

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>  
**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 2/21/2023 6:23:47 PM  
**Subject:** Cold weather response

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Good evening Mayor and Council,

Staff received a question this morning about upcoming warming centre activations. Please find below an update from ACCS staff in response and attached the most recent notification.

As a reminder, Warming Centres are activated by the City of Vancouver as a life-saving response for people experiencing homelessness during periods of extreme weather. Warming Centres are opened to supplement the existing shelter system which has approximately 1400 shelter beds. In addition to the permanent and temporary shelters that operate year round, the City and Province partner to open additional spaces during the cold and wet winter months. There are four main components to the City's winter response. This includes:

1. Temporary winter response shelters (open nightly November-March 31)
2. Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters
3. Warming Centres, and
4. Extended hours at Social Service Centres & Daytime Winter Drop-in Centre.

### **Extreme Weather Response shelters (108 beds)**

The Province funds the Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program, which is an initiative that supports community-based services to provide additional temporary emergency shelter spaces during periods of extreme winter weather which threaten the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness. The Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC) manages the EWR program in Vancouver and liaises with community service providers and faith-based organizations to secure shelter beds. In Vancouver, EWR is activated at 0 degrees Celsius (or "feels like").

Staff continue to work throughout the season to identify community needs and opportunities, and in conjunction with Lookout Housing and Health Society, the City operationalized a City-owned property at Commercial and Hastings with 20 new EWR beds that opened on Feb 17, 2023.

### **Warming Centres (up to 186 spaces)**

- In conjunction with partners, Warming Centres are activated at -4 degrees Celsius (or "feels like" -4) or below and act as a life-saving response to extreme cold weather that presents a life safety risk to those experiencing homelessness and sleeping outside.
- Warming Centres are opened pending auxiliary staff availability
- Warming Centres are welcoming to all, reduce barriers to access warm space, by allowing visitors may bring their pets, bikes, and carts with them. Hot drinks and snacks will be available.
- Warming Centres provide a place for individuals who may not traditionally access shelter space to go inside when weather outside is extreme
- This is the sixth season the City of Vancouver will open Warming Centres during periods of extreme winter conditions
- Warming Centres are activated, and coordinated by City of Vancouver Warming Centre Coordinator, and activations and alerts are sent out in conjunction with Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC)
- Both Warming Centre and EWR Alerts are shared with service providers, TransLink, partner agencies, Community Centre staff, Homeless Outreach Program staff, and other partners who can alert people who are experiencing homelessness.
- Warming Centres may remain open in-between periods of prolonged extreme weather patterns. In the event of continued activations, or accumulated snow between Activation Parameters.
- While they are not set up with beds or mats, they provide a safe, warm space for people who might be living outside, and people with their own bedding may choose to sleep at the warming centre.
- This season, between 5-10 sites will be open on any given night
- Community Centres and other public buildings may also be available during their opening hours as

- spaces to warm up during extreme weather conditions

If you have any questions, please send to Sandra Singh and she will ensure either a direct response through me or in the weekly Q&A, subject to the timeliness of the question.

As a reminder, please do not email staff questions directly but rather direct to me or the General Manager. This will help to ensure all of Council receives the same information in a timely manner.

Best,  
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Snw̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.