

Winter Emergency Response Extreme Weather Protocol 2016-17

Principle: Prevent harm to homeless people during extreme winter weather.

Step 1: Consider positive and negative factors and determine the risk level.

Below you will find examples of the types of positive and negative factors to consider.

Negative Factors	Positive Factors
Intoxication	Level of intoxication
Mental Health Issues	Level of mental health crisis
Mobility Limitations	Availability of transportation
Violence	Availability of appropriate shelter
Extreme Weather (-20 or below with wind-chill)	Sufficient winter gear for the weather
Agency Ban	EPS Involvement

Different combinations of factors produce different risk levels. Ultimately, determining risk level is a judgment call based on experience, history, and relationships with the client. **If in doubt, it is always best to err on the side of assuming a higher risk level to ensure safety for both the client and staff.**

Examples

“Low Risk” level: The client is not visibly intoxicated and has good winter gear. Services are available within a 5 to 10 minute walk.

“Moderate Risk” level: Client may be intoxicated but is competent. Services are available but not close by. Client does not have good winter gear and there is no readily available transportation.

“High Risk” level: Client is intoxicated, incoherent and unable to maintain balance. Client has threatened other clients or staff. Temperatures are extreme and client has a ban from the agency.

Step 2: Decide on the most appropriate response based on risk level.

- **Low Risk Situation**
 - o Consider temporary variance of organization policies. **This is at the agency’s discretion and should only be considered if it does not pose an undue risk to agency staff or clients.**
 - Temporarily lift bars on people.
 - Allow staff/volunteers to stay later, or keep facility open longer.
 - Allow more people to stay in your facility.
 - Allow intoxicated individuals to stay in your facility.
- **Moderate Risk Situation**
 - o Contact other appropriate agencies to coordinate transfer as soon as possible.
 1. Start planning for transfer immediately (do not wait until closing time).
 2. Explain plans to client and disclose that you will be sharing their information
 3. Arrange for appropriate shelter or warming space
 4. Arrange for appropriate transportation
 - o If necessary, contact EPS non-emergency line: 780-423-4567
 - o To access the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team, call 211, option 3
- **High Risk Situation**
 - o If there is the threat of immediate/imminent danger, contact Emergency Services
 1. Dial 911. Explain that this is a “Winter Emergency Response”.
 - 911 can dispatch the Hope Mission Man Down Van, 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team, EMS or EPS as needed.

If in doubt or all else fails, call 911 and ask for immediate help.