

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

Date: 1/31/2025 10:48:16 AM

Subject: Upcoming information bulletin: City prepares for freezing temperatures and chance of snow (January 31, 2025)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below information bulletin this morning regarding the City's response plans for the coming snow event. Please keep this information bulletin embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account. Below you will find a bit of additional information about the City's planned response and our media strategy.

### Considerations

- The Chinatown Spring Festival Parade will be on Sunday when there is the highest likelihood of steady snowfall. At this time, event organizers are intent on moving ahead with the festival. Engineering is providing extra supports to help the festival safely move forward from a traffic flow standpoint.
- While it is not currently contemplated, should the organizers choose to cancel the event, the City will support them by sharing and amplifying that update through our social media channels.
- The event organizers are watching the weather and are in close contact with the City and other authorities.
- TransLink has requested that the City does not encourage the public to leave cars at home and use transit to avoid overburdening the system, as weather will likely impact service.

### Media strategy

- Callum Baynham, AD, Safety & Operations, will be available to media this afternoon. We will continue to assess media needs and spokesperson availability as the weekend progresses.
- Lisa Parker, Director, Director of Public Space and Street Use, will be available to media this weekend as needed to speak to media from an event perspective to support the parade should there be any weather impacts.
- Social media will go out starting today and through the weekend highlighting City's response plans, snow removal by-law, how residents can stay safe and shelter openings.

### Reactive messages, if asked

- City staff met with parade organizers this week to understand to walk the route and understand their needs.
- Most of the parade route is a part of the City's priority network and will be treated ahead of the festival.
  - Crews will also be hand salting and shoveling transit stops and curb ramps in Chinatown.
- The City will maintain crew access to ensure roads are clear right up until the festival begins and will have some smaller snow removal equipment on hand to use as needed and if feasible given

- crowds and limited space.
- We thank the local BIA for encouraging residents and business owners in the area to keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice.
- When snowfall is forecasted, our crews closely monitor the weather and implement a coordinated plan to treat for snow and ice on all key routes across Vancouver. Our forecasting service is anticipating steady precipitation moving through late Saturday night, Sunday morning and again Sunday night, with a likelihood of precipitation falling just as snow on Sunday.

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,

Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)

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City of Vancouver

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθḵʷəy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**City of Vancouver**  
**Information bulletin**  
**January 31, 2025**

**Note to editors:**

To arrange media interviews today on the City's winter maintenance plan with Calum Baynham, Associate Director of Street Operations, please email [media@vancouver.ca](mailto:media@vancouver.ca).

## City prepares for freezing temperatures and chance of snow

With freezing temperatures and snowfall in the forecast for Vancouver this weekend, the City is ready to help keep residents safe when moving around the city. For those sheltering outside, the City and its partners have activated options for people to come indoors.

### Streets and sidewalks

Our [winter maintenance plan](#) includes street brining, salting and plowing with a priority focus on major roads, bus routes, bridges within City limits, and main streets adjacent to major hospitals. [View the map of snow and ice treatment locations.](#)

Four major pedestrian pathways (Arbutus Greenway, Central Valley Greenway, False Creek Seawall, and Coal Harbour Seawall) and the 16 most-used bike routes are also included in the plan. Crews prioritize treatment of pedestrian pathways before adjacent bikeways. Residential side streets are not included as part of the City's treatment plans, with the exception of priority hills and access routes to hospitals and schools.

During freezing temperatures, Vancouver property owners and occupants are responsible for clearing snow and ice from the full width of sidewalks that surround their property by 10 am each day.

### What residents can do:

Be on alert for winter weather forecasts, and make sure you are prepared:

- Take care when travelling around the city.
  - o Sign up for TransLink's [Transit Alerts](#) or use the [TransLink Trip Planner](#) for the latest updates on transit services.
  - o Look for alternatives to driving during winter weather conditions. If you do drive, allow more time, watch out for pedestrians and be prepared with winter tires.
  - o Open your map app or [use our traffic cameras](#) to check traffic and road conditions before you travel.
- Have snow shovels and de-icing materials available and ready to remove snow and/or ice from sidewalks adjacent to private property by 10 am the morning after a snow fall. Failure to remove snow and ice within a 24-hour period could result in a fine of \$250 to \$750 per offence.
- Help others in need. Snow and ice on the sidewalk can be a barrier for many people, particularly seniors and people with mobility challenges. Consider [becoming a snow angel](#) and help others clear their sidewalks when it snows.
- Be safe, be seen. In darker, wet weather, visibility is limited and changing conditions can make it harder to travel. Dress for the weather, including wearing proper footwear, lights and reflective gear. Be sure to make eye contact with other road users. Review winter safety tips at [vancouver.ca/wintersafety](http://vancouver.ca/wintersafety).
- Avoid over salting. Excess road salt damages vehicles and infrastructure, harms our pets and plants, and degrades waterways. [Learn about sustainable salt use.](#)

- Keep catch basins clear of snow and ice to prevent flooding. If your local catch basin is blocked, break up and remove any built-up ice. If this does not help, report the blockage to 3-1-1 or via Van311. Learn more about [adopting your own catch basin](#).
- Check and restock your emergency supplies, including emergency supplies in your vehicle.
- Remember to check on family, friends and neighbours, especially those who may be more vulnerable during winter.

Those planning to attend the [Chinatown Spring Festival Parade](#) this weekend are encouraged to dress warmly, drive for the conditions and allow extra travel time.

### **Winter Shelters Strategy**

As temperatures begin to dip, the City and its partners are once again activating a variety of additional indoor spaces to ensure that people sleeping outside can come into warm, safe spaces. Those looking to keep warm prior to warming centres and extreme weather response shelters opening can also visit public libraries and public community centres during daytime operating hours.

In partnership with BC Housing, the following indoor spaces form the winter shelters strategy:

- For the 2024-2025 winter season, there are four temporary winter shelters that will be open every night until March 2025, providing an additional 97 nightly winter shelter beds in addition to the total of over 1,400 shelter spaces in Vancouver. The City continues working with BC Housing to identify opportunities to add additional shelter capacity during the cold season.

### **Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters**

There are approximately 174 EWR beds that provide additional shelter spaces. EWR sites are provincially funded and delivered through partnerships with community-based service providers, and faith-based organizations to provide additional temporary emergency shelter spaces during periods of extreme winter weather.

These spaces are activated based on criteria including:

- Temperatures near zero with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for those experiencing homelessness to remain dry
- Sleet or freezing rain or snow accumulation
- Sustained high winds
- Temperatures at or below 0°C, or "feels like" 0°C with wind chill
- Rainfall of at least 50 mm in a 24-hour period

Alerts are shared with service providers, outreach teams, TransLink and other partners who can inform

people who are experiencing homelessness that there are places to come inside and get warm.

The City of Vancouver funds the activation of additional Warming Centres during periods of extreme cold.

### **Warming Centres**

- The City of Vancouver also activates Warming Centres, which operate overnight, as a life-saving measure when the temperature reaches -4 degrees Celsius or below (or it feels like -4°C or below).
- Warming Centres are open to all, and depending on the site, visitors may bring their pets, bikes and carts with them. Hot drinks, snacks and washrooms are available.

### **Where to find more information**

- Information on winter strategies and shelters can be found by visiting the City's [shelter and winter response strategy webpage](#).
- EWR and Warming Centre alerts are also highlighted on Vancouver.ca and across all City of Vancouver social media channels when spaces are activated. To see what sites are currently open, please visit: [vancouver-ewr.pdf](#)
- Warming Centre and EWR alerts are circulated in partnership with the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC) to a variety of agencies serving individuals experiencing homelessness. [HSABC X account](#) (Twitter) also provides up to date information on activations.

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### **Media contact:**

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