

LANGLEY EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN 2011 - 2012

1. Introduction

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

The development of this plan was cultivated by a group of representatives from various community and social service organizations involved in assisting, either directly or indirectly, the homeless in the Langley's. These include:

Community and Social Service Organizations

- Christian Life Assembly (C.L.A.)
- Stepping Stone Community Services
- The Salvation Army

Municipal

- City of Langley
- Township of Langley
- RCMP

Provincial

- BC Housing
- Langley Health Services

2. The Current Homelessness Situation:

The Langley's, like many other regions in British Columbia, have not experienced an increase in homelessness.

While it is difficult to ascertain an accurate count in the City / Township of Langley the March 2008 homeless count showed a conservative count of 74 absolute homeless and 12 in a Shelter.

A Preliminary Report on the region's fourth homeless count conducted on March 16/11 showed the overall number of people found on count day was down by 37 people from the previous count in 2008.

Statistically, the number of homeless remained virtually the same.

Since The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope opened its facility on the Langley Bypass in December of 2009 it has continued to see the occupancy rate in the Emergency Shelter Program rise. Their September 2011 statistics show that the program is running at 100% occupancy of the 22 beds allocated for males. The female bed rate is running at 85% of the 8 beds available.

3. The Extreme Weather Response Plan:

The Extreme Weather Response Plan must meet the diverse needs of the homeless population (e.g., men, women, youth over 18, people with disabilities and seniors). It must anticipate demand for service and weather conditions and ensure that facilities are open during extreme winter weather conditions. It must also ensure that adequate staffing, safeguards and other resources are in place.

Extreme Weather is defined as:

- temperatures at or below -2 degrees Celsius AND/OR
- significant snow accumulation; AND/OR
- five or more days of rain creating conditions where it is difficult for people to keep dry;¹
- conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of homeless individuals.

Activating/Deactivating an Alert:

Carol Parcher, Patty Gilfillan and Fraser Holland will be responsible for determining if an activation/deactivation is to be called. Jared Roessle will be responsible for all notifications.

Where possible, an alert will be activated prior to 12:00 p.m. (noon) of the day of the alert in order to give sufficient time to mobilize staffing, food services and Gateway maintenance. An alert can be called for up to three

¹ *These conditions would necessitate the activation of an alert for only one night. After that night, five or more days of rain would have to occur prior to the activation of a similar alert, and, again, this would be for only one night.*

days in advance if the weather reports indicate continued adverse conditions but will be reviewed the following day, again, based on weather reports, to determine if the alert is still needed.

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

The BC Housing template for activating (appendix #1) and deactivating (appendix #2) and extreme weather alert to the Langley RCMP are included in this plan.

Notification to the Langley's Agencies and Organizations:

The following list of agencies and organizations will be notified in the event of an extreme weather alert activation/ deactivation. The purpose of the notification is to raise awareness regarding the severity of the weather conditions and the potential impact on people who are homeless and to inform outreach workers, police, supporting agencies of the additional shelter resources available to people who are homeless in the Langley's.

Notification to BC Housing

Please refer to appendix #3. This appendix also contains information related to filling occupancy reports and submitting invoices.

Activation and Deactivation Team:

- Carol Parcher, The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope
- Fraser Holland, Outreach Worker, Stepping Stones
- Patty Gilfillan, Chief Bylaw Enforcement Officer

Time Frame

The Extreme Weather Response Program is implemented:

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

Hours of Operation

- Night-time shelter between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

4. Media Inquiries:

- Media inquiries are to be directed to:
 - Major James Hagglund. In the absence of Major Hagglund please contact Major Brian Venables, Salvation Army Public Relations
- BC Housing will offer media support in case of major media interest (e.g., if a controversial issue develops), or should it become necessary to coordinate media response between communities. Sam Rainboth, Senior Manager, Public Affairs, BC Housing Corporate Communications, is available in this capacity.

5. Evaluation & Plan Revision

This plan has been developed for the 2011/2012 winter period. After March 31, 2012, the Extreme Weather Planning Committee will reconvene under the direction of the Chair, Carol Parcher, and The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope to assess the implementation of the plan and amend the plan as required.