

Richmond Extreme Weather Community Response Plan

(Updated: September 25, 2017)

Introduction

The Richmond Extreme Weather Community Response Plan sets the framework for expanding resources for persons who are experiencing homelessness during the winter months to prevent hardships due to extreme winter weather conditions.

In 2003 Richmond's Cold Weather Response Plan was developed and in 2007 Richmond City Council endorsed the Extreme Weather Response Plan. In 2012 the Richmond Extreme Weather Response Planning Committee determined the need to incorporate a community stakeholder approach to the maintenance of the response plan to ensure that it meets the ongoing and immediate needs of the community.

This plan addresses BC Housing's Extreme Weather Response Policy requirement for each community participating in the Extreme Weather Response program to submit an annual updated plan.

The Richmond Extreme Weather Response Planning Committee consists of representatives from the following organizations and agencies:

Community Organizations:

- Salvation Army Richmond House
- Chimo Community Services/St. Alban
- Turning Point Outreach and Resource Support (OARS)

City of Richmond:

- Community Services Department
 - Affordable Housing
- Emergency Programs

Regional Representation:

- Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy

Community Contacts:

- Extreme Weather Community Response Plan - please contact:

Contact	Joyce Rautenberg (Affordable Housing Coordinator) Monica Bennington (Affordable Housing Planner)
Phone	604-247-4916/604-247-4946
Email	jrautenberg@richmond.ca mbennington@richmond.ca

- Extreme Weather Alert Notifications - contact the Emergency Social Services Coordinator, City of Richmond.

Contact	Norman Kotze, Coordinator, ESS and Public Education
Phone	604-244-1211
Email	nkotze@richmond.ca

- Shelter site operations - please contact the shelter providers:

Contact	Chimo Community Services (shelter site located at St. Alban Anglican Church)
Phone	604-728-2945 (Neena Randhawa, Manager, Housing Programs) Backup: 604-719-1876 (Hugh Freiburg, Outreach Worker)
Hours	7 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Contact	Salvation Army Richmond House
Phone	604-276-2490
Hours	24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Current Homelessness Situation in Richmond

According to local service providers and the RCMP, the number of absolutely homeless in Richmond is greater than 100. Outreach workers have estimated around 120 active client files receiving some form of outreach. Outreach workers and first responders also report homeless individuals in Richmond having more complex needs, such as mental and physical health challenges.

The Metro Vancouver Homeless Count has been conducted regionally every three years since 2002. Homeless Counts are anticipated to be underestimations since they are 24-hour surveys that cannot locate all homeless persons throughout a city. The 2017 Homeless Count found in Richmond:

- 70 homeless people in total (an increase of 84% from 2014)
- 10 youth individuals were counted
- 16 Indigenous individuals were counted

Research across Canada indicates that households may be at risk of homelessness if they are in core housing need, which is defined as “current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.” According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 17.4% of Richmond households are in core housing need and fall below affordability standards and therefore may be at risk of homelessness.

Current Shelter And Resource Capacity

Currently, the Salvation Army operates the only year-round emergency shelter in Richmond (Richmond House located at 3111 Shell Road). The shelter has 10 men-only beds and one (1) additional bed reserved for Richmond Hospital discharged clients, which is always in use. The length of shelter stay varies, as the Salvation Army has a policy not to discharge clients to the street. Shelter staff work with clients to find stable and transitional housing options. The shelter is always at capacity and turns away approximately 133 visits per month (equating to approximately 60 individual clients). The landlord has sold the Salvation Army emergency shelter site, and ownership transferred to the new buyer in September 2016.

With respect to emergency shelters for women and children, there are currently no beds for homeless women with children in Richmond. Chimo Community Services operates Nova Transition House, where there are 10 emergency beds for women fleeing violence with a maximum stay of 30 days. Chimo is currently turning away approximately 30 women every month seeking shelter.

The Salvation Army shelter will be relocated to 12040 Horseshoe Way (anticipated Fall 2018), with an expansion of up to 36 beds. The new location will accommodate both men and women, and will be minimal barrier (e.g. pet friendly, storage space and accessible). Individuals accessing the shelter will have opportunities to connect to necessary supports and services.

Extreme Weather Alert

Extreme weather can include significant snow accumulations, severe winds or cold temperatures. For the purposes of an Extreme Weather alert in Richmond, extreme weather is defined as:

- Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of persons who are experiencing homelessness; OR
- Any snow accumulation; OR
- Temperatures at or below 0° C; OR
- Temperatures near 0° C with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for persons who are experiencing homelessness to remain dry.

Activation

Richmond House and Chimo will determine the need for activation for extreme weather response and contact the Richmond Emergency Programs who will initiate an extreme weather alert by 10 am on the first day of an extreme weather event and on Friday for the upcoming weekend, if possible. As much as possible, the forecast will be consulted daily. If activation seems likely within 2 days, then volunteers and service agencies will be put on alert that activation may be imminent. This allows adequate time to mobilize for the activation while minimizing the potential for staff overtime costs.

This determination will be based on the definition of extreme weather as outlined above, Environment Canada weather reports, information from the City's contracted meteorologist, weather alert notifications, and the perceived need for additional shelter space in the community.

Commencement of an extreme weather response will activate the St. Alban's Inn from the Cold shelter and will increase the capacity of The Salvation Army Richmond House.

Notification – Assistance to Shelter Act

The Assistance to Shelter Act became law in British Columbia on November 26, 2009. During extreme weather, the Act grants local police and the RCMP the ability to assist a homeless person on the street to a shelter, connect them with a shelter worker, and show them that there is a warm place to stay for the night. Pursuant to this act, notifications are sent to BC Housing, Richmond RCMP and RCMP Federal Operations Communications Centre. EWR activation and deactivation notifications contain the following language:

Activation message:

Email subject line: *City of Richmond – Extreme Weather Alert issued*

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above. Also it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided (in Appendix A):

EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca;
dstaplet@bchousing.org;
dflanagan@bchousing.org;
bmelles@bchousing.org;
paul.woolley@gov.bc.ca;
darren.harbord@gov.bc.ca;
bchceo@bchousing.org;
CommsEWR@bchousing.org;
homelessnessservices@bchousing.org;
weatheralert@gov.bc.ca

Text template for e-mail:

Hello,

I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of [REDACTED], British Columbia. I am issuing an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of [REDACTED], British Columbia.

It would be appreciated if the police department in receipt of this e-mail acknowledged receipt of this message to me only – no other recipients need to reply. You will be advised via e-mail when the EWA has been cancelled.

Thanks in advance for your assistance,

(Name of Community Representative)

Extreme Weather Alert

Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(b) of the Assistance to Shelter Act an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) is being issued for the City of Richmond British Columbia. This EWA activates the authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions and remains in effect until it is cancelled.

This EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to the following weather conditions and forecast: (insert one of the following: Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of persons who are experiencing homelessness; OR Any snow accumulation; OR Temperatures at or below -2°C (0°C with a wind chill); OR Temperatures near 0°C with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for persons who are experiencing homelessness to remain dry.)

The following shelter(s) will be providing spaces during this EWA:

*Richmond House Men's Shelter - 3111 Shell Road
604-276-2490
604-722-9957 (not for public, agencies only)*

*St. Alban Anglican Church (men, women and families) - 7260 St. Alban's Road
604-728-2945*

EWA issued by: (insert name), Community Representative for the City of Richmond, British Columbia.

Cancellation message:

Subject line: City of Richmond - Extreme Weather Alert Cancelled

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above ONLY. Failing to use the appropriate subject line may jeopardize the appropriate RCMP detachment from being informed of the Alert.

Also it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca;
dstaplet@bchousing.org;
dflanagan@bchousing.org;
bmelles@bchousing.org;
paul.woolley@gov.bc.ca;
darren.harbord@gov.bc.ca;
bchceo@bchousing.org;
CommsEWR@bchousing.org;
homelessnessservices@bchousing.org;
weatheralert@gov.bc.ca

An Extreme Weather Alert cancellation email is imperative as cancels the activation of the Assistance to Shelter Act.

Text template for e-mail:

Hello,

I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the City of Richmond, British Columbia.

There is no longer a need for the EWA to remain in effect and, as such, I am issuing a Cancellation of an EWA. It would be appreciated if the police department in receipt of this e-mail acknowledged receipt of this message to me only – no other recipients need to reply.

Thanks again for your assistance,

(Name of Community Representative)

Cancellation of an Extreme Weather Alert

Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(e) of the Assistance to Shelter Act the Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) issued on (date) for the City of Richmond, British Columbia, is now cancelled. The authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions are no longer in effect.

This Cancellation of an EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to improved weather conditions and forecast.

Cancellation of an EWA issued by: (insert your name), Community Representative for the City of Richmond, British Columbia.

Notification – Community Groups

Multiple community agencies and locations will also be notified by the City of Richmond Emergency Programs in the event of an Extreme Weather activation. The purpose of the notification is to raise awareness of the severity of the weather and the potential impacts to the homeless and to provide information about the additional shelter that is being offered during the alert. A poster indicating the location of the activated shelter will be faxed or emailed to those agencies and businesses on the list. The poster can then be placed on display for the public to view. The poster will contain the phone number for St. Alban Church as a point of contact for extreme weather shelters for questions. Transportation will be arranged to the shelter sites, if required. The following is a list of the notification recipient phone numbers for reference. In addition, the City of Richmond Emergency Programs distributes notifications through an e-mail notification system.

BC Ambulance Services	604-660-1265
BC Housing	604-433-1711
Bottle Depots in Richmond	
Broadmoor Baptist Church	604-277-8012

Chimo Community Services	604-297-7077
City of Richmond	
Affordable Housing	604-247-4916/604-247-4946
Community Bylaws (inquiries and complaints)	604-276-4345
Community Services	604-247-4941
Corporate Communications (Kim Decker)	604-276-4371
Emergency Programs	604-244-1211
Fire Rescue Battalion Chiefs (main reception)	604-278-5131
Law and Community Safety GM	604-276-4104
Parks Reception	604-244-1208
Parks Caretakers	
Public Works Dispatch	604-270-8721
Social Planning	604-276-4220
Coast Mental Health	
Drop-in Resource Centre	604-644-7247
Emergency Mental Health Services	604-874-7307
Gilmore Park United Church	604-277-5377
Info Services Vancouver	604-875-6431
Liquor Stores in Richmond	
Ministry of Housing and Social Development, Housing and Integration Task Team	604-775-3094
Ministry of Employment & Income Assistance	604-775-3094
Nanaksar Gurdwara-Gursikh Temple	604- 270-7369
Open Door Group	604-247-0770
Pacific Community Resources	604-412-7950(Vancouver) 604-951-4821 (Surrey)
Pathways Aboriginal Program (RYSA)	604-271-7600
Pathways Clubhouse Society	

Richmond Addiction Services	604-270-9220
Regional Extreme Weather Response Coordinator	250-920-7826
Richmond Bethel Church	604-274-2811
Richmond Centre Mall Security	604-273-2767
Richmond Community Advisory Committee	604-279-5599 ext 201
Richmond Extreme Weather Response Committee	
Richmond Food Bank	604-271-5609
Richmond Homeless Coalition	604-818-3290
Richmond Hospital Emergency Room	604-278-9711
Richmond Hospital Social Workers	604-278-9711
Richmond Public Library	604-231-6413
Richmond RCMP	604-278-1212
Richmond Women's Resource Centre	604-279-7060
Richmond Youth Service Agency	604-271-7600
Salvation Army Community Church	604-277-2424
Salvation Army Richmond House	604-276-2490
St. Alban Anglican Church	604-278-2770
SUCCESS	
Tikva Housing Society	
Touchstone Family Association	604-279-5599
Turning Point Recovery Society	604-303-6844
Vancouver Airport Chaplaincy	604-303-3010
Vancouver Coastal Health	604-736-2033
Vancouver International Airport Authority, Airport Operations	604-207-7077
Volunteer Richmond Information Services	604-279-7020

The Response

Additional Temporary Emergency Shelter Space:

The Richmond Extreme Weather Community Response Plan meets the needs of a wide range of homeless people (e.g. men, women, seniors, and families) in the community. When an extreme weather alert is called, the following shelter facilities are activated:

- The Salvation Army's Richmond House Men's Shelter, 3111 Shell Road, will be expanded by 6 spaces to a maximum of 16 spaces for men only.
- Chimo Community Services, operating the shelter site out of St. Alban Anglican Church, 7260 St. Albans Road, will provide up to 20 shelter spaces for men, women, seniors and families.
- Both shelters will provide breakfast, a bagged lunch and dinner.

Activation plans for each of the sites have been developed. Each facility director will continue to manage their own site, but may call upon other agencies for assistance. Shelter providers have established effective communication procedures that include continual collaboration to monitor extreme weather conditions and to determine the appropriate level of response; and discussions pertaining to broader issues that impact service to the community.

Outreach

Agencies that have been notified of the activated temporary emergency shelters that have staff that interact with the homeless can alert them to the dangers of hypothermia presented by the weather conditions and encourage them to seek shelter.

The following locations have been identified as potential outreach target areas:

- At Steveston Highway and Shell Road, south of Ironwood, in the adjacent wooded area
- Behind Park Road and Cooney Road, in the parkade
- Behind the former Legends Pub, across from Lansdowne Shopping Centre at Cooney and Lansdowne Road
- In Minoru Park (washrooms at Bowling Green)
- In the Cultural Centre parkade (the Aquatic Centre is used as a place to keep warm)
- The Boy Scout Camp at Woodward's Landing
- Alexandra Road (boarded up houses)
- Lang Park (Saba Road and Buswell Street) & Richmond Public Market
- Capstan Way Marina
- Park area surrounding Richmond Nature Park
- Bottle Depots (e.g. 135-8171 Westminster Highway near Pricesmart)
- Canada Line stations (Brighthouse Station and Bob's Subs near Brighthouse Station)
- Railroad corridors
- Garry Point Park

The Ministry of Social Development has assigned an Integration and Outreach worker to Richmond.

Contact	Susana Martinez, Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, Integration and Outreach
Phone	604 375-9449
Email	Susana.martinez@gov.bc.ca

The Airport Chaplaincy will continue to monitor the airport for homeless people during the Extreme Weather Alert.

Contact	Layne Daggett, YVR Chaplain
Phone Cell	604-303-3010 604-970-5730
Email	ldaggett@shaw.ca

Time Frame

The extreme weather response usually occurs:

- Between November 1 and March 31
- Intermittently during this five-month period, as weather conditions and need dictates.

Hours of Operation

Night-time shelters are available generally between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. at St. Alban and 24 hours at the Salvation Army Richmond House shelter. BC Housing encourages Extreme Weather shelters to be open long enough for clients to obtain at least 8 hours of sleep per night.

Media

Inquiries about the Extreme Weather Response program should be directed to the Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy (Chloe Good chloe@gvss.ca). Inquiries about the shelter sites should be made to the shelter providers, The Salvation Army Richmond House and St. Albans Inn from the Cold. Inquiries about the City of Richmond's response to broader homelessness and shelter issues should be directed to the Corporate Communications Department.

Evaluation and Plan Revision

Twice per year the Richmond Extreme Weather Planning Committee will reconvene in consultation with the Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator with the Metro Vancouver Shelter Strategy to review and amend the plan as required – once in the fall before the EWR season, and once in the spring to debrief the season just finished. As part of the evaluation procedure, data collected by the organizations involved in the response will be collated and distributed by BC Housing.

Appendix A

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Program BC Housing Contacts 2016 – 2017

Regional Extreme Weather Contact	Email address	Phone	Fax
Maria Rodrigo, Orange Hall	mrodrigo@bchousing.org	604-648-4274	604-648-4279
Daisy Stapleton, Lower Mainland Non-Profit	dstaplet@bchousing.org	604-439-4150	604-439-4729
Sheila D'Albertanson, Vancouver Island	sdalbert@bchousing.org	250-978-2923	250-475-7551
Maggie Chinnery, Nanette Drobot, Wayne Schmuck, Interior Region	mchinnery@bchousing.org; ndrobot@bchousing.org; wschmuck@bchousing.org	1-800-834-7149	250-492-1080
Valerie Hare, Northern Region	vhare@bchousing.org	250-649-2154	250-562-6488

What Is It?	By When Should It Be Completed?	Who and How to Contact BC Housing	
Community EWR Plan	September 30, 2017	Email plan to your Region's BCH Extreme Weather Contact (see above)	
Nightly Shelter Budgets	September 30, 2017	Email to your Region's BCH Extreme Weather Contact (see above)	
Activation and Deactivation of EWR	As soon as you know a response is being activated	Email: Your regional EWR contact (listed above)	
		AND all contacts below:	
		Dominic Flanagan	dflanagan@bchousing.org
		Bruc Melles	bmelles@bchousing.org
		Daisy Stapleton	dstaplet@bchousing.org
		Paul Woolley	Paul.Woolley@gov.bc.ca
		Darren Harbord	Darren.harbord@gov.bc.ca
			bchceo@bchousing.org
			CommsEWR@bchousing.org
			HomelessnessServices@bchousing.org
			weatheralert@gov.bc.ca
Occupancy Reports	By 11am the following business day of an EWR	In NON RCMP Detachments	Local Police department email contact
		In RCMP Detachments	EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca
EWR Invoice (for	Submit invoices for related costs	Enter into ATS database, or Email: HomelessnessServices@bchousing.org or fax: 604 439-4722	
		By fax or email to your region's extreme weather contact. The two invoice periods are:	

payment)	twice a month for each relevant period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st – 15th, invoices should be submitted by the 17th • 16th – end of month, invoices should be submitted by 2nd of the following month
Media Response	As soon as you know	<p>Any media releases with regard to EWR must be forwarded in draft form to your region's representative and BC Housing's Communications Branch for comments and final approval before release.</p> <p>Email: Your regional EWR contact listed above AND all contacts below:</p> <p>Monday to Friday to Ally Skinner-Reynolds rrao@bchousing.org</p> <p>Weekend media@bchousing.org</p>

All Extreme Weather Forms are available on-line at www.bchousing.org under the Partner Resources; Program Resources; Extreme Weather Response Program