

NEW WESTMINSTER EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN

2016/2017

1. Introduction

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Plan provides a framework for expanding resources to people who are homeless in order to reduce the substantial threat to life and/or health associated with extreme weather conditions in New Westminster.

The development of the EWR Plan is informed by representatives from the below listed government, community and social service organizations who are involved in providing assistance and/or services, either directly or indirectly, to people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in New Westminster.

Community and Social Service Organizations:

- Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
- Fraserside Community Services Society
- Hospitality Project
- Lookout Emergency Aid Society
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families
- Salvation Army (New Westminster)
- Senior Services Society
- Spirit of the Children Society
- Union Gospel Mission
- Westcoast Genesis Society
- Women in Need Gaining Strength (WINGS)

City of New Westminster:

- Development Services, Social Planning
- New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
- New Westminster Police Department

Provincial Government:

- BC Housing

2. Homelessness Situation in New Westminster

Between 2002 and 2008, the unsheltered homeless population increased by 118% in New Westminster. Starting in 2005, the City undertook a number of actions, including developing a Needs Assessment and Strategy; establishing a Homelessness Coalition; hiring a Social Planner; and partnering with BC Housing to develop 28 new shelter beds and 121 longer-term transitional and supportive housing units. Regarding the latter, planning and rezoning 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 2014, it would appear that these efforts are making a significant difference. Between 2008 and 2014, there was a 53% reduction in unsheltered homelessness in New Westminster. 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 Westminster

There are currently 54 year-round emergency shelter beds in New Westminster. These are:

Emergency Shelter	Capacity during Winter Months
Gurney's Place Shelter	<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	<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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by the Salvation Army. For single men. 14 beds.
Russell Housing Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated year round by the Lookout Emergency Aid Society. For single men. 16 beds.

4. The Extreme Weather Response Plan

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Plan must meet the diverse needs of the homeless population (e.g., men, women, 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.

Lookout Emergency Aid Society EWR Shelter for Men and Women

The EWR Shelter is operated by the Lookout Emergency Aid Society and is located at the Cliff Block at 606 Clarkson Street (i.e., intersection of Clarkson and Sixth Streets). This EWR Shelter is subject to the following use conditions as contained in the Temporary Use Permit, which was approved by Council to permit a shelter at this location:

- shall not serve more than 30 individuals at any given time;
- shall only be permitted to operate between November 1 and March 31; and,
- shall only be permitted in the lowest level of the existing building on the site.

Proposed Elizabeth Fry Society EWR Shelter for Women

At the meeting of the New Westminster EWR Planning and Debrief Committee, which included representation from those organizations listed on page 1, on September 30, 2016, the Elizabeth Fry Society proposed offering an EWR Shelter for up to six women at its current facility located at 402 East Columbia Street in New Westminster.

Based on the ensuing discussion, there was support for such an EWR Shelter for Women, subject to approval and funding from BC Housing. It was noted that given the distance between the existing EWR Shelter at 606 Clarkson Street and the proposed EWR Shelter at 402 East Columbia Street and given the needs as identified by the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Committee felt it would address a gap in service and not negatively affect the existing EWR Shelter.

Extreme Weather Conditions

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 0 degrees Celsius or feels like 0 degrees Celsius given the wind chill;
- heavy rain, in combination with low temperatures close to 0 degrees Celsius;
- three or more days of rain creating conditions where it is difficult for people to keep dry;¹
- snow accumulation; and,
- sustained or steady winds of 70 km/h or wind gusts up to 90 km/h that present a risk to those living outdoors.

Activation Team

The following individuals (or designated alternates) will be available throughout the duration of the identified months of the EWR Operations to collaborate and determine when there is an identified need to activate an EWR Alert, ensuring that the sole determining factors include anticipated need to ensure accessibility and availability to shelter and local weather conditions.

Name ²	Organization	Contact Number
Dean Joseph	Lookout Emergency Aid Society	604-831-0340
Troy Balderson	Lookout Emergency Aid Society	778-223-9493

In activating an extreme weather alert when temperatures are not at or below 0 degrees Celsius or in situations when it ‘feels like’ 0 degrees Celsius, Dave Brown or Laurel Nagem will gain the consent of one of the two below listed people:

Name	Organization	Contact Number
Dorothy Henneveld	Fraserside Community Services Society	604-832-7453
Vallen Mah	Union Gospel Mission	778-242-6302

Activating an EWR Alert

Dean Joseph or Troy Balderson will be responsible for all notification with regard to the activation or deactivation of an EWR Alert.

Upon activation of an EWR Alert, actions will include but not be limited to:

¹ These conditions will necessitate the activation of an alert for only one night. After that night, three 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.
² In the event that Dean Joseph or Troy Balderson is not available, then Fatima Sunderji, Community Services Manager, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, 604-910-3070, will activate or deactivate an extreme weather alert.

- That the EWR Alert will be activated prior to 11:00 a.m. of the day of the Alert in order to mobilize staffing resources and to ensure adequate time for notification.
- That the EWR Shelter will ensure an appropriate quantity of required essentials are supplied, including but not limited to:
 - mats, blankets and pillows;
 - administrative items for the purpose of data collection and reporting;
 - first aid supplies;
 - harm reduction supplies;
 - health and safety committee requirements;
 - cleaning supplies;
 - clothing;
 - food supplies; and,
 - hygiene products.
- That the EWR Shelter, where possible, will ensure that the required items will be stored and restocked within the identified location to ensure prompt service delivery.
- That the EWR Shelter will ensure that appropriate referral and resources will be made available to all persons accessing services.
- That the EWR Shelter will ensure service provision without discrimination, requiring that:
 - trained shelter staff will provide close monitoring and supervision;
 - men and women will be kept in separate areas;
 - attempts will be made to ensure that couples are accommodated;
 - belongings will be stored securely; and,
 - privacy and confidentiality will be strictly observed.
- That the EWR Shelter will ensure that meal provisions will be provided with the support of staff and the community, including a nightly meal, coffee and snacks.
- That the EWR Shelter will encourage volunteers to assist in operations, including conducting the following tasks:
 - set-up and take-down of sleeping areas;
 - clothing distribution;
 - meal preparation and service;
 - daily cleaning and sanitizing of all areas;
 - donation organization and distribution; and,
 - support to shelter staff as needed and/or required.
- That the EWR Shelter will provide bus tickets for transportation purposes.
- That the Lookout Emergency Aid Society will ensure a total of two (2) EWR Shelter Workers on a nightly basis.
- That the Lookout Emergency Aid Society will ensure training and coordination of volunteers (through the use of the GVSS Extreme Weather Response Committee, as available), as well as keeping records of a detailed volunteer database.
- That the Lookout Emergency Aid Society will provide all transportation of goods and materials to and from the EWR Shelter site location as needed and/or required.
- That the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MFCD) will be immediately notified of the presence of a youth under the age of 19 years of age who is requiring and/or requesting to utilize EWR Shelter services.

Deactivating an EWR Alert

That upon sufficient evidence to the Activation Team that the weather no longer represents a substantial threat to the life and/or health of people who are homeless in New Westminster, the EWR Alert will be deactivated.

- That all persons utilizing the EWR Shelter service will be notified of the deactivation.
- That Lookout Emergency Aid Society will be responsible to distribute the deactivation notice utilizing the same notification process.
- That the EWR Shelter will post closure notices on its door(s).

Assistance to Shelter Act

That upon issuance of an EWR Alert, the Assistance to Shelter Act is activated throughout the duration of the Alert, ensuring that members of the New Westminster Police Department have the authority to assist/transport people who are absolutely homeless to the EWR Shelter(s).

Collection of Information

- That data and information will be collected for statistical and reporting purposes to the funder:
 - That information will be treated as confidential;
 - That information and data collection will include:
 - Individual – Name, Age, Gender, Ethnicity, City of Origin, Length of Homelessness;
 - Shelter –Number of Nights Open, Number of Individual Served
 - Volunteers – Name, Contact Information, Number of Hours Served
 - Additional – Critical Incidents, Turnaways
 - That nightly occupancy reports shall be supplied by 11:00 a.m. each day directly following any night open.
 - That invoicing will be submitted on the 2nd and 17th of each month.
 - That information and data collection will be shared with the:
 - New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society;
 - BC Housing; and,
 - Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy.

Evaluation and Plan Revision

This plan has been developed for the 2016/17 period. After March 31, 2017, the EWR Planning and Debrief Committee will reconvene to assess the implementation of the plan and to amend it as required.

Notifications

That following a decision to activate an EWR Alert, notifications will apply as follows to ensure awareness regarding the severity of impending weather conditions in an attempt to preserve the life and/or health of people who are homeless.

- That the Lookout Emergency Aid Society will assume responsibility of the prompt and accurate distribution of Alert notifications via e-mail communications as contained in the Notification List.
- That the Lookout Emergency Aid Society will ensure that all parties from the Pre-Determined Notification List will be alerted regarding the response.
 - Mandatory notification must be made to the Minister of Housing, BC Housing and the New Westminster Police Department and this notification must follow the outlined and approved format.
- That organizations and individuals notified of an EWR Alert will ensure that their respective staff members and clients are aware of all available services.
- That organizations will ensure collaborative communication regarding the distribution of blankets, outerwear and donated clothing to people who are homeless, as available.

Notification List

Organization	Contact	E-Mail Address
City of New Westminster	Shelley Cole Kristian Davis Kim Deighton John Hatch Cory McLaren Veronika Metchie John Stark	scole@newwestcity.ca kdavis@newwestcity.ca kdeighton@newwestcity.ca jhatch@newwestcity.ca cmclaren@newwestcity.ca vmetchie@newwestcity.ca jstark@newwestcity.ca
New Westminster Police Department	Dave Jansen Dave Jones Art Wlodyka	djansen@nwpolice.ca djones@nwpolice.ca awlodyka@nwpolice.ca
New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society	Martha Kerr	admin@nwhomeless.ca
Lookout Emergency Aid Society	Troy Balderson Dean Joseph Fatima Sunderj	nwcoord@lookoutsociety.ca deanj@lookoutsociety.ca nwmanager@lookoutsociety.ca
Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver	Bonnie Moriarty	Bonnie.moriarty@elizabethfry.com
Fraser Health	Lisa Mu Yvette Soriano	lisa.mu@fraserhealth.ca yvette.soriano@fraserhealth.ca
Fraserside Community Services Society	Lynda Edmonds Dorothy Henneveld Marina Vereschagin	ledmonds@fraserside.bc.ca dorothyh@fraserside.bc.ca marinam@fraserside.bc.ca
Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society	Zsuzsi Fodor	ZsuzsiF@foodbank.bc.ca
Holy Trinity Cathedral	Dale Yardy	priest@holyltrinitycathedral.ca
Lower Mainland Purpose Society	Lynda Fletcher-Gordon	lyndafg@purposesociety.org
MLA Judy Darcy's Constituency Office	Nadine Nakagawa	judy.darcy.mla@leg.bc.ca
MP Peter Julian's Constituency Office		peter.julian.c1@parl.gc.ca
St. Banabas Anglican Church	Emilie Smith	emiliesmith@gmail.com
Salvation Army	Carlos Galvez Anthony Owusu	Carlos_Galvez@can.salvationarmy.org anthony_owusu@shaw.ca
Seniors Services Society	Brian Dodd	BrianD@seniorsservicessociety.ca
Union Gospel Mission	Bill Wong Vallen Mah	bwong@ugm.ca vmah@ugm.ca
Westcoast Genesis Society	Robert Chesterman	robertchesterman@w-g-s.ca
WINGS Monarch Place Women In Need Gaining Strength (WINGS)	Marina Vereschagin Lorrie Wasyliw	monarchplace@telus.net wingsed@telus.net
BC Housing	To be completed.	To be completed.

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

Please note:

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

Police Contact and Police Contact

Also add these addresses:

weatheralert@gov.bc.ca; bchceo@bchousing.org;
homelessnessservices@bchousing.org

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 Response (EWR) Alert for New Westminster. It would be appreciated if the New Westminster Police Department would acknowledge the receipt of this e-mail to me only – no other recipients need to reply. You will be advised via e-mail when the EWR Alert has been cancelled.

Dean Joseph, Program Coordinator
Lookout Emergency Aid Society

Extreme Weather Alert

Pursuant to Sec. 2(2)(b) of the Assistance to Shelter Act, an Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Alert is being issued for the City of New Westminster. This EWR Alert activates the authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist people at risk due to extreme weather conditions and remains in effect until it is cancelled.

This EWR Alert is being issued on (date) at (time), due to the following weather conditions and forecast (description of conditions in forecast).

The following shelter will be providing spaces during this EWR Alert:

- Cliff Block at 606 Clarkson Street – Adult Men and Women – 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

EWR Alert issued by Dean Joseph, Program Coordinator, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Community Representative for the City of New Westminster.

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

Please note:

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

Police Contact and Police Contact

Also add these addresses:

weatheralert@gov.bc.ca; bchceo@bchousing.org;
homelessnessservices@bchousing.org

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 Response (EWR) Alert and requested that the New Westminster Police Department send out an EWR Alert to all patrol members.

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

Dean Joseph, Program Coordinator
Lookout Emergency Aid Society

Cancellation of an Extreme Weather Alert

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

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

Cancellation of an alert by Dean Joseph, Program Coordinator, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Community Representative for the City of New Westminster.