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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
Date: 11/17/2021 1:21:41 PM  
Subject: [Upcoming IB: Cold winter in forecast - City plans to help Vancouver stay safe and warm \(November 18, 2021\)](#)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

According to AccuWeather's long-range winter forecast, Vancouver can likely expect colder, wetter La Niña conditions for a second year in a row. The City will be issuing the information bulletin below that will outline the City's response plan for cold weather this winter, as well as information on how people sleeping outside will be supported.

Best,  
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

## **City of Vancouver Information Bulletin November 18, 2021**

### **City ready to support residents through this winter's snow and cold**

Vancouver can expect colder, wetter conditions this coming winter. According to AccuWeather's long-range winter forecast, B.C. is entering its second year of La Niña conditions. This likely means more snow on the mountains, and at lower elevations.

Fortunately, the City has a robust strategy to deal with snow and ice and to support those in need of shelter.

At our shelters and warming centres, measures are in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. All sites have safety plans and are meeting physical distancing requirements. City staff are working with BC Housing to identify opportunities to add additional shelter capacity over this winter season.

Our winter weather response plan includes street brining, salting, plowing, enforcement and emergency response. When cold weather is forecast, our crews begin planning for snow and

ice treatments on priority routes.

This season, we have more than 100 vehicles and equipment units, 3,000 tonnes of salt at our yards and hundreds of staff to deploy as required. We request that the public help our workers who are out treating snow and ice on the roads by only undertaking essential trips on snow days.

### **Snow and ice response:**

- We follow a [prioritized plan](#) to first address major roads and bus routes, as well as bridges and main streets adjacent to major hospitals.
- Last season we introduced new procedures to prioritize treatment of pedestrian pathways in advance of adjacent bikeways. Our crew procedures were also updated to train crews on how best to treat sidewalk corner ramps at intersections to maximize accessibility. This season we have also added two walk-behind brine units to treat icy conditions on bridge sidewalks.
- The public also plays an important role in keeping Vancouver's sidewalks and storm drains clear. Following a snow event, all property owners and tenants must clear snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their property or residence the morning after a snowfall, seven days a week, by 10 am on the morning following a snowfall. Failure to remove snow and ice may result in fines.
- Snow and ice on the sidewalk can be a barrier for many people, particularly seniors and people with mobility challenges. The City encourages residents and businesses to lend a hand to those who are unable to shovel their own sidewalks. You can also become an official Snow Angel and help others in need when it snows – [www.vancouver.ca/snowangel](http://www.vancouver.ca/snowangel).

### **Support for people sleeping outside**


To ensure that people sleeping outside can come into warm, safe spaces during Vancouver's coldest months, the City and partners are once again activating a variety of spaces to encourage people to come in from the cold.

In partnership with BC Housing, the City opens the following warm spaces during the winter:

- **Temporary winter response shelters**

Two temporary winter shelters will be open every night this year between November and March providing 30 additional shelter spaces. City staff are also working with BC Housing to identify opportunities to add additional shelter capacity over this winter season.

- **Extreme weather response (EWR) shelters**

There are approximately 89 EWR beds at five sites that are providing additional shelter spaces funded by the provincial government. EWR sites provide mats to sleep on and are opened when Extreme Weather Response alerts are issued by the [Homelessness Services Association of BC \(HSABC\)](#). These are based on criteria including temperature near zero, heavy rainfall and high winds. Alerts are shared with service providers, TransLink, and other partners who can inform people who are experiencing homelessness. [Learn more about the Extreme Weather Response Program](#) 

- **Warming centres**

The City is working towards opening 95 Warming Centre spaces at five sites (45 spaces at two sites are confirmed as of November). The City activates warming centres in extreme cold weather as a life-saving measure when the temperature reaches -5°C or below (or it feels like -5°C or below). While they are not set up with beds or mats, they provide a safe, warm space for people who might be living outside. The centres are open to all and, depending on the site, visitors may bring their pets, bikes and carts with them. Hot drinks and snacks are available. Warming centre alerts are circulated to partner agencies, community centre staff, outreach program staff, and a variety of agencies serving individuals experiencing homelessness. The home page of the City's website shows an alert when warming centres are activated.

These winter spaces are in addition to the 1,350 year-round beds available at our permanent and temporary shelters.

Those looking for shelter space can call 2-1-1 to check availability or find a [full list of shelters online](#).

More information about the City's winter response strategy is available [here](#).

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**Note to editors:**

To keep you up to date on our overall cold weather response we will be providing video content for your use. Here you can [download current interview clips](#) with Amy Sidwell, Manager of Street Operations and Celine Mauboules, Managing Director of Homelessness Services. Future video updates will be shared with the media when there is a snow event.

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