

CITY OF SPOKANE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE	DEPT 1540-13-01 LGL 2007-0037
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TITLE EMERGENCY EXPANSION OF COLD WEATHER WARMING CENTERS FOR THE HOMELESS

EFFECTIVE DATE November 21, 2005
REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE: September 23, 2013

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 The Emergency Expansion of Warming Centers for the Homeless plan is intended to create a coordinated and highly efficient community response to the needs of homeless during periods of extremely cold weather.

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2.0 DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS AFFECTED

This policy shall apply to the Community, Housing and Human Services Department.

3.0 REFERENCES

- City of Spokane Resolution 05-127
- City of Spokane Resolution 07-115
- City of Spokane Resolution 07-143
- City of Spokane Resolution 09-025

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 "Cold Weather Watch Period" is the period of time November 1st through the last day of February of each year. The Community, Housing and Human Services Director or his/her designee may activate the Warming Center Program at the director's discretion prior to and/or after the official Cold Weather Watch Period, weather warranting.

- 4.2 "Warming Center" shall mean a building which is not designated for lodging and is operated for the purpose of sheltering the homeless from the elements for brief intervals during any twenty-four (24) hour period.

5.0 POLICY

- 5.1 During the cold weather watch period, the City shall assist the community with activation of the emergency expansion of warming centers to respond to the needs of the homeless during periods of extremely cold weather.

- 5.2 Activation.

- 5.2.1 Warming center(s) will be activated when temperatures are predicted to be twenty degrees Fahrenheit (20° F) or less and designated shelter space was at ninety percent (90%) capacity the previous night. (Predictions of the *National Weather Service's Spokane Forecast Office* disseminated within twenty-four (24) hours of the anticipated inclement weather will be used exclusively).

- 5.2.2 Activation of warming centers will be for a twenty-four (24) hour period. Should extreme weather result in continuous activation for six (6) or more days, warming centers may request supplemental reimbursement to reduce the burden of maintaining ongoing services, and the City may, as funds allow, reimburse warming centers for additional expenses.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Certification to Become Warming Centers.

- 6.1.1 Warming centers will be certified annually.

- 6.1.2 The Warming Center Committee, consisting of representation from the Spokane Homeless Coalition and relevant City advisory boards, shall, on an annual basis, review applications and recommend to the Community, Housing and Human Services Director the centers to be certified.

- 6.1.3 The Community, Housing and Human Services Department shall issue a certification of qualifying as a warming center.

- 6.1.4 A modified certification process will be used for previously certified centers.

6.2 Activation of the Plan for Emergency Expansion of Homeless Warming Centers

6.2.1 When temperatures are expected to dip, facilities will be monitored and when they are at capacity, an emergency expansion will be triggered for the subpopulation served by the facilities

a. Individual Men — Emergency expansion of space for individual men will be triggered when:

- 1) temperatures meet the criteria, and
- 2) the House of Charity shelter beds are at capacity.

b. Individual Women — Emergency expansion of space for individual women will be triggered when:

- 1) temperatures meet the criteria; and
- 2) the Hope House shelter beds are at capacity.

c. Unaccompanied Youth — The Community, Housing and Human Services Director reserves the right to activate, if needed.

d. Families — Emergency expansion of space for families will be triggered when:

- 1) temperatures meet the criteria, and
- 2) the shelter beds managed through the Homeless Families Coordinated Assessment Program are at capacity.

6.3 Spokane Homeless Coalition

6.3.1 The Spokane Homeless Coalition is a voluntary organization, as such, its leadership will be invited to designate a representative to respond to media on general requests for information about homelessness and homeless serving organizations.

6.4 The Community, Housing and Human Services Department shall:

6.4.1 Establish minimum standards for operation and a pre-qualification process for warming centers.

- 6.4.2 Annually, establish a contract with each designated warming center specifying requirements and reimbursement rates.
- 6.4.3 Either internally or by an outside contract, monitor weather predictions and homeless shelter capacity during the Cold Weather Watch Period:
 - a. Check each morning, Monday thru Friday, and weekends as deemed prudent, the weather forecast for the next twenty-four (24) hours to see if temperature is predicted drop to twenty degrees Fahrenheit (20° F) or less.
 - b. When weather is predicted to be twenty degrees Fahrenheit (20° F) or less, check with shelters and/or coordinated assessment program to determine whether their beds were full the previous night.
 - c. If beds for a certain population were at ninety percent (90%) capacity the previous night, i.e. women, then will contact the designated warming center for that population to request that the warming center be open.
 - d. Email daily notices of the list of warming centers to be opened to contact list for warming center notification.
- 6.4.4 Maintain contact lists:
 - a. Maintain a list of the certified warming centers with the names of their contact person and contact number.
 - b. Maintain a contact list for warming center notifications, which will include contacts for the Spokane Homeless Coalition Interagency Outreach Team, social service organizations, police and fire departments, homeless-servicing organizations and media.
 - c. Maintain Spokane Homeless Coalition leadership media contact person, if designated, and refer media to that person.
- 6.4.5 Activate the warming centers when conditions are as specified.
- 6.4.6 Reimburse the designated warming center(s) for expenses for days they open at the request of the City.

9-26-13


7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Community, Housing and Human Services Director or designee shall administer this policy.

8.0 APPENDICES


None

APPROVED BY:



City Attorney (1735T)

9-27-13
Date



Director,
Community, Housing and Human Services

10-3-13
Date



Director,
Community and Neighborhood Services

9-27-13
Date