are to be directed to:

Tiffany Sawatzky, Manager of Residential Services

In her absence:

Emmy Skates, Executive Director

BC Housing will offer media support in case of major media interest.

## **Evaluation & Plan Revision**

This plan has been developed for the 2017-2018 winter period. After March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 the EWR planning committee will reconvene under the direction of the Chair, Tiffany Sawatzky, and The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope to assess the implementation of the plan and amend the plan if necessary.