

NEW WESTMINSTER EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN

2007/2008

1. Introduction

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

The Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy provided assistance during the planning process, with funding support from BC Housing.

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 Westminster. These included:

Community and Social Service Organizations:

- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Fraserside Community Services Society
- Lookout Emergency Aid Society
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society
- Salvation Army (New Westminster)
- Senior Services Society
- Union Gospel Mission

City of New Westminster:

- Senior Social Planner
- Manager, Risk and Emergency Planning

Provincial Government:

- Emergency Medical Services
- Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

2. Homelessness Situation in New Westminster:

New Westminster has seen an increase in homelessness between the first regional count conducted in 2002 and the second regional count conducted in 2005. In fact, the homeless population increased from 69 to 92 or by 33% for the time period in question. Of the homeless who were counted in 2005, about half were living on the street.

City of New Westminster Bylaw Enforcement Officers, who conduct daily homeless patrols, estimate the number of deeply entrenched homeless who live on the streets at between 40 and 50 at any one time. Homeless outreach workers believe this number is closer to 100. Regardless of the true number, all agree on the need for more housing resources to serve this population, especially during the winter months.

The next regional homeless count will be conducted on the evening of March 10 and the day of March 11, 2008. This count will provide a current snapshot of the homeless situation in New Westminster; providing number, profile and trend information.

3. Emergency Shelter Capacity in New Westminster

There are currently 45 emergency shelter beds in New Westminster which are available during the winter months (i.e., November 1 to March 31). These are:

Emergency Shelter	Capacity during Winter Months
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 (referral only)
Stevenson House 32 Elliot Street NW, V3L 2K1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated year round by the Salvation Army. • For single men. • 10 beds (referral only).
The Way* 1107 Royal Avenue NW, V3M 1K4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by the Salvation Army. • For single men. • 23 beds year round (referral only).

* The Way will no longer be operational after March 31, 2008.

4. The Extreme Weather Response Plan

The New Westminster Extreme Weather Response Plan must meet the diverse needs of the homeless population (e.g., men, women, youth, families, 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 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 Westminster, such as:

- temperatures at or below -2 degrees Celsius or 0 to -2 degrees Celsius with a wind chill;
- prolonged heavy rain in combination with low temperatures (close to 0 degrees Celsius);
- significant snow accumulation;
- significant wind storms that present a risk to those living in wooded areas.

Activation Team:

The following individuals, or their designates, will decide when to activate or deactivate an extreme weather alert. They will make the determination based on weather reports and the perceived need for emergency shelter space in New Westminster. These are:

Name	Organization	Cell Number
Caroline Bonesky	Fraserside Community Services Society	
Dave Brown	Lookout Emergency Aid Society	
Bill Wong	New West Drop-In Centre (Union Gospel Mission)	

Activating/Deactivating an Alert:

At least two of the above three individuals, or their designates, are required to activate or deactivate an alert. Where possible, alerts 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.

Notification:

The below people will be notified in the event of an extreme weather alert (or the deactivation of an alert). 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 and others of the additional shelter resources available to people who are homeless in New Westminster.

Individual	E-Mail Address
Joven Antolin	
Michael Anhorn	
Alex Bempong	
Kathy Blindenbach	
Caroline Bonesky	
Claude Bouliane	
Dave Brown	
Mavis Brownlee	
Marion Bruce	
Kim Deighton	
Linda Dyck	
Lynda Fletcher-Gordon	
Harvey Froment	

Individual	E-Mail Address
Kim Hayek	
Lynn Hillier	
Kimiko Karpoff	
Val MacDonald	
Mary MacDougall	
David MacPherson	
Lisa Macpherson	
Rusti Moffatt	
Bonnie Moriarty	
Dave Reid	
Mike McQuillan	
John Stark	
Cheryl Stogren	
Bruce Staidans	
Lyn Stokes	
Lorrie Wasyliv	
Colin Wheaton	
Rick Whitlock	
Bill Wong	
Patrick Young	
Marni Ziegler	

Additional Temporary Emergency Shelter:

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 25 to 40 men and women. This facility is wheelchair accessible.
- Fraserside Shelter (1206 Eighth Avenue) will house families with children and single women needing shelter if there is space available. If not, After Hours will be contacted for the families to be housed in a motel by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.
- 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

Activation plans for each of the sites will be developed. Each facility director or manager will continue to manage his/her site but may call upon other agencies for assistance.

Posters will be circulated and posted during an extreme weather alert.

Timeframe:

An extreme weather alert can be activated at any time between November 1 to March 31 based on the conditions as described earlier.

Hours of Operation:

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

5. Evaluation and Plan Revision

This plan has been developed for the 2007/08 period. After March 31, 2008, the Extreme Weather Response Planning Group will reconvene to assess the implementation of the plan and to amend it as required.