



Extreme Weather Response

Report and Evaluation of the 2004-2005 Year

Prepared for: The Greater Vancouver Cold/Wet Weather Strategy

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September 21, 2005

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Extreme Weather Response Report for 2004-2005: Executive Summary

The winter season 2004/2005 was the second year of operational responses within the extreme weather response programs for Surrey, Richmond, New Westminister and Langley. Extreme weather response planning on the community-based model was begun on the North Shore and in Burnaby. The Tri-Cities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, and Port Moody) continued their committee work towards having their own extreme weather shelter site rather than sending homeless persons to New Westminister. Vancouver has an established extreme weather response, which was complemented in 2004/2005 by an Aboriginal response program in Vancouver and Burnaby.

An extreme weather period occurred in Greater Vancouver from January 2nd through January 17th. Prepared communities opened up extreme weather sheltering sites during this time. The information available from Environment Canada was able to forewarn communities that the period of extreme temperature would last for a significant number of days. This was important for communities to know what to expect as they opened up their sites. Early in the weather alert, the Ministry of Human Resources committed to fund the response beyond the Extreme weather funding available from the National Homelessness Initiative. The combined funding commitment allowed the sites to remain open for the necessary time period and to allow the extreme weather community committees to focus on providing the needed services.

The various participating community organizations provided a total of approximately 390 extreme weather beds most nights in sheltering sites across Greater Vancouver. As shown in the table below, the reported number of EWR bed nights used increased to approximately 4,378 from 837 in the previous year.¹

Total Extreme Weather Outputs: Comparison of 2004-05 with 2003-04

Location	# of bed nights 04/05	# of bed nights 03/04	# of days 04/05	# of days 03/04
Aboriginal Response (Vancouver/Burnaby)	1,744	212	13	3
Vancouver	1,880	495	15	12
Richmond	2	1	2	1
Surrey	223	23	13	2
Langley	162	13	13	4
New Westminister	367	93	17	11
Total	4,378	837	N/a	N/a

¹ Statistics were unavailable for an initial extreme weather response in the North Shore.

1. Introduction

Purpose and Objectives

2004/2005 was the second season of implementation for the Cold/Wet Weather Strategy (CWWS) Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program and this is the second evaluation of the program.

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the program in its second year of operation. The secondary purpose is to provide information for use sustaining the program beyond its current funding from the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative and in the further development of the EWR program.

The evaluation has four objectives as follows:

1. To provide an overview of the EWR Program in 2004 – 2005
2. To identify inputs, outputs and outcomes
3. To analyze strengths and challenges faced by the EWR program, and
4. To make preliminary recommendations around sustainability.

Scope

This evaluation covers the period from October 2004 to March 31, 2005. Analysis of the strengths and challenges provides qualitative information that will inform program planning in subsequent seasons and contribute to discussions on sustainability.

Methodology

- The consultant used various data sources in the preparation of this report including the following:
- CWWS documents including meeting minutes,
- Service statistics,
- Ongoing feedback from community-level EWR organizers,
- Evaluation meetings with each community regarding the successes and challenges of the past season.

2. Overview of the Extreme Weather Response

Background

EWR plans were developed for Surrey, Vancouver, Langley, Richmond and New Westminister in 2003. These plans set the framework for expanding community resources for homeless persons during the winter months to prevent hardships due to extreme winter weather conditions.

In Richmond, Surrey, Langley, and New Westminister the EWR Plans were developed by local steering committees. The community members involved in this planning process represented a broad array of organizations and agencies. The Cold/Wet Weather Strategy, through funding from the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, provided assistance with the planning process. In Vancouver the plan reflected the EWR that was already being implemented, primarily through funding from the Ministry of Human Resources.

The past season (2004/2005) was the second year of operation of the extreme weather response as set out in each community plan. In addition planning was begun on the North Shore and discussions began in Burnaby. Tri-Cities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, and Port Moody) worked towards having their own extreme weather sheltering site rather than sending homeless persons to sites in New Westminister.

Purpose & Objectives of the Program

The overall purpose of the EWR is to protect homeless people in Greater Vancouver from contracting a critical illness, becoming hypothermic or dying due to exposure to extreme winter weather.

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Provide safe and adequate temporary extreme weather shelter for up to 190 homeless people (in Surrey, Richmond, New Westminister and Langley) per night during periods of extreme winter weather;
2. Provide outreach in Surrey, Richmond, New Westminister, and Langley (warm food, winter clothing and blankets) during extreme weather to those living rough who do not want to use emergency shelters;
3. Co-ordinate community based co-operative approaches for all aspects of the EWR including meal provision, shelter, transportation, and communication;
4. Coordinate communication among communities implementing EWR;
5. Foster increased public awareness about homelessness in the Greater Vancouver and the potential impacts of extreme weather on the homeless;
6. Develop trained volunteers to support the EWR; and,
7. Increase the response's sustainability by securing ongoing funding.

Indicators of Success for the Extreme Weather Project

- The communities will implement their EWR plans as the weather requires in a safe and effective manner;
- Homeless people in the EWR communities requiring shelter will receive it during extreme weather; and,
- Information about the extreme weather alert within the communities will be circulated quickly and effectively – homeless people will know when there is an alert and what resources are available to them.

Program Logic Model

The following logic model chart shows inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes for the EWR.

Inputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Funding provided by the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative and the Ministry of Human Resources.2. Community donations from faith groups, service clubs and others.3. In-kind contributions, including facility space, food, blankets, winter clothing, hygiene kits, and volunteer time.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preparation for periods of extreme weather.2. EWR implementation in January 2005.3. Response tracking.4. EWR planning in the North Shore.5. Liaison with other similar tasked groups.6. Regular Extreme Weather Task Group meetings.7. Media relations.8. Definition of responsibilities and duties of local committees.
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Total number of EWR bed spaces provided.2. Number of nights open, by facility.3. Number of clients, by facility.
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improved access to emergency shelter during extreme weather.2. Reduced risk during extreme weather.3. Improved co-ordination of sheltering services during extreme weather.4. Improved understanding of local and regional needs during extreme weather.5. Increased public awareness of homelessness and extreme weather.

Activities

The only extreme weather in the region in the 2004/2005 season occurred right after New Year's Day and lasted over ten days. All six participating communities opened up extreme weather sheltering sites during this time. Environment Canada was able to warn communities that the period of extreme temperature would last for a significant number of days. Communities were aware of the potential length of the alert as they opened up their sites. Early on in the alert, the Ministry of Human Resources committed to fund the response beyond the funding available from the federal government. This allowed the

sites to remain open and the extreme weather community committees to focus on providing the needed services, rather than wondering how the response would be funded beyond the five days of Federal funding.

In addition to the communities that have extreme weather response committees, a number of other responses took place:

- The North Shore was able to open first a temporary site at the North Shore Neighbourhood House, and then offer extreme weather and cold wet weather beds at the unfinished North Shore shelter (still under construction).
- The Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee set up its own extreme weather response in Vancouver with a number of sites and vans to pick up the homeless and bring them to the sites.

New communities were encouraged to develop extreme weather responses. With the opening of the North Shore Shelter, it was possible for the community to begin planning for its own community response. Burnaby started to organize around homelessness and housing and should begin planning for an extreme weather response by this fall. Tri-Cities worked hard at finding a suitable site for an extreme weather shelter. A site was not found by the end of the 2004/2005 season but there is a strong possibility of a suitable site becoming available as of the fall of 2005.

Additional EWR activities included:

- Generating public and media awareness about homelessness and the EWR,
- Developing media information for the EWR,
- Initiating EWR planning for the North Shore,
- Developing draft duties and responsibilities for the community coordinators,
- Helping the Tri-Cities committee to find a suitable site,
- Liaison with the GVRD Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness around the homelessness count,
- Liaison with the Aboriginal Extreme Weather Committee,
- Participating in the Communication Task Group of the GVRD Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness Committee,
- Linking with MHR regarding funding,
- Collecting invoices and expenses for processing by South Fraser Community Services Society,
- Information sharing during extreme weather,
- Collection of EWR data,
- Extreme Weather Task Group meetings,
- Evaluation of the 2004/2005 year.

3. Service Statistics

Langley

The total number of clients (bed nights of service) in Langley was 162.²

- **Aldergrove Seventh Day Adventist Church** was opened for 11 days for a total of 5 clients.
- **Brookwood Baptist Church** was opened for 11 days for a total of 51 clients.
- **South Gate Community Church** was opened for 13 days for a total of 106 clients.

The first five days were funded by HRSDC and the other 7 days by MHR. In Langley two of the churches serving as extreme weather shelters had kennels provided by the Langley Animal Protection Society.

Shelter Usage for January 4-16 /05 Extreme Weather Alert

Shelter	Tues 4 th	Wed 5 th	Thurs 6 th	Fri 7 th	Sat 8 th	Sun 9 th	Mon 10 th	Tues 11 th	Wed 12 th	Thurs 13 th	Fri 14 th	Sat 15 th	Sun 16 th	Total
Aldergrove	0	X	X	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
Brookwood	0	X	X	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	9	8	8	51
Southgate	5	7	6	7	6	7	7	10	8	12	12	9	10	106
Total	5	7	6	10	10	11	11	14	13	17	21	17	22	162

Surrey

The total number of clients served during the extreme weather alert in Surrey was 225.

- **Hyland House** opened for 3 nights and served a total of 3 clients.
- **Johnston Heights Evangelical Free Church** opened for 2 nights and served a total of 22 clients.
- **Kla how eya** opened for 11 nights and served a total of 120 clients.
- **Surrey Urban Mission** opened for 5 nights and served a total of 80 clients.

Surrey opened four different sites for 13 nights. The first 5 nights of the extreme weather alert were funded by HRSDC and 8 nights by MHR.

Date	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
Hyland House	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	3
Johnston Heights	-	-	-	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Kla-how eya	1	5	4	6	5	15	20	20	-	-	13	15	16	120
Surrey Urban Mission	10	12	17	-	-	-	-	-	20	21	-	-	-	80
Total	12	19	21	17	16	15	20	20	20	21	13	15	16	225

² In this report the term clients” is used interchangeably with “bed nights”: the figures represent the number of instances of a client using a bed for a night, not the number of distinct individuals.

New Westminster

In New Westminster, 3 facilities opened for 17 days. The total number of clients served was 367, including 42 from the Tri-Cities pick-up service.

- **Salvation Army Community Church** (men and women) served a total of 365 clients.
- **Elizabeth Fry Society** (women and children) served 0 clients.
- **Lower Mainland Purpose Society** (youth) served 2 clients.

Of the 367, two clients were identified as youth. Clients were 85.5% males, 14.5% females, 88.5% from New Westminster, and 11.5 % from the Tri-Cities pick up service.

Community	Shelter Site	Date (D/M/Y)	Male 19 yrs +	Male 18 yrs -	Female 19 yrs +	Female 18 yrs -	Family	Total
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/1/05	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/2/05	4	0	0	0	0	4
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/3/05	5	0	0	0	0	5
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/4/05	17	0	2	0	0	19
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/5/05	16	0	4	0	0	20
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/6/05	18	0	1	0	0	19
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/7/05	19	0	5	0	0	24
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/8/05	12	0	6	0	0	18
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/9/05	17	0	5	0	0	22
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/10/05	20	0	4	0	0	24
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/11/05	20	0	6	0	0	26
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/12/05	26	0	5	0	0	31
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/13/05	25	0	7	0	0	32
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/14/05	30	0	2	0	0	32
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/15/05	19	0	2	0	0	21
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/16/05	33	0	2	0	0	35
New Westminster	Salvation Army	1/17/05	31	0	2	0	0	33
New Westminster	Purpose Society	1/1-17/05		2				2
New Westminster	Elizabeth Fry	1/1-17/05					0	0
Total	New Westminster	271 New West 41 Tri-Cities			52 New West 1 Tri-Cities			367

Richmond

The Salvation Army Shelter is open all the time because it is a year round shelter. Only 2 persons were housed during the extreme weather alert in excess of the year round shelter capacity. Richmond Bethel Church, which opens up in case of overflow at the Salvation Army Shelter, did not house anybody.

Vancouver

Vancouver had 9 sites opened plus the Aboriginal Extreme Weather Response. The alert lasted for 15 days. A total of 3,624 nights of shelter were reported, including approximately 1,744 provided by the Aboriginal Response. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of other informal shelters opened up during the extreme weather.

Date	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total	
Aboriginal Response		120	89	142	150	159	175	184	179	130	116	100	100	100	Closed	1,744	
Facility																	
10th Avenue Alliance			27		5	6	8	8	8	31	9	13	8	9	7	Closed	139
Evelyne Saller Centre				9	10	14	15	23	22	18	30	27	22	27	25	49	291
Gathering Place			11	13	12	12	17	0	12	25	22	27	32	28	29	31	271
Harbour Light (50 extra mats)	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	15	35	
Anchor of Hope (50 capacity CWW)	?			25	26	14	11	17	15	16	19	33	19	12	15	50	272
Crosswalk	?			22	19	21	20	26	21	20	20	28	28	15	21	36	297
Kits Community Centre					6	6	17	9	14	21	21	17	17	21	23	24	196
First Baptist Church				30	14	14	17	36	32		33	31	25	26	24	30	312
Covenant House (youth)						Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	67³
TOTAL	20	158	188	234	237	264	294	308	310	284	292	251	238	244	235	3,624	

Summary of Extreme Weather Statistical Information

The various participating community organizations provided a total of approximately 390 extreme weather beds, for the duration of the cold snap, in sheltering sites across Greater Vancouver.

Greater Vancouver communities called the Extreme Weather Response for the below listed number of nights:

- ❖ New Westminster – 17 nights (5 nights with HRSDC funding plus an additional 10 nights with MHR funding and one night with community funding).

³ Covenant House serves youth only. Data is not available per night. A total of 67 bed nights in total were utilized by 26 distinct individuals (20 males and 6 females). Covenant House, which joined the extreme weather response on January 6 because of the need to create more youth beds, had a 51% occupancy rate. Their beds were funded by MHR.

- ❖ Langley – 13 nights (5 nights with HRSDC funding plus an additional 8 nights with MHR funding).
- ❖ Richmond – 13 nights (HRSDC funding).
- ❖ Surrey – 13 nights (5 nights with HRSDC funding plus an additional 8 nights with MHR funding).
- ❖ Vancouver – 15 nights (MHR and community funding).
- ❖ Aboriginal – 13 nights (Aboriginal Extreme Weather funding).

Total Extreme Weather Outputs: Comparison of 2003-04 and 2004-05

Location	# of clients 04/05	# of clients 03/04	# of days 04/05	# of days 03/04
Aboriginal Response (Vancouver/Burnaby)	1,744	212	13	3
Vancouver	1,880	495	15	12
Richmond	2	1	2	1
Surrey	223	23	13	2
Langley	162	13	13	4
New Westminster ⁴	367	93	17	11
Total	4,378	837	73	33

A total of approximately 4,378 EWR bed nights (HRSDC, MHR and community funded beds) were used in Greater Vancouver during the 2004/2005 season, compared to 837 in the 2003/2004 season.

⁴ Clients were bused from Tri-cities to New Westminster during the extreme weather alert and housed at the Salvation Army shelter because there was no extreme weather site in the Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody). Their numbers are counted in with New Westminster.

4. Outcomes

- a. Improved access to emergency shelters during extreme weather was achieved through the following means:
 - During extreme weather in the 2004/2005 season there were 190 additional beds available outside Vancouver for EWR. While not all of these spaces were used during the EWR, homeless people did access many of the sheltering sites during extreme weather nights.
- b. Reduced risk during extreme weather was achieved through the following means:
 - For homeless people who stayed at the EWR sheltering sites during extreme weather, the risks of illness, hypothermia and death were reduced.
 - Coordination of sheltering services during extreme weather in 6 communities and beginning of coordination in 2 others.
 - Communication via email and telephone among shelter providers, social services, MHR, and the EWR sheltering sites in Vancouver, Richmond, New Westminster, Langley, and Surrey worked well during the EWR period in January 2005.
 - Guidelines on the duties and responsibilities of community coordinators to help them in providing leadership during the EWR (attached).
 - Warning by Environment Canada as to the possible extension of the extreme weather in January, which helped communities plan.
- c. Improved understanding of local and regional needs during extreme weather was achieved through the following means:
 - The implementation of the EWR plans, and the response of homeless people, has helped the individual communities to understand local homelessness better and to strengthen the homelessness committees or task forces in these communities.
- d. Increased public awareness of homelessness and extreme weather was achieved through the following means:
 - The EWR in January 2005 served to focus media attention on the issue of homeless and EWR. During the EWR, media coverage in all communities with shelter sites was high in both print and radio. There was an emphasis on long-term solutions to homelessness and the need for permanent housing, which is affordable and supportive.
 - Involvement of many volunteers in each community to provide food, clean bedding and facilities, transportation and a welcome.
 - Beginning of initiatives around homelessness in Burnaby.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

Each community EWR committee met towards the end of the EWR period and debriefed on the alert period. The following were general observations from communities:

- The length of the alert was challenging in terms of finding and supporting volunteers.
- A description of the duties and responsibilities of local coordinators would be helpful (see template in Appendix A).
- Community response was strong, and police, emergency workers and others directed homelessness persons to the sites.
- Credit is due to MHR for quickly ensuring that communities did not have to worry about funding beyond five days and providing the funds for the extent of the alert.
- In Vancouver and Surrey, the existing CWW shelters were underutilized during the extreme weather period. Some of the homeless preferred the environment of the extreme weather sites i.e. earlier bedtime, consistent meals, staffed by volunteers.
- In each community, there needs to be acknowledgement of the time that it takes to undertake the triage activities to make sure that the homeless are sent to the right sheltering sites.
- Since the EWR may occur during the holiday period, it is important that each community makes plans to have an alternate coordinator or co-coordinators and that home and cell numbers are easily available so that the response can be initiated.
- Volunteer orientation is important and should be held prior to the beginning of the EWR.
- During extreme weather events sheltering sites received many donations of goods from their local communities.
- Utilization of specialized shelters for youth or women was very low.

Surrey:

- There is a long distance (10 km) between the Front Room where most homelessness persons can be provided with a meal and some services and Hyland House, which is one of the sheltering sites. This was a factor in Hyland House not being used after the initial couple of days.
- There needs to be an extreme weather sheltering site in South Surrey/White Rock as all the existing sites are in North Surrey.
- Volunteers need to be coordinated so that they can be used effectively and so that all sites can be staffed.
- Sites will be opened on a rotation basis to maximize resources.

New Westminster:

- The Salvation Army Community Church will be used as a triage site and as the primary sheltering site.

- Women with children will be referred to the MHR after hours line for housing in a motel/hotel.
- During the past EWR alerts, few youth used the extreme weather shelter. The community may need to think of how youth can be reached.

Langley:

- One of the sites in Langley is difficult to access and another site may need to be found.
- There is a need for shelters that accept people with pets.

Richmond:

- Volunteers did go out to try to find the homeless but it appears that anyone needing shelter during the extreme weather found shelter outside of Richmond.
- Richmond will need to find a new coordinator, as the former coordinator is no longer working in Richmond.

Vancouver:

- Coordination between the Vancouver sheltering sites and the Aboriginal Extreme Weather Response is important to maximize efficiency of resources.
- The Vancouver response is different from other communities because there are many sites, some City operated or staffed, some operated by shelters and others by volunteer groups. A meeting is planned in the fall of 2005 to foster communication and provide an opportunity for everyone to know each other.

Tri-Cities:

- This past season, a sheltering site could not be opened in the Tri-Cities and transportation was set up by the Salvation Army to take clients to New Westminster. As the season ended a site was found in one of the churches, which already is very involved with the homeless.

North Shore:

- The North Shore shelter opened during the EWR alert as a cold/wet weather site and provided shelter during the extreme weather alert. One-day shelter was provided at the North Shore Neighbourhood House through the initiative of the North Shore Shelter staff.
- The North Shore now has an extreme weather plan that is ready to be implemented during the coming 2005-06 season.

6. Sustainability of local Extreme Weather Responses

Unfortunately two communities without a permanent shelter (Langley and Tri-Cities) were not able to move ahead with plans for a shelter. The completion of the North Shore Shelter with its Cold/Wet Weather beds increased the capacity of beds throughout the year and also provided the North Shore with the opportunity to move ahead and plan for the extreme weather. Richmond also had hoped to see its shelter capacity expand with the building of a new shelter possibly in conjunction with other community services. Unfortunately, plans for a new shelter in Richmond were shelved. In Surrey, Gateway Shelter continues to be restricted to operating only between November and March.

Communities with extreme weather response committees are addressing the issue of sustainability beyond March 2006 when the SCPI funding ends. Communities with responses that are dependent on shelter staff providing most of the staffing looked at how the number of sites opened could be changed to maximize resources. Those who depend on volunteers for providing some of the staffing, food and other resources looked at the need for long-term volunteer coordination and support. Those communities with active housing or homelessness committees have established good communication channels, regularly exchange information and resources, and have needed less support from the Greater Vancouver Extreme Weather Coordinator.

The cost of the extreme weather response can be broken into: coordination, and administration, shelter staff salaries per night of alert, food and other incidentals. Trained workers from shelters staff sites in churches and community centers with support from volunteers. To be sustainable the extreme weather response in each community needs to raise between \$5-10,000 each year to operate at least five nights of extreme weather alert and support the coordination and volunteer involvement. In most communities, local foundations, service clubs and/or municipality may be able to provide the funding. This would require a marketing/public relations campaign possibly as a joint initiative in all communities. The GVRD Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness Committee is engaged in developing materials that would help in explaining the homeless situation to community groups and might be adapted to specifically raise funds for the extreme weather response. The Greater Vancouver Extreme Weather Coordinator is a member of the Communication Committee of the Regional Steering Committee and can provide the linkage.

Another approach may be to have shelters build into their cold/wet weather funding 5 or more nights of extreme weather staffing. This would include shelter staff being provided to the sheltering sites and triage activities. Communities would then need only to seek funds for food and other incidentals and some support for volunteer involvement.

Few municipalities are currently in a position to fund the extreme weather response beyond providing staff support and administration. Some have community grants that may be accessible for the extreme weather response. These grants are given once a year with applications usually in the fall.

7. Recommendations

- a. That discussion on sustainability be held with each community committee early on in the 2005-2006 cold/wet weather season.
- b. That funding for the extreme weather response be discussed with the Province (Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and BC Housing).
- c. That each community be funded for triage activities for each night of the extreme weather alert.
- d. That a volunteer training event be held in each community at the beginning of the cold/wet weather season to train volunteers and share information about the extreme weather plan for that community.
- e. That the local coordinators for each community meet at the beginning and at the end of each season with the Extreme Weather Task Group to debrief and share ideas.
- f. That Surrey explore having two separate responses: one for North Surrey and the other for South Surrey/White Rock.

Appendix A:

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNITY EXTREME WEATHER COORDINATOR

The coordinator or co-coordinators work (s) for a community organization that assumes leadership in the coordination of the extreme weather response and in the communication to the community, media and emergency services as per the extreme weather plan for that community. The coordinator also provides a link to the Greater Vancouver Extreme Weather Response.

Two persons may share the position.

Responsibilities:

1. Monitor weather conditions in accordance with the extreme weather accepted definition for that community.
2. Call the alert by noon on any day that fits in the agreed upon criteria where possible in consultation with the members of the extreme weather committee for that community,
3. Communicate the alert to the distribution list that include all members of the committee, emergency services (fire, police, hospital etc), the local media, the extreme weather coordinator for the Greater Vancouver Area, agencies, faith groups and others who may be in contact with homeless individuals.
4. When possible in consultation with the committee, make decisions as to which site or sites will be opened on a given night.
5. Provide support and information to sheltering sites as required or needed.
6. Link with the Extreme Weather Coordinator for the Greater Vancouver Area and request help or support as needed.
7. Coordinate the invoicing for the Extreme Weather Response and forward the invoices to the organization that holds the contract.
8. Support the training of volunteers as needed and acknowledge volunteers and sites.
9. Chair meetings of the extreme weather committee for that community, and assign minutes taking and other tasks.
10. Help to solicit funds for the extreme weather response and in-kind donations.
11. Make recommendations to improve the next extreme weather response including education, training, services etc.
12. Appoint a back up person to this position in case of absence from the community or illness.

Qualifications:

- current knowledge of the homeless and services
- connected to the sheltering community
- available during the extreme weather

Drafted February 2005

Appendix B:

Definition of Extreme Weather

In existing response plans, extreme weather has been defined as:

- Temperatures at or below - 4 degrees Celsius (-2 with wind chill); OR
- Significant snow accumulation; AND
- Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of homeless persons.

The Cold/Wet Weather Strategy and the Extreme Weather Task Group discussed why extreme weather is defined at -4 degrees Celsius. The Task Group decided to recommend that local Extreme Weather committees change the definition so that it was not the temperature that was emphasized but rather the fact that it is the weather conditions which may be different in each community that are deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of homeless persons and that -4 degrees Celsius is only a guideline.

New recommended definition:

Conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of homeless persons, such as:

- Temperatures at or below - 4 degrees Celsius (-2 with wind chill); OR
- Significant snow accumulation.