

NEW WESTMINSTER EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN

2011/2012

1. Introduction:

The New Westminister Extreme Weather Response Plan provides a framework for expanding resources to people who are homeless to reduce hardships associated with extreme weather conditions in New Westminister.

The development of the plan was spearheaded by a group of representatives from community and social service organizations involved in providing services, either directly or indirectly, to the homeless in New Westminister. These included:

Community and Social Service Organizations:

- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Fraserside Community Services Society
- Lookout Emergency Aid Society
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families
- Salvation Army (New Westminister)
- Senior Services Society
- Union Gospel Mission
- Westcoast Genesis Society

City of New Westminister:

- Development Services, Social Planning
- Emergency Management
- New Westminister Fire and Rescue Services
- New Westminister Police Service

Provincial Government:

- Emergency Medical Services
- Minister Responsible for Housing

2. Homelessness Situation in New Westminister:

Between 2002 and 2008, the unsheltered homeless population increased by 118.2% in New Westminister. Starting in 2005, the City undertook a number of actions, including developing a Needs Assessment and Strategy, establishing a Homelessness Coalition, hiring a Senior Social Planner and partnering with BC Housing to develop 27 new shelter beds and 84 longer-term transitional and supported housing units. Regarding the latter, planning and re-

zoning approval took place in 2007 and 2008, with most of the units being occupied in 2009 and 2010.

Based on the Regional Homeless Count numbers for 2011, it would appear that these efforts are making a significant difference. Between 2008 and 2011, there was a 45.8% reduction in unsheltered homelessness in New Westminister. It should be emphasized that the counts, which are conducted over a 24-hour period and utilize volunteer enumerators, typically underreport the true extent of homelessness, as they seldom include people who are couch surfing or living rough.

3. Emergency Shelter Capacity in New Westminister

There are currently 53 year-round emergency shelter beds in New Westminister. These are:

Emergency Shelter	Capacity during Winter Months
Gurney's Place Shelter 402 E. Columbia Street NW, V3L 3X1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by the Elizabeth Fry Society. For single women and single mothers with children. 10 units for single women / 2 units for single mothers with children.
Fraserside Shelter 1206 Eighth Avenue NW, V3M 1S3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by Fraserside Community Services Society. For families with children and single women. 12 beds.
Stevenson House 32 Elliot Street NW, V3L 2K1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by the Salvation Army. For single men. 14 beds.
The Russell Residence 740 Carnarvon Street NW, V3M 1E7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by the Lookout Emergency Aid Society. For single men. 15 beds.

4. The Extreme Weather Response Plan

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

Extreme weather is defined as:

Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life and/or health of people who are homeless in New Westminister, such as:

- temperatures at or below -2 degrees Celsius or 0 to -2 degrees Celsius with a wind chill;
- heavy rain in combination with low temperatures (close to 0 degrees Celsius);
- five or more days of rain creating conditions where it is difficult for people to keep dry;¹
- significant snow accumulation; and
- significant wind storms that present a risk to those living in wooded areas.

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

Activation Team:

The following individuals will decide when to activate or deactivate an extreme weather alert. They will make the determination based on the conditions as reported by the Weather Network's New Westminster Sensor. These individuals are:

Name	Organization	Cell Number
Anthony Owusu	The Salvation Army	
David MacPherson	The Salvation Army	

In activating an extreme weather alert when temperatures are not at or below -2 degrees Celsius (e.g., heavy or prolonged rain, significant snow accumulation, wind storm, etc.), Mr. Owusu or Mr. MacPherson will gain the consent of one of the two below listed people:

Name	Organization	Cell Number
Dave Brown	Lookout Emergency Aid Society	
Bill Wong	Union Gospel Mission	

Activating/Deactivating an Alert:

Mr. Owusu or Mr. MacPherson will be responsible for all notification with regard to the activation or deactivation of an alert.

Where possible, an alert will be activated prior to 12:00 p.m. (noon) of the day of the alert in order to mobilize staffing resources and ensure adequate time for notification. An alert can be called for up to three days in advance (based on weather reports) but must be reviewed the following day (again, based on weather reports) to determine if the alert is still warranted.

Due to differences or variations in weather conditions across Metro Vancouver, an alert may be called in New Westminster 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.

Please refer to template for issuing (appendix #1) and cancelling (appendix #2) an extreme weather alert to the New Westminster Police Service.

Notification to New Westminster Agencies and Organizations:

The below people will be notified in the event of an extreme weather alert activation or deactivation. The purpose of the notification is to raise awareness regarding the severity of the weather conditions and the potential impacts on people who are homeless and to inform outreach workers, police and others of the additional shelter resources available to people who are homeless in New Westminster.

Individual	E-Mail Address
Jack Beatty	
Susan Broadfoot	

Claude Bouliane	
Andrew Boyd	
Dave Brown	
Kim Deighton	
Lynda Fletcher-Gordon	
Neil Fernyhough	
Kara-Leigh Jameson	
Dave J. Jones	
David Jones	
Rod Macdonald	
David Macpherson	
Lisa Macpherson	
Jaimie McEvoy	
Bonnie Moriarty	
Anthony Owusu	
James Pratt	
Mariam Smith	
John Stark	
Marina Vereschagin	
Lorrie Wasyliw	
Bill Wong	

Notification to BC Housing Activation and Deactivation Team:

The people identified in appendix #3 will be notified in the event of an extreme weather alert activation or deactivation.

Additional Temporary Emergency Shelter Capacity:

When an extreme weather alert is called, the following temporary shelters can be activated:

- A triage site will be opened at The Salvation Army Church (325 Sixth Street) and all persons needing shelter will be directed to go there first. If needed, they will then be directed to another appropriate shelter site.
- The Salvation Army Church will open its gym as a temporary emergency shelter for up to 40 men and women. This facility is wheelchair accessible.
- The Lower Mainland Purpose Society (40 Begbie Street) will open their drop-in centre over night and will take up to 10 youth.
- Outreach to youth will be provided by the Lower Mainland Purpose Society.

Each extreme weather response site will be responsible for developing its own activation plan with regard to ensuring that adequate staffing, safeguards and other resources are in place.

To assist in notifying people who are homeless regarding the activation or deactivation of an extreme weather alert, service providers, bylaw enforcement officers, fire, police and outreach workers are requested to circulate and post the notification flyer.

Children and Youth:

Persons under the age of 19 are not allowed to access emergency shelters through the Extreme Weather Response Program (EWRP) unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. To do so creates a potential legal liability under the CFCSA legislation should the youth be harmed while at the shelter. If a youth does arrive at a shelter seeking accommodation, call the MCFD New Westminster After Hours Line to inform them that the youth is homeless and request instructions on how to proceed. Document the date and time of the call, the name of the worker spoken to and the instructions received.

If MCFD requests the youth be allowed to remain in the emergency shelter, refuse and insist that MCFD make other arrangements. To accommodate the youth until MCFD is able to make other arrangements, a shelter provider must provide a private sleeping place for the youth and have current criminal record checks on file for all staff on-duty while the youth is in the shelter. The emergency shelter provider must also have sufficient insurance to cover providing service to minors.

Timeframe:

An extreme weather alert can be activated based on the conditions and requirements as described earlier.

Hours of Operation:

Night time shelter is generally available between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

5. Assistance to Shelter Act:

Once an Extreme Weather Response (EWR) is called by the Extreme Weather Activation Team, for the duration of the EWR, members of the New Westminster Police Service have the authority to assist homeless individuals found on the street to a shelter by providing transportation.

The New Westminster Police Service headquarter notification is to follow the requirements and language as outlined by BC Housing and in the Assistance to Shelter Act. It is to also to request confirmation that the email has been received and that the New Westminster Police Service have activated their authorities to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather.

6. Media Inquiries:

All media inquiries will be directed to the Regional Extreme Weather Coordinator, James Pratt, and David MacPherson, as the spokespeople for the New Westminster Extreme Weather Response.

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 to advise the Coordinator.

7. Evaluation and Plan Revision:

This plan has been developed for the 2011/12 period. After March 31, 2012, the Extreme Weather Response Planning Group will reconvene to assess the implementation of the plan and to amend it as required.

Appendix #1: Template for Issuing an Extreme Weather Alert to the New Westminster Police Service

Please note:

It is important that this e-mail be sent to the following recipient:

Also add these addresses:

Text template for e-mail:

Hello,

I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the City of New Westminster. I am issuing an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) and it is requested that the New Westminster Police Service send the below noted EWA verbatim to all patrol members.

Captain David MacPherson, Corps Officer and Pastor
The Salvation Army, New Westminster

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 New Westminster. 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 (description of conditions in forecast).

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

- Salvation Army Extreme Weather Shelter (325 Sixth Street) – Adult Men and Women – 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society Extreme Weather Shelter (40 Begbie Street) – Youth – 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

EWA issued by Captain David MacPherson, Corp Officer and Pastor, The Salvation Army, Community Representative for the City of New Westminster.

Appendix #2: Template for Cancelling an Extreme Weather Alert to the New Westminster Police Service

Please note:

It is important that this e-mail be sent to the following recipient:

Also add these addresses:

Text template for e-mail:

Hello,

I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the City of New Westminster.

On (date), I issued an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) and requested that the New Westminster Police Service send out an EWA to all patrol members.

There is no longer a need for the EWA to remain in effect and, as such, I am issuing a cancellation of the EWA.

Captain David MacPherson, Corps Officer and Pastor
The Salvation Army, New Westminster

Cancellation of an Extreme Weather Alert

Pursuant to Sec. 2(2)(b) of the Assistance to shelter Act, the Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) issued on (date) for the City of New Westminster is now cancelled. The authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk to extreme weather conditions are no longer in effect.

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

Cancellation of an EWA issued by Captain David MacPherson, Community Representative for the City of New Westminster.

Appendix #3: Extreme Weather Response BC Housing Contacts and Forms

October 20, 2011

Organization	Contact	E-Mail Address
BC Housing	Rubina Bedford Roberta Randall Fergus McCann Dominic Flanagan Bruk Melles	
Minister of Social Development	Maryann Anderson Paul Woolley	

Regional EWR Contact Name	E-Mail Address	Phone	Fax
Sheila Matthews, Vancouver Coastal			
Rubina Bedford, Fraser Region			
Heidi Hartman, Vancouver Island			
Peter Chau, Interior Region			
Valerie Hare, Northern Region			

What is it?	By when should it be completed?	Who and how to contact BC Housing?
Community Extreme Weather Response Plan	October 31, 2011	E-mail plan to your Region's BCH Extreme Weather Contact (see above).
Nightly Shelter Budgets	October 31, 2011	E-mail or fax to your region's extreme weather contact
Activation and Deactivation of Extreme Weather Response	As soon as you know a response is being activated.	Email your region's PPM contact (listed above) and: Sam Rainboth Dominic Flanagan Roberta Randall Fergus McCann Paul Woolley David Haslam Cindy Rose Brent Shepherd Maryann Anderson
Occupancy Reports	By 11a.m. the following business day of an extreme weather response.	E-mail: or fax:
Shelter Invoice (for Payment)	Within two weeks of extreme weather event and no later than March 25, 2012	By fax or email to your region's extreme weather contact.
Media Response	Any media releases with regard to	E-mail or call

	extreme weather response must be forwarded in draft form to your region's representative and Sam Rainboth for comments and final approval before release.	Sam Rainboth
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