

# Extreme Weather Response Program: Resource Guide | 2018-2019

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October 2018

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## Purpose of the Guide

This guide was created in response to a need identified by the community of EWR providers.

We hope it provides you with a general understanding of how the EWR program works, provides you with some tools and resources to ensure that you and EWR guests are both safe and comfortable.

This guide should be used as that, a guide. It does not replace the training that is necessary to effectively and safely work within a shelter setting and is not meant to be a definitive source of information. If you have questions, or suggested additions to this living document, please email Dustin Lupick ([dustin.lupick@hsa-bc.ca](mailto:dustin.lupick@hsa-bc.ca)).

## Purpose and Structure of the EWR Program

### Background Information

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program is designed to provide time-limited, weather-responsive, temporary shelter spaces in communities where there is insufficient shelter capacity during periods of extreme weather. Grassroots and informal extreme weather responses began informing current EWR program structures in and around Metro Vancouver in the 1990's. For the most part, activities were based on individual agencies and faith-based organizations responding to people standing and lying outside their doors on the coldest winter nights. Over the years extreme weather responses have evolved into a structured program, funded by BC Housing and based on approved community plans, operational support and an EWR framework.

### Annual Community Plans

Annual community plans provide an operating structure for the EWR program and are written by each community and must be submitted to BC Housing by September 30th. Each plan outlines the roles and responsibility for community organizations, service providers, and local coordinators. They describe services and hours of operation of EWR sites, outline procedures for how to call an extreme weather alert and identify who needs to be contacted during an activation. Although distinct, each community plan provides a framework for expanding resources to reduce the substantial threat to life and/or health for persons experiencing homelessness during extreme weather conditions.

## Assistance to Shelter Act

In 2009, the Government of British Columbia passed Bill 18-2009, Assistance to Shelter Act (“the Act”), to enact procedures to issue extreme weather alerts. When passed, the Act was not without controversy as it also gave police new powers to compel persons deemed at risk to seek emergency shelter. The Act identifies who may be at risk, how extreme weather conditions are defined, and who is responsible for issuing an EWR activation.

Under the Act, individual designated community representatives are responsible for determining whether weather conditions meet the agreed upon extreme weather criteria, activate and deactivate EWR, as well as carry out the required notification process to police, transit authorities, provincial staff, and community partners.

### *Resources*

[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/09032\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/09032_01)

## What is BC Housing’s Role?

BC Housing manages the program, approves community plans and budgets, and provides nightly operational funding to EWR sites.

## What is HSABC’s Role?

The Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC) is the Metro Vancouver Regional Coordinator, as well as the sub-region Coordinator in Vancouver and Surrey/White Rock.

As the Metro Vancouver Regional EWR Coordinator, HSABC provides support to participating communities to develop EWR community plans, ensures extreme weather responses are operational (i.e. ensures sites can open to respond to an activation), as well as support the longer-term sustainability of the program. HSABC also provides training to support staff and volunteers during the EWR season across the region and manages any media enquiries in consultation with BC Housing.

As the Sub-Regional Coordinator in Vancouver and Surrey/White Rock, HSABC is responsible for developing and finalizing community plans. During the season, HSABC monitors weather conditions, and is responsible for issuing all activations and deactivations in Vancouver, while subcontracting these services in Surrey/ White Rock.

## What is the EWR Provider's Role?

EWR sites typically operate in existing shelter facilities and additional mats are used to expand capacity and accommodate guests during an EWR activation. Some EWR sites are located within churches or other community gathering places and EWR guests are accommodated in space during the night when regular programs are not in operation. The EWR site provider is responsible for hiring staff and managing any volunteers, developing and submitting nightly budgets and occupancy statistics to BC Housing, as well as managing the site during EWR activations.

## What is EWR staff and volunteer's role?

Depending on the site, the make up of EWR staff and volunteer may be quite different, including roles and responsibilities.

Based on information provided by service providers EWR staff and volunteer responsibilities include:

- Set up, take down, and storage of mats and blankets
- Welcoming guests / Guest intake
- Interacting with guests
- Preparing and serving meals
- Performing wellness checks
- Providing harm reduction care (where applicable)
- Crisis intervention (as needed)
- Calling emergency services (as needed)
- Providing First Aid (as needed)
- Connecting people with outreach (where applicable)
- Cleaning
- Laundry

## EWR Activation Criteria

EWR activations occur when specific weather conditions are met. Alert criteria are defined by each community to meet their unique geographic considerations and are reviewed annually.

While communities may have different criteria, all community plans define extreme weather conditions as follows: “Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life and/or health of people who are experiencing homelessness.”

The weather criteria for each participating community during the 2017-18 season is outlined below:

Community	Temp	Wind chill	Snow	Rain	Wind
Delta	0°C	“Feels like” 0°C	Accumulation	Difficult to keep dry/ freezing / 50mm in 24hrs/ storm surge	Sustained high
Burnaby	2°C	2°C after WC	Accumulation	0°C/ freezing/ impossible to keep dry	Severe wind; severe wind warning
Langley	-2°C	-2°C after WC	Significant	Extensive days/50mm in 24hr/ freezing	Severe wind warning; significant
Maple Ridge	-2°C	-2°C after WC	Significant	Extensive days/50mm in 24hr/ freezing	-
New Westminster	0°C	2°C after WC	Accumulation	Heavy & near 2°C/ 3+ days	Steady 70 km or 90 km gusts
North Shore	0°C	2°C after WC	Accumulation	Freezing rain/2 days +weather warnings	-
Richmond	0°C	-	Any accumulation	Near 0°C + impossible to keep dry	-
Surrey & White Rock	0°C	“Feels like” 0°C	Significant	Difficult to keep dry/ freezing/ 50mm in 24hr	Significant
Tri-Cities	0°C	0°C after WC	Significant	Heavy/low temps	Significant
Vancouver	0°C	“Feels like” 0°C	Accumulation	Near 0°C/ freezing/ 50mm in 24hr	Sustained high

## How are weather conditions monitored?

BC Housing recommends Environment Canada be used as the primary reference point for determining activations and deactivations. To supplement this information, a number of other resources are consulted including Spot WX and the Weather Network. Given the temperate, variable climate in our region, 'feels like' criteria can be difficult to determine because they take additional factors, such as wind chill, into consideration. However, 'feels like' considerations are particularly important when there are long periods of rain and/or the temperature hovers just above the activation temperature.

## Determining Activation/Deactivation Alerts

Official EWR activation alert notifications are made in accordance with BC Housing protocols prescribed within BC Housing's EWR Program Framework. Community representatives follow structured procedures similar to those listed below.

### *Two Days Prior to Alert*

- Email EWR service providers a 'heads up' that an alert might be called
- Determine which sites can be available for an activation
- Continue to monitor the weather

### *On the Day of the Alert Activation*

- Confirm weather conditions are as expected and activation criteria is met by 11am
- Email/phone/text providers that activation alert is being called and confirm ability to open. Depending on the forecast, the EWR activation can be in effect for a maximum of three days at one time.
- **Official Notification:** The community representative composes an email using 'EWR Official Alert Activation text' and sends to the EWR Official Alert email list. The notification list includes community agencies, the local police or RCMP and BC Housing.
- **Community Notification:** Additional emails are sent to the community notification lists which include designated BC Housing and provincial contacts, emergency services, local media, agencies, faith groups, outreach services, and others who may be in contact with persons experiencing homelessness.

### *On the Day of the Alert Deactivation*

- Confirm weather conditions no longer meet activation criteria
- Compose email using approved EWR official alert deactivation text' and send to the to community agencies, the local police or RCMP and BC Housing.

At this point the extreme weather alert issued for a community has been deactivated and all EWR shelters are closed.



## Limitations of EWR Sites

The EWR program is a crisis response during periods of extreme weather to expand shelter capacity for those experiencing homelessness. Each site will be unique in what it can provide guests (e.g., showers, food or access to other support services). If operating at an existing shelter site, services may be provided by the shelter staff while other sites (e.g., church or community spaces) may not be able to offer such services. However, these sites can work to connect guests with local service providers and ensure their staff and volunteers receive an orientation on what is available, including any referral protocols.

## EWR Guests

Homelessness is a growing issue, not just locally, but across the province and country. There are three general ways in which people may experience homelessness:

- Unsheltered – Someone who does not have a place to stay and is sleeping on the street, in parks, alleys, tents, vehicles or abandoned buildings;
- Sheltered - Someone who has a place to stay, but the accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure. Someone may for example be staying in an overnight shelter, couch surfing, staying with family or friends, as a transition home, hospital, jail, or detox. Included under sheltered people experiencing homelessness are the ‘hidden homeless,’ which particularly impacts women, youth, and seniors.
- At risk of homelessness- Someone who is not experiencing homelessness, but their current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

Homelessness is typically not as a result of a single cause, but a multitude of factors, including structural, individual and systemic drivers. Structural factors including a lack of affordable housing, poverty, and discrimination. System failures include aging out of care and discharge from hospital or jail into homelessness. And finally, individual and relational factors can include mental health, addiction, or family breakdown which can lead to homelessness.<sup>1</sup> Individual circumstances can change and over the course of a year, some people will become homeless for the first time, some will find permanent housing, and others will find temporary housing and cycle in and out of homelessness.

During the 2017 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count there were 3,605 people identified as experiencing homelessness. The homeless count was done using a point in time (PiT) methodology that provides a 24-hour snapshot of the estimated number of people who are experiencing homelessness in the region.

There is an acknowledgement that a homeless count is an undercount of the actual number of people experiencing homelessness. While every effort is made to include as

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<sup>1</sup> Information adapted from the Homeless Hub <http://homelesshub.ca/>

many individuals experiencing homelessness as possible, the count will not be able to find everyone experiencing homelessness and not every individual experiencing homelessness will want to be surveyed.

For the first time in 2017, EWR sites were open during the night of the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, which provided a unique opportunity to include EWR guests.

Of the respondents who participated in the Count, 1,032 were unsheltered, 2,317 were sheltered and an additional 256 were in EWR shelters. Shelter providers and community partners reported that those who access EWR shelters are typically much more street entrenched and would likely be unsheltered on nights where EWR shelters do not operate. On the night of the count, it was reported that 334 people were turned away from shelters, including 3 from EWR sites.<sup>2</sup>

Of people who participated in the Count within an EWR site, 23% work part or full time and 50% reported that this was not the first time they had experienced homelessness. Just under half of individuals at EWR sites who participated in the Count had experienced homelessness for over a year. Compared to 2014, there was an overall 10% increase in people that had experienced homelessness for longer than a year.

When participants were asked how long they have been in the municipality where the EWR site is located, almost half of people who participated had lived there for 10 years or more, with 13% having always lived there.

### *Resources*

#### Metro Vancouver Homeless Count

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2017MetroVancouverHomelessCount.pdf>

#### Fraser Valley Regional District 2017 Homelessness Survey

<http://www.fvrd.ca/assets/Government/Documents/2017%20FVRD%20Homelessness%20Survey%20Report.pdf>

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that even though an individual may have been turned away from one site, they may have found another shelter for the night.



## Demographic Considerations

While homelessness affects people from all demographic and cultural backgrounds there is generally an over-representation of certain sub-populations accessing homelessness services. The following sections highlight a number of communities who are over-represented. In many cases, people will belong to more than one of these communities, and we acknowledge the intersective nature of people that are experiencing homelessness.

### *Indigenous/Aboriginal People Experiencing Homelessness*

Homelessness affects Indigenous persons disproportionately in Canada. A total of 746 survey respondents in the 2017 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count identified as Indigenous/Aboriginal. While Indigenous/Aboriginal people represent 2% of the Metro Vancouver population, they represented 34% of respondents during the count, as well as 34% of guests surveyed at EWR sites. Indigenous/Aboriginal people are 18 times more likely to be experiencing homelessness than the non-Indigenous/Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal homelessness is a facet of the broader issues of colonization, the legacy of the residential school system and the foster care system, particularly the Sixties Scoop, intergenerational trauma, discrimination (both overt and systemic), poverty, health and housing inadequacy.<sup>3</sup>

From SPARC BC's *Feeling Home: Culturally Responsive Approaches to Aboriginal Homelessness*, "Aboriginal peoples experiencing homelessness face additional barriers including prejudice, racism and disenfranchisement of rights, along with the enduring effects of forced acculturation and assimilation."<sup>4</sup>

While the EWR program is a short-term crisis response, approaching everyone with the understanding that an infinite number of experiences are behind an individual accessing an EWR shelter is important. For Indigenous persons, it is helpful to understand that some of these experiences can mean that some of the symbols of European culture can have negative connotations, particularly religious symbols.

Indigenous Cultural Safety training is available through an online course developed by the Provincial Health Services Authority. You can learn more about the training at <http://www.sanyas.ca/>

### *Resource(s)*

Indigenous Perspectives Society

<http://ipsociety.ca/>

3 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver Final Report. Prepared from the Metro Vancouver HPS Community Entity by BCNPHA and M. Thomson Entity (2017).

4 SPARC BC ' Feeling Home: Culturally Responsive Approaches to Aboriginal Homelessness (2011). <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/feeling-home-final-report.pdf>

## Seniors

Communities across the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions are seeing a significant growth in the number of older persons who are experiencing homelessness.

During the 2017 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, seniors aged 55+ represented 21% of people counted, representing a significant increase from 2005 where 9% of individuals counted were 55+. Within EWR sites, 26% of guests who completed a survey identified as a senior.

Coinciding with this demographic trend is the unique health conditions and vulnerabilities of this burgeoning population. Those working in shelter settings often identify seniors as those who are 50 years or older. This younger categorization recognizes that the experience of poverty and homelessness can substantially impact the experience of aging. Many homeless seniors experience the same physical health, mental health, and psycho-social challenges as individuals who are 10 to 20 years older.

During the 2017-18 EWR season there was a reported increase in the number of seniors accessing EWR services. This includes an increase in medically compromised seniors requiring care for open wounds, incontinence, and other medical needs.

Shelter service and design considerations may be required when supporting complex health conditions that seniors experiencing homelessness often present with, such as mobility limitations, incontinence, cumulative or advancing chronic disease, and/or cognitive decline. It is also important to remember that older adults in shelter settings may be at-risk of being victimized or easily taken advantage of because of their vulnerability and complex health issues.

Among the growing population of seniors who are experiencing homelessness, is an increase in the number of those who find themselves unhoused for the first time later in their lives. Pathways to homelessness for seniors later in life can include family related crisis, social isolation, loss of a spouse, limited income, job loss, or extended hospitalization. Service providers should be aware of the fresh trauma resulting from experiencing homelessness later in life and my need to address acute feelings and behaviors associated with the loss of status, dignity, and self-esteem.

## *Females/ Women*

Violence plays a central role in shaping the pathways into homelessness for women and girls and once homeless, it is an ever-present reality of life on the street. Attempting to avoid violence, many women and girls cycle in and out of abusive relationships, trade sex for temporary accommodation, and stay in unsafe and overcrowded housing.<sup>5</sup>

Women are more likely to stay with friends, or couch surf and are therefore hidden. Women will often exhaust other options, couch surfing, staying in dangerous relationships, or trading sex for accommodation, prior to seeking shelter services. This may be because women feel like they have more control or are safer then when they stay in a shelter.

When women do present at mixed gender shelters there are many ways staff can support their sense of safety and security. When women first enter the shelter, it is important to ask her if she is safe, or if she has any immediate safety concerns. When considering staffing the shelter it is important to have women on shift. Not all women will seek the support of a female staff person but having the option will increase her sense of safety. It is suggested that female staff complete the bed checks on women and monitor washrooms.

Most women seeking shelter will have experienced trauma. Most will have experienced violence. It is beneficial to remember this will have negatively impacted their sense of trust and increased their sensitivity to feeling safe. Women seeking services at EWR shelters will need more than the physical safety of the shelter. Women who are experiencing homelessness will also be seeking psychological and emotional safety.

Listen with care and empathy but do not rush women to disclose information. It is important to recognize each woman for her strength and allow her time to build trust and relationship before disclosing information. Have on hand women specific resources in the community. Women only resources are important in meeting the needs of women who are experiencing homelessness and having information and resources at hand will provide women with important options.

In planning for providing services to vulnerable women it is important to consider the physical set up of the shelter space. When possible provide women only sleeping and communal spaces within the shelter environment to increase women's safety. Women only washrooms in women only spaces are also helpful. When this is not possible having women's washroom in highly visible areas will help increase safety.

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5 Homes for Women "Housing First, Women Second? Gendering Housing First A Brief from the Homes for Women Campaign" 2013. <http://ywcacanada.ca/data/documents/00000382.pdf>

If shower facilities are shared, consider providing for women only times. Having clear sight lines on communal spaces will increase safety. It is also important to consider the outside spaces of the shelter. Well-lit exteriors make entering and exiting the shelter less dangerous.

In planning for providing services to vulnerable women it is important to consider the physical set up of the shelter space. When possible provide women only spaces within the shelter environment. Providing Women only sleeping spaces and communal spaces will increase women's safety. Women only washrooms in Women only spaces are helpful, when this is not possible having women's washroom in highly visible areas will help increase safety. If shower facilities are shared, consider providing for women only times. Having clear sight lines on communal spaces will increase safety. It is also important to consider the outside spaces of the shelter. Well-lit exteriors make entering and exiting the shelter less dangerous.

### *Youth + Children*

According to the 2018 Metro count, youth (19-25 years of age) accounted for the same proportion of sheltered and unsheltered respondents (16%) but were less likely to be found in EWR shelters where they represent only 6% of all clients.

Children, under the age of 19, can receive service if they are accompanied by their parent/guardian or if they are referred to the provider by a social worker acting under the Child, Family and Community Service Act. Individuals under the age of 19, presenting without a parent or guardian, should be referred to child and youth serving agencies and/or the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). In BC, this can be done at any time by calling 1 800-663-9122.

The province-wide Helpline for Children (310-1234; no area code required) is an available resource.

## Interpersonal/Hospitality Skills

When working at an EWR site, it is important to be non-judgmental and open to people from different backgrounds and unique personal histories.

The basis of communication is the interaction between people. Interpersonal or hospitality skills enable staff and volunteers to engage meaningfully with a person who is accessing an EWR site. Interpersonal and hospitality skills are based on how we talk and interact with each other. This is how we share with others who we are.

### Welcoming People

When people arrive at the shelter let them know what type of shelter is being provided, including any rules or regulations that are site specific. When welcoming people, ensure that you are not on your phone and you give them your undivided attention. If you are distracted it can be difficult for someone to feel comfortable entering the shelter and this will be the guests first contact. *First impressions are important.*

### Body Language

Body language is non-verbal communication and is how we say what we say without using words. Body language uses body poses, gestures, and eye movements. Examples include putting your hands in your pockets, folding your arms, or eye movements when communicating. People send and interpret such signals intuitively, and physical expressions may reveal many things about the person using them.

An example of body language that can be interpreted a variety of ways is eye contact. Some people may feel that this shows trust, opening, respect, confidence, or connection. Others though may feel that it is confrontational, judgmental, aggressive, or a sign of disrespect.

Depending on the context it is important to understand how body language can mean numerous things in different settings. Examples of physical expression that are non-verbal include waving, pointing, touching and slouching.

## Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is how people communicate face-to-face using their words.

Key tips for verbal communication include:

- Remember to be aware of what you are saying.
- Consider your position of privilege and power as a staff or volunteer providing this service
- Before you speak, think about your purpose, or the main idea of your words.
- As you speak, watch the other person to see if your point is making the desired effect. If not, think about what you are saying, revise your message and try again.
- Use plain language, while being aware that plain language should not be used in a way that makes someone feel they are being considered less intelligent.
- Only provide advice to people when they request it.

## Importance of Being Non-Judgemental

As you interact with EWR guests, it is important to be non-judgemental. The opposite of feeling a sense of belonging is to feel judged. Being “judgemental” is judging someone without knowing all the facts.

If someone feels that they are being judged, it can cause resentment that grows over time and can lead to behavioural challenges. This is especially true if someone feels that an EWR site is the only available resource in a community and they feel that they are being judged while there.

Accept that people will act the way they do, without wanting or having a desire for them to change. As a volunteer or staff person at an EWR site, ensure that you approach all guests from a place of empathy and understanding.

When people access EWR services there can be an imbalance of power. The person providing a service may feel they are coming from a place of ‘knowing what’s best’, or that people need to earn a spot at an EWR site. Instead, while working at an EWR site it is important to be empathetic, or to put yourself in the shoes of others and try and understand people from their own perspective instead of your own.





While you are working at an EWR site people may want to tell you their story. Reasons that people will tell their own story include:

- Feeling they are listened to and their voices are heard
- As a tool of promoting relaxation
- As a way to communicate thoughts and feelings.
- As a tool to judge you as a service provider by your reaction to their story.
- As a method to judge our authenticity towards them.
- Because stories reveal their truths about the world they live in.
- As a way to establish their credibility through stories they tell you.

## Listening Skills

### *Differences Between Hearing and Listening*

Hearing is the physical ability to hear noise while listening is a skill. Listening skills allow you to understand what another person is saying or what message they wish to convey. Listening requires attention and concentration so you can focus your thoughts on what is being talked about.

Poor listening habits include cutting someone off when they are speaking, criticizing a speaker, finding fault with a speaker, allowing yourself to be distracted when someone is speaking to you, or faking attention when someone is speaking to you.

Active and reflective listening are two powerful tools that will help you understand what people are telling you beyond just hearing the words.

### *Active Listening*

Active Listening is an approach to learn what it is a person is trying to say and is an art rather than a science. Active listening is done by placing all of one's attention and awareness at the disposal of another person, listening with interest and appreciating without interrupting.<sup>6</sup> This process intentionally focuses on who you are listening to, in order to understand what they are saying. As the listener, you should then be able to go over what the person has said in your own words in a way that they are comfortable with. "Listening is difficult work that we will not undertake unless we have deep respect and care for the other... we listen not only with our ears, but with our eyes, mind, heart and imagination, as well."<sup>7</sup>

6 Robertson, Kathryn. Active Listening: More Than Just Paying Attention Australian Family Physician Vol. 34, No. 12, December 2005. Accessed at: <https://www.racgp.org.au/afpbackissues/2005/200512/200512robinson.pdf>

7 ibid.

This does not mean you agree with what someone is saying, but rather that you understand. Active listening is instrumental in building trust with someone, as it gives people space to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment where they know that they will be given not be judged.

### *Keys to active listening*

1. **Be there in the moment with the person talking**
  - give them your undivided attention
  - do not multi task
2. **Be non-judgemental**
  - avoid why questions
  - do not minimize what is being said
3. **Allow for quiet time during conversation for people to be silent**
  - do not fill the silence with your own talking
  - some people need time to think
  - silence allows you time to think of a response
4. **Listen for messages in their feelings and body language**
  - listen for their feelings and not just the facts
  - pay attention to body language
5. **Restate what was said by the person in your own words**
  - this will allow you to clarify what was said
  - this will let people know you are listening to them and will provide validation
  - run through key points to affirm your understanding
  - ask (non-threatening) questions to build understanding
  - interpret after you feel you have grasped content



## Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is a skill that is hard to master. We bear witness to what a person has learned.

When listening to someone, make sure to avoid becoming an active participant, or a co-creator in the story that they are telling. Always be aware that we are there to witness the person's learning. When reflective listening we are not there to solve a person's problems, we are there to bear witness to what they learned and will respect how and what they want to share. We do not interrupt their story with suggestions or leading questions. Allow the story to flow from a person who is telling it without you getting in the way. Ask people what they know from their experience and what they learned from it.

As reflective listeners, be aware that:

- EWR guests experts on themselves.
- They will tell you what has or has not worked for them.
- They know what has helped them move forward.
- They are aware of what may have triggered a setback and do not need or want you to explain it to them. People will not thank you for trying to provide them solutions, given the short amount of time you are working with them.

Advice should only ever be provided when it is requested or directly asked of us.

## Being Authentic with People

It is important to be honest and open with EWR guests. Part of this is understanding what can and cannot be provided for them during this short time period. There will be many times when we will be unable to provide the answer that someone is looking for. It is important to acknowledge when there is something that you do not know. Never feel like you cannot ask for help from other people at the EWR site, you are there as a team. Not being authentic can lead to conflicts at EWR sites between volunteers, staff, and people accessing the EWR services.

Authenticity requires that staff and volunteers be:

- Open
- Approachable
- Non-judgemental
- Genuine
- Able to listen

## Navigating and Recommending Other Services

While the EWR program is a short-term crisis response to protect health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness, EWR shelters are often a first point of contact for individuals who do not normally access other services. Having a familiarity of resources available can be helpful in providing referrals to other, more long-term services.

In addition, if your site is able to offer internet access, either through a computer or guest wifi access, this can be a helpful tool for EWR guests, either to search on their own or with the help of a volunteer or staff member. However, when doing so, it is important to have an internet access policy in place that describes acceptable use of the internet, and time limits if there are many guests wanting to use it.

Below are some types of services that your guests may have previously tried to access, or might be interested in.

### *BC Housing Outreach Programs*

BC Housing funds outreach programs in communities across the province, primarily through the Homeless Prevention Program and the Homeless Outreach Program. If there is not an outreach worker at your site, it is useful to be familiar with programs that serve your community, and how individuals can access them. A list of BC Housing Homeless Outreach Program sites is available at <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/homelessness-services/find-homeless-outreach-worker>

### *Year-round Emergency Shelters*

In many communities, EWR shelters are the only shelter beds available in the winter months. However, there is an opportunity for individuals who are in EWR shelters to access other shelters, particularly during longer activations where there are many chances to use the phone to call facilities. A list of shelter beds across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley is available here: <http://shelters.bc211.ca/bc211shelters>. This list is updated twice a day, so it is best to check the website directly at least once per day the shelter is open.

### *Recovery Services*

In this context, recovery means help with reducing or stopping substance use. There is a wide spectrum of services available, from harm reduction services, to medically supervised inpatient programs. What is important to note is that recovery is not a “one size fits all” approach. To find resources available, contact BC211 or connect guest with an outreach worker.

In summary, while EWR is a time-limited emergency response and therefore can make it challenging for staff to connect guests with health, housing and other supports. However, if time does allow to provide some referrals, it is important that when talking with individuals about what services they might want to access, you keep the following safety points in mind:

- Avoiding preferential treatment. It is important that guests aren't seen as receiving something that another guest would not be entitled to.
- Make sure the guest is telling you what they want to do, that you're not telling them what you want them to do.
- Maintaining boundaries. It is important to remember that you are a staff or volunteer at an EWR shelter, trained to help in a specific way. Some things that should be avoided are:
  - Providing guests with your personal contact information (email, phone, social media)
  - Discussing personal problems of your own
  - NEVER invite an EWR guest to your home
  - Saying the phrase "Call me if you need anything"
- Ensure services offered are sustainable and scalable. For example, if you bring a granola bar from home for a guest because they mentioned they like a certain kind, will you be able to offer one to all guests? What happens if you aren't there and the guest expects this granola bar every night?

# Cultural Sensitivity/Spirituality

## Cultural Sensitivity

It is important to recognize that our cultural lens may be similar or different than others and can form the basis of judgement. A culturally sensitive person will understand that traditions and ways of life will impact how we talk to someone. They will know and acknowledge that these differences may affect their relationships and the way they communicate with someone.

Our cultural lens can be changed to ensure that we are more culturally sensitive. There are reasons why we feel like we are part of a particular group. While we may choose to be part of certain groups, other groups we are part of are not something that we may choose.

EWR sites that operate within culturally sensitive or religious locations must remain free from prejudices and preconceptions about other cultures and the people they serve. Regardless of someone's cultural background, it is important that everyone feels safe and welcome while at an EWR site.

Establishing trust with a person reinforces and supports the idea in a person that their knowledge, history and experience is both valid and valuable, and is a key element of being culturally sensitive. This trust may open communication with a person and can help someone feel safer while using EWR services. Someone may decide not to access an EWR site if they feel unsafe, humiliated, or alienated.

While at an EWR site it is important to remember that it is not EWR guests' jobs to educate us about their culture.

The following list will help you think about what it means to be culturally sensitive:

- We need to be aware that we bring our own culture and attitudes to our work.
- We need to be aware that we can consciously or unconsciously exercise power over people we are trying to help.
- We should never blame victims of historical processes
- We need to examine our own realities and attitudes that we will bring when we encounter each new person at an EWR site
- We need to be open minded and flexible in our attitudes toward people who are different from ourselves, and for whom we deliver services.
- We need to consider each guest as an individual first.
- We should never assume that a person's ethnic identity defines their cultural values or patterns of behaviour



While working or volunteering at an EWR site we must always be aware of our potential to influence people and shall never impose our own beliefs and personal values. While people accessing EWR services may decide to discuss their cultural views, we should never state or impose our own moral, religious or political values.

## Spirituality

Members of the faith community have a long history of supporting EWR programs in Metro Vancouver and the EWR program would not be possible without their continued efforts and contributions.

For some people, it may be difficult to enter an EWR site that is located within a spiritual setting.

EWR sites that provide shelter to people experiencing homelessness need to ensure that no one will be required or asked to participate in any service or discussions about spirituality. If someone wishes to engage in a discussion or service they shall do so on their own accord. Anyone working or volunteering at an EWR site needs to be mindful of issues pertaining to spirituality and never impose their beliefs on another person. Someone who is accessing the EWR site may not be receptive to communication on spiritual matters and should never feel pressured to engage with the subject.

Some guests using an EWR site will have their own sense of spirituality and will object to being pressured by a service provider to adopt to a site provider's belief systems. A person using the site may have their own sense of their relationship with any spiritual entities and reject all religious community approaches. Religious groups may be perceived as foreign, or unwanted to a person experiencing homelessness needs.

# Safety

## Personal Safety

Safety within EWR sites is paramount. HSABC offers day long training on 'Managing Hostile Interactions,' and 'Mental Health, Addiction and Trauma' that is available to all EWR staff and volunteers. Each EWR site will have safety protocol in place that is created by the site provider and volunteers and staff should be provided with safety training prior their first shift, as well as regular follow up to review and practice any health and safety procedures. Staff and volunteer safety come first, so that they are able to come to the aid of others in the event of an emergency.

### *Importance of personal safety*

- If someone is hurt or incapacitated and cannot call for help, then everyone at the site and the site itself is unsafe.
- Taking preventative measures is crucial to keeping yourself safe.
- If confrontation is avoided or dismissed when it first occurs, there is a strong likelihood that the situation will escalate.
- Use common sense and call for help if necessary.

### *Safety for Staff/Volunteers*

A safe EWR site will have the following:

- Volunteers and staff at the EWR site are open and accessible.
- Volunteers and staff at the EWR site are assertive about expectations without being confrontational or aggressive.
- People accessing the EWR site clearly know what the behaviour expectations are for the site.
- The EWR site is at a comfortable temperature and provides enough bedding and space to accommodate all the people who are using it.
- People using the EWR site feel they are safe while there.
- Amongst people accessing EWR services there is no hierarchy. There is no shelter user or group who tries to assert authority over the site or other people.





## *Personal Space*

Personal space is the area around a person which they feel is an extension of themselves. Personal space generally ranges from 1.5 to 3 feet around us and is used among friends and family members. Intimate space may range out to 1 foot and involves a high probability of touching. We reserve it for whispering and embracing.

Different people will have their own limitations regarding personal space and it is important to always be aware where these boundaries are while working at an EWR site. The limited space provided by EWR sites may present opportunities for confrontation. It is important to be vigilant and defuse small altercations as these can quickly escalate into major incidents. Volunteers should rely on staff to diffuse small altercations. People can subconsciously have triggered reactions to infringement on their personal space. These reactions may be dependent on stress, trauma or anxiety levels in a person that is subconsciously assessing threat levels.

## *Challenging Behaviour*

Challenging behaviour is any behaviour that a person or persons may engage in which place themselves, other people using or working at the EWR site, or the site itself at risk of harm or injury. Every site will have different policies and expectations that you should know before beginning your first shift.

Challenging behaviour will be influenced by a combination of interactions among the individual, the environment, and the other people in the setting. These areas are continuously changing, therefore influencing a person's responses.

Consistency in the enforcement of EWR site guidelines and expectations will help guests to know their boundaries. You should never take challenging behaviour by a guest personally, and you should remain detached from a conflict, or a person who is acting out.

To help ensure that you, and everyone within an EWR site remains safe the following guidelines should be followed:

- At the beginning of your first shift, work with the EWR site supervisor to determine protocol around working with a challenging guest.
- Never be alone with a guest.
- Always give guests an appropriate amount of personal space.
- Do not turn your back on an angry guest.
- Stand with a relaxed posture with your hands at your sides, never behind your back or out of sight.
- Always know where you are and have an escape route (never back yourself into a corner or against a wall).

- Always be aware of where guests are at all times
- When in doubt, talk to another person working at the EWR site.
- If the situation escalates, call 911.
- Pre-plan what type of situations will require you to call the emergency services.

### *What to Do When Someone is Agitated*

When you are working with someone who is presenting challenging behaviour make sure you set limits that are clear, reasonable, and achievable. Always document any threats, get witnesses if possible and notify the policy or call 911 if it is necessary.

Some guidelines for dealing with an agitated person include:

#### *Respect personal space:*

- Ensure that you are at least arm or leg span away from an agitated guest. Crutches, canes, and walkers will extend beyond this length and should be accounted for in judging personal space boundaries.
- Always avoid touching a person.

#### *Be in the moment with that person:*

- Let the person talk. Be interested in what they have to say. Let them vent (See reflective listening).
- If you are doing something else, stop. Do not appear to be rushed or not interested in what someone who is agitated is saying.

#### *Demonstrate supportive body language:*

- Avoid gestures that may be seen as threatening (i.e. finger pointing).
- Avoid laughing or smiling inappropriately.
- Approach an agitated person from an angle rather than facing them directly.
- Demonstrate confidence in your ability to resolve the situation.
- Be calm. If you can't be calm, act it. Remember anxiety can trigger or escalate behaviours.
- Keep eye contact, smile, and always keep hands open and visible.



### *Drug use by People Who use the Shelters*

During EWR alerts there will be people who use substances that access EWR services. Generally, EWR as a program has adopted a harm reduction approach. Harm reduction “recognizes that people engage in behaviours despite the potential for harm, and so rather than focusing on abstinence-based measures, the goal of harm reduction is to broaden the platform of engagement and to keep people as safe as possible.”<sup>8</sup>

There are numerous reasons why a person may be using substances, including to cope with trauma or for pain management. In order to keep people safe during EWR activations, and ensure that people do not leave, it is important to not criticize or judge people who use substances.

If a person is deemed to be too intoxicated to stay at the EWR site, then the police should be called.

### *Use of Profane or Inappropriate Language*

While working at an EWR site you will encounter profane language and swearing among guests, staff, and volunteers.

While swearing will be common, you will need to be able to identify when language has crossed a line. There are certain words that may not be acceptable to use at any time. This can include language that is racist, sexist, xenophobic, or homophobic.

EWR guests who swear or use profane language will most likely do so in three ways. They may:

- Swear or use profane language with you.
- Swear or use profane language as a method of stress or anxiety release.
- Swear or use profane language directly at you because they are defensive and/or acting out.

### *Swearing or using profane language with you*

- A person who is swearing in conversation with you but is not using it as a weapon or being abusive.
- No power struggle is going on.

*In response*, you should use discretion and if necessary determine a course of action on a case by case basis.

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8 <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/2017%20HRSS%20Indicators%20Report%20final.pdf>

*Swearing or using profane language as a method of stress or anxiety release*

- This may involve emotional outbursts of undirected high energy to blow off steam and can involve screaming.
- This may be a defensive response to fear and anxiety or a in response to a sense of loss of control.

*In response*, you should allow the person to vent. If possible, you should try and isolate the person from an audience that could increase the persons stress or anxiety, including people who may enable them. When the person begins to regain control go over expectations using an understanding and reasonable approach.

*Swearing or using profane language directed at you or someone else*

- A person is directing abusive language at you or someone else as a weapon to hurt, intimidate, or threaten.
- A person is using language to challenge authority or power dynamics in the EWR site.
- A person is using language as a tool in a power struggle.

*In response*, you should always seek assistance and wait for a team member before intervening. Always try to avoid individual interventions that may put the person acting out, other people using the shelter, and people working at the shelter at risk. Make sure you set your own personal limits and be clear, reasonable and make sure that you are able to enforce the limits that you set. If any threats occur make sure that they are documented, get witnesses if possible, notify police, and if necessary call 911.

## Health and Safety

There are a number of health and safety resources that may provide procedure sheets that can be printed and placed around the EWR site.

*Resources include:*

- Canadian Mental Health Association  
<https://cmha.bc.ca/programs-services/workplace-mental-health-webinars/>
- Canadian Public Health Association  
<https://www.cpha.ca/do-you-consistently-use-universal-precautions>
- Canadian Institute for Health Information  
<https://www.cihi.ca/en/access-data-and-reports>

### *Universal Blood Precaution*

Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of germs from one person to another. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 1 to 2 minutes (length of time it takes to sing happy birthday two times). Waterless alcohol-based hand rinses can be used as long as hands are not heavily soiled.

For protection against germs and disease, always wash hands:

- Blood or body fluids splashed on your skin are very unlikely to cause infection unless you have fresh cuts or raw chapped areas on your skin. If you are exposed to blood or other body fluids, protect yourself by wearing disposable gloves. If this is not possible, continue to help the person, and then wash immediately afterwards.
- Remember, it is important to wash your hands carefully after touching any body fluids, even if you have worn gloves.

*Precautions to take:*

1. **Blood and Body Fluids** - If you come into contact with blood and body fluids (except sweat), always treat them as potentially infectious. Clean up spills quickly using absorbent material first, such as paper towels. Then clean more thoroughly with soap and water. Finally, disinfect with household bleach.
2. **Gloves** - Use clean, disposable gloves when handling any body fluids or cleaning cuts, scrapes or wounds. Wash hands after removing gloves and dispose of the gloves in a plastic bag. Add gloves to your first aid kit so you are prepared.
3. **Needle Stick Injuries** - Wash the area with warm soapy water. Do not squeeze the wound or soak it in bleach. Go to the nearest health unit or hospital emergency department immediately for care.

4. **Sharp Objects** - Place needles and syringes in a sealed puncture-proof metal or plastic container with a lid. Never re-cap, bend or break off used needles. Dispose of them according to local bylaws.
5. **Personal Articles** - Never share toothbrushes or razors. As they can transmit small amounts of blood from one user to the next. Dispose of razors carefully. Handle bedding or clothing soiled with body fluids cautiously, and wash in hot soapy water.

#### *How to safely clean up spills of blood or other body fluids*

1. Protect yourself by wearing gloves. If there is a risk of splashing, use protective eye wear.
2. Use disposable absorbent material, such as paper towels, to clean most of the spill. Place these in a plastic bag and put in the garbage.
3. Clean the surface using soap and water to remove any remaining blood or body fluids.
4. Wipe contaminated surfaces with a disinfectant solution.
  - a. Disinfection solution can be made of 1 portion bleach, 50 portions water (i.e. 2 ml bleach and 100 ml water). Bleach solution should be made freshly before use, or it may lose its strength. For carpets or upholstery that may be damaged by bleach, other household germicides or disinfectant agents can be used. Soak mops or cloths used for cleaning in a disinfectant for 20 minutes or wash these in hot water and detergent.
5. When you finish, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

#### *If you find a used needle, condom or pipe*

A used needle may contain a small amount of blood, which can potentially carry HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C virus. Used condoms or pipes can also contain infectious body fluids. Syringes, condoms, needles or pipes can be found in clothing, bedding and bags. These items should always be handled with caution.

#### *What to do if you find a used needle or condom*

1. Use a pair of tongs, pliers, or sturdy strong gloves, to pick up these items.
2. Discard condoms in a plastic bag.
3. Discard syringes or needles in a puncture-proof container, preferably one intended for such purposes. All EWR sites should have a container to dispose of syringes or needles. If they do not, discuss with supervisor protocol to dispose of used needles or condoms.
4. Do not place these containers in your recycling bin.
5. When you finish, wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water.



*What to do if you prick yourself with a dirty needle*

1. Put the pricked area low to the ground to promote bleeding. Do not squeeze.
2. Wash the area well with soap and water.
3. Do not soak the wound in bleach.
4. Go to the nearest health unit or hospital emergency department immediately for care.

## Medical Emergencies and Overdose Response

### *When to call 911?*

The EWR site address should always be posted clearly on the wall and should be visible to workers and EWR guests. Posting the address prevents a loss of time when emergency services need to know the EWR site location.

The following is a list of situations when 911 should be called. Each situation will require a degree of judgement on behalf of the person making the call.

*Call 911 ambulance when:*

- Someone is having a medical emergency including: sweating, unable to rouse, shallow or difficulty breathing, paling of skin, blue lips, seizure, loss of consciousness, vomiting.
- There are threats of violence with intent (fear that violence will erupt very soon, and it is not an idle threat)
- Violence erupts

*How to talk to the 911 operator:*

- State the location, including address
- State the reason for your call
- Give your name and phone number
- Stay on the line, do not hang up
- Follow the instructions of the emergency operator
- Respond clearly, calmly and accurately

Although it may seem as though the 911 operator is asking a lot of questions, it is imperative that you respond clearly, calmly and accurately. In most cases, the police will be sending a response while you are still on the phone.

### *What to do when someone is having a medical emergency*

*If someone is unconscious take the following steps and precautions:*

- Try to rouse the person.
- If unsuccessful, have another staff member call 911 (ambulance) and follow their instructions.
- Ensure the guest is in the recovery position (please see recovery position below)
- Stay with the guest and keep talking to them.
- If they lapse into unconsciousness, try to rouse again by speaking to them. Often if you call someone by their name, they will arouse more quickly.

*If someone is still conscious:*

- Ask them if they might be overdosing and what drugs they have used today (the ambulance needs this information).
- Have another staff member call 911 (ambulance).
- Get them to lay down on the floor in the recovery position and place something under their head (please see recovery position below).
- Often a cloth placed on the back of their neck will sooth them.
- Keep them talking to you.
- If they start to lose consciousness, arouse them by speaking to them. Often if you call someone by their name, they will arouse more quickly.





## Recovery position<sup>9</sup>



*The recovery position should be used because:*

- It prevents the person's tongue from blocking their airway
- It promotes drainage of fluids, such as blood or vomit, from their mouth
- It keeps the person in a safe position if they have to be left alone. If possible, do not leave somebody alone.

*The following are steps to correctly place someone in the recovery position:*

*Step 1:*

- Kneel beside person
- Remove any fragile objects, such as their glasses
- Place the arm nearest you at right angles to their body, with palm facing upwards

*Step 2:*

- Bring person's far arm across their chest
- Hold back of person's hand against opposite cheek
- With your other hand, pull up their far leg just above the knee, keeping their far foot on the ground

*Step 3:*

- Pull their knee towards you, rolling the person towards you and on to their side
- Keep the person's hand pressed against their cheek, as this helps to keep their airway remains open
- Tilt back their head and adjust the hand under the cheek, if necessary, to ensure head remains tilted
- Check for breathing
- Adjust upper leg so both hip and knee are bent at right angles
- Monitor the person's condition until help arrives

<sup>9</sup> Recovery Position' image from: <http://vchdesign.ca/naloxone/img/Recovery%20Position.png>

## Opiate Response

In response to the continued rise in drug overdoses and death British Columbia's provincial health officer declared a public health emergency on Thursday, April 14, 2016.<sup>10</sup> Opioids include morphine, heroin, methadone, fentanyl, and oxycodone and medically are prescribed for pain relief.<sup>11</sup> According the BC Centre for Substance use, "Opioid use disorder is one of the most challenging forms of addiction facing the health care system in British Columbia and a major driver of the recent surge in illicit drug overdose deaths in the province."<sup>12</sup>

### Resource

<http://www.vch.ca/Documents/Housing-overdose-revention-site-HOPS-Manual.pdf>

### Signs of an Overdose<sup>13</sup>

An overdose might look different from one person to the next. But there are a few things you can look for if you suspect someone may have overdosed on an opioid like fentanyl or any other drug.

Look for these signs if you think someone may have overdosed:

- Slow, shallow breathing or no breathing
- Severe sleepiness or person is not moving / responsive
- Slow heartbeat
- Person may be choking, or you can hear gurgling sounds
- Cold, clammy skin
- Trouble walking or talking
- Pupils are tiny
- If you suspect someone may have overdosed call 911 immediately, time is of the essence

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10 <http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/public-health-emergency-in-bc>

11 <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hlbc/files/documents/healthfiles/hfile118.pdf>

12 [http://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BC\\_OUD\\_Guideline.pdf](http://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BC_OUD_Guideline.pdf)

13 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose/what-you-need-to-know/signs-of-an-overdose>



According to BC's coroner services, "Vancouver Coastal Health Authority has the highest rate of illicit drug overdose deaths (37 deaths per 100,000 individuals), while overall, the rate for all of BC was 31 deaths per 100,000 individuals in 2018.<sup>14</sup> To date, there have been no deaths at supervised consumption or drug overdose prevention sites.<sup>15</sup>

As reported by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), "although substance use is common across BC and around the world, regardless of race or ethnicity, background, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation, the opioid public health emergency has disproportionately affected First Nations peoples and communities in BC due to the ongoing legacy of colonization."<sup>16</sup>

### *Naloxone: Treating Opioid Overdose<sup>17</sup>*

Naloxone is a drug that can reverse opioid overdose. It is available in injectable and nasal spray (or "intranasal") formulations. In Canada, intranasal naloxone is not yet available to the general public.

Naloxone can quickly reverse the effects of opioid drugs. It binds to the same sites (receptors) in the brain as opioids. When naloxone is given it pushes the opioid from the receptor to restore a normal breathing rate. Naloxone can reverse slowed breathing within 3 to 5 minutes. A second dose of naloxone may be needed if the first dose does not restore normal breathing.

The effects of naloxone only last for 20 to 90 minutes. After naloxone wears off, the opioid may still be present, and it can bind to its receptors in the brain and cause breathing to slow down again. That means the overdose may return, requiring another dose of naloxone. This is why it is important to seek medical help as soon as possible by calling 9-1-1 and be prepared with a second dose of naloxone if the overdose symptoms return.

To learn more about naloxone, to learn how to administer it safely and to receive an overdose response box, please see: <https://towardtheheart.com/naloxone>. Additional in person training is offered through St. John's. Please visit <https://www.startsavinglives.ca/>.

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14 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

15 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

16 [http://www.fnha.ca/newsContent/Documents/FNHA\\_OverdoseDataAndFirstNationsInBC\\_PreliminaryFindings\\_FinalWeb\\_July2017.pdf](http://www.fnha.ca/newsContent/Documents/FNHA_OverdoseDataAndFirstNationsInBC_PreliminaryFindings_FinalWeb_July2017.pdf)

17 <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/naloxone>

## Overdose Response Protocol

The following steps are adapted from existing EWR site overdose protocol and should be taken during an overdose response.

Action	Instruction
Scan	Hazards – are there sharp items or weapons nearby. Ensure your safety, are the environmental conditions appropriate to respond? Is there adequate lighting?
Identify	Unresponsive – does not respond to verbal stimulation (shout) or pain (tell them what you are going to do) – nudge/them, then do a sternal rub, pinch ear lobe or finger webbing  Slow breathing – less than one breath every five seconds, might be snoring or gurgling  Skin – may be pale or blue, especially lips and nail beds, may be cool and sweaty  Eyes – very small pupils
Take Charge	Team up with your volunteer responder partner  Delegate who will – Phone 911, do rescue breathing, meet emergency re-sponders, get overdose response box, crowd control, read these instructions
Call 911	Phone 911  Say – it is a MEDICAL EMERGENCY – non-responsive and not breathing, make sure an ambulance is dispatched  Give – address to the dispatchers  Send – someone to meet emergency responders to direct them to the incident scene
Rescue Breaths	Put on - safety glasses and gloves  Clear – mouth and airway  Place – breathing mask with one-way valve over mouth and nose as a barrier to body fluids  Give 2 breaths  Continue to give 1 breath every 5 seconds – even after giving naloxone – continue until the person regains consciousness or paramedics arrive



Give Naloxone	<p>NO consciousness with rescue breathing...</p> <p>Swirl – naloxone ampoule – snap off the top away from your body</p> <p>Draw up all the ampoule (1ml) into the Vanishing point syringe</p> <p>Inject entire dose at 900, straight into the big muscle – THIGH, upper arm, butt - through clothes is OK</p>
Evaluate	<p>Wait 3 to 5 minutes (30 – 40 breaths) to see if person regains consciousness</p> <p>Continue to give 1 breath every 5 seconds until person is breathing on their own</p> <p>Stand back at least 6 ft. as person gains consciousness and monitor them for aggression to ensure your safety</p> <p>Give more naloxone after 3 to 5 minutes (30 – 40 breaths)</p>
More Naloxone	<p>After 3 to 5 minutes (30-40 breaths) give a 2nd dose of naloxone</p> <p>Wait another 3 to 5 minutes (30 – 40 breaths) providing rescue breathing and give 3rd dose of naloxone</p> <p>Continue breaths and naloxone until paramedics arrive</p>
Document, Debrief, Self Care	<p>Tell paramedics about the care provided and the number of naloxone injections given</p> <p>Complete – Naloxone Administration Incident Form and any other facility incident documentation</p> <p>Talk to your fellow rescuer, co-workers and/ or supervisor and/ or site coordinator about the event</p>

### *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act*

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provides some legal protection for individuals who seek emergency help during an overdose.

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act applies to anyone seeking emergency support during an overdose, including the person experiencing an overdose. The act protects the person who seeks help, whether they stay or leave from the overdose scene before help arrives. The act also protects anyone else who is at the scene when help arrives.

## EWR Site Fire Plans

All EWR sites must have a written fire plan in place that can be viewed by the Fire Department. A copy of the EWR site fire plan should be made available to staff and volunteers during orientation. Fire inspection plans and approval will come from the local municipality. The local municipality will determine the requirements rules that local EWR providers will need to comply with.

The site operator is required to ensure the Volunteers and Staff be trained in fire emergency procedures described in the fire safety plan before they are given any responsibility for the fire safety.

- How to call 911
- Evacuation procedures explained
- Location of Fire Extinguishers
- Location of Fire Alarm Panel
- Fire Alarm Panel functional
- Emergency Lighting functional
- Emergency Exits clear
- Sprinkler System functional

*Fire plans will have the following in place:*

1. Diagram /Chart of site bed locations and fire exits.
2. Procedure for notifying fire department of a fire at the location.
3. Procedure for evacuation, which includes a head count, and designated safe meeting area.
4. Method to inform the firefighters attending the site who is in what bed and where that bed is located in the building.
5. How to ensure fire fighters have access to the whole building to allow them to inspect the whole building.

Each community will have a slightly different fire plan. An example could look like the following: A diagram with all the bed locations within the EWR site, with all beds numbered with their location within the space.

- The names of people sleeping in the shelter are written into the bed space and on the diagram upon their admission to the site.



- Upon admission volunteers will inform the EWR guests where the safe meeting site is and direct everyone to go there to meet in case of a fire.
- In the event of a fire, staff and volunteers will alert all people who are in the EWR site that they are to be evacuated using the fire exits located in the diagram
- In the event of a fire, staff will:
  - Evacuate the site
  - Call 911 and notify the operator there is a fire and provide details and ask for assistance
  - Meet at the designated meeting area
  - Do a head count
  - Wait for the Fire Department to arrive on scene
- Once fire fighters arrive staff will inform them of anyone who is missing and give them the bed location diagram with the names and locations of people who were sleeping and the keys to access the building.
- Staff and volunteers will wait for the fire department to inform them it is clear go back into the building.
- The EWR Coordinator will be notified that a fire has occurred. EWR site staff will provide a written incident report within 3 days of the event to the EWR Coordinator and BC Housing.

### *When You Hear an Alarm*<sup>18</sup>

If there is an alarm, exit the building immediately by the nearest safe exit, and close the door behind you. If it is safe, assist others in evacuating, but do not re-enter a building. After you have left the building go to the evacuation assembly area and do not return to the building until advised by the emergency response personal.

### *If you Discover a Fire*

The following steps should be taken if you discover a fire:

- Activate the fire alarm at the pull station to alert other people
- Call 911
- Small Fire: if you are trained and it is safe, use the appropriate fire extinguisher
- Large Fire: Leave the area, closing the door behind you, and go to the evacuation assembly area.
- If your clothes are on fire STOP.. DROP.. ROLL..

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18 Adapted from "Fire Plan and Emergency Preparedness Plan for Evelyne Saller Centre (2018)

## EWR Forms

The following forms are important to ensure a smooth and operational EWR program.

*EWR forms are to be completed and provided to BC Housing.*

### Nightly Shelter Budgets

Nightly Shelter Budgets are submitted to BC Housing by September 30th. Nightly Shelter Budgets outline all the expenses that are expected to incur at an EWR site during an activation. These forms allow BC Housing to create a budget for the EWR season. Allowable expenses during the EWR season must incur due to an Extreme Weather Response, would not have otherwise been incurred and are identified in their approved nightly budget.

Nightly Shelter Budgets will outline the following allowable expenses:

- Shelter staff costs (salaries and benefits) including reasonable volunteer recognition or honorarium (i.e. small token item, coffee gift card, etc.) if shelter includes volunteers
- Food costs
- Cleaning and laundry costs
- Client transportation to and from Extreme Weather Shelters (i.e. bus tickets)
- First aid supplies

### EWR Invoices

EWR Invoices are submitted to BC Housing twice a month. For EWR activations between the 1st and 15th the invoice should be sent by the 17th. For Invoices between the 16th to the end of the both, invoices should be sent by the 2nd of the following month. The nightly invoice cost will be based off of the approved budget submitted at the beginning of the season.

### Nightly Occupancy Reports

Nightly Occupancy Reports provide a nightly overview of who has access an EWR site and are submitted to BC Housing by 11 am the day following and activation. The reports include:

- Number of guests sheltered
- Self identified gender of guests sheltered
- Age category of guests shelters (i.e. under the age of 19 or over the age of 19)
- Any critical incidents



## About Homelessness Services Association of BC

The Homelessness Services Association of British Columbia (HSABC) is a solution-focused, member-driven organization supporting shelters, drop-in centres, homeless outreach teams, transition houses and other service providers to strengthen and unify services across BC that are addressing the needs of persons experiencing homelessness. Our mandate is to raise awareness of the causes and solutions to homelessness by working with all levels of government, the private and non-profit sector, and communities across the province with the goal of ending homelessness by connecting people with appropriate housing and supports.

Our key areas of focus include:

- **Training** – we provide skills training and professional development opportunities to build the confidence and capacity of the homelessness serving sector across BC
- **Program Implementation** – we coordinate and implement programs such as the Extreme Weather Response Program to increase shelter beds available during critical weather conditions, as well as supporting the sector to deliver other essential services for those experiencing homelessness.
- **Conference and Networking** – we provide networking opportunities to build resilience and connectivity across the sector
- **Research** – we develop and implement research and evidence-based best practices to address the causes and solutions to homelessness
- **Sector Support** – we unify and strengthen the voice of the sector to represent distinct and unique regional perspectives, and approaches addressing the needs of diverse communities experiencing homelessness

