

ANNEX I

COLD WEATHER EMERGENCY SHELTERING

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I. PURPOSE

This document outlines measures for the City of North Port and its community partners to coordinate public and private resources when outside temperatures pose an immediate danger to the life and health of unsheltered people, especially families and those living with medical or mental health conditions that render them more vulnerable in inclement weather.

Experiences in other communities demonstrate that it is best for a group of community members and organizations to lead and organize – hosted at a non-governmental facility. The City of North Port is prepared to help in ways it can (e.g., inspections in a timely manner, etc.), but it will take the community to create and implement a cold weather shelter.

While the objective of the Plan is to safeguard the lives of vulnerable homeless families and individuals by providing temporary shelter during inclement weather conditions that pose a threat to those living without adequate shelter, all applicable City and State health and safety codes and regulations remain in effect and must be followed. The Plan allows some exemptions from zoning regulations, but not health and safety codes and regulations.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Freeze Watch is issued when there is a potential for significant, widespread freezing temperatures within the next 24-36 hours.
- B. Freeze Warning is issued when significant, widespread freezing temperatures are expected.
- C. Frost Advisory is issued when the minimum temperature is forecast to be 33° to 36° F on clear and calm nights during the growing season.
- D. Wind Chill Advisory is issued when wind chills of -5° F to -19° F are expected.
- E. Wind Chill Warning is issued when wind chills of -20° F or lower are expected.

III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Situation
 - 1. Although infrequent, Sarasota County does experience freezing and near-freezing weather during wintertime. Since 1956, per the National Weather Service Tampa Bay Office, the area has seen an annual average of 4.7 days with minimum temperature equal to or below 32° F.

2. There exists a population of homeless persons in North Port. Some may be transients, whereas others may be residents of the City who have been displaced from their home. Community members who serve meals responded to this question, indicating that persons who are homeless are spread out over the 104 square miles of the City. There is an established network among persons in the community who are homeless, and they can get out the word quickly.
 3. Sarasota County Emergency Management is responsible for “Risk Shelters,” which include hurricanes. Local government (cities and counties) traditionally do not operate cold weather shelters.
 4. The Salvation Army expands services for the homeless during cold weather emergencies. The shelters in the City of Sarasota and Port Charlotte open earlier and admit non-traditional clients.
 5. Churches in North Port, Englewood, and Venice have operated cold weather shelters but they are subject to change.
 - a. Englewood – St. David’s
 - b. Venice – Center of Hope
 - c. North Port- New Hope
- B. Assumptions
1. Any facility that develops a shelter agreement with Red Cross, including their training, will be covered under their liability.
 2. Red Cross can provide the training and some of the equipment.

IV. METHOD OF OPERATIONS

- A. General
1. When the outside temperature reaches 40° F (freeze watch advisory) or below (by ambient or wind-chill measure) as measured the National Weather Service, churches located within or adjacent to the City of North Port may act as temporary cold weather shelters. The Plan is in effect until the outside temperature reaches 33° F or above.
 - a. Hours of operation are from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.; however, that is at the facility’s discretion.

2. While initiation of The Plan may exempt designated churches from certain zoning regulations:
 - a. Facilities must be surveyed by the Red Cross.
 - b. The facilities must be inspected by North Port Fire Rescue for a change in occupancy type.
 - c. Volunteers and paid staff must be adequately trained (as determined by the Red Cross).
 - d. The plan and protocols for churches shall include provisions limiting use of their facilities as a temporary cold weather shelter for homeless families and individuals who are not under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances not prescribed to the individual.
 - e. The facilities must meet any additional requirements deemed necessary by the City.
3. While official notification from the City is not necessary to initiate the plan, the Emergency Management Coordinator will develop and maintain a contact list for those City Departments and Community Partners affected by initiation of The Plan. This process has been employed so City Departments and Community Partners can coordinate their efforts.

C. Phases of Management

1. Preparation (*prior to weather event*)
 - a. The City will engage the faith-based and community organizations to participate in the providing of temporary shelter services. An orientation will be delivered to participating shelter provider organization on the Severe Weather Shelter Response Plan. The shelter will provide site location, contact information, shelter capacity, hours of intake, shelter amenities, and population to be sheltered (e.g. – singles, families with children). The Service Provider Organization Directory will be updated.
 - b. The Shelter shall contact North Port Emergency Management requesting to be added to the email distribution of the National Weather Service forecast updates. Shelter provider organization will provide an email address to receive the National Weather Service forecast and will monitor the weather for activation.

- c. North Port Emergency Management will add the shelter contact information to the email distribution.
 - d. Prior to use, a facility to be approved:
 - i. Survey – basic information on site and conformity to standards.
2. Response (*during weather event*):
- a. The shelter provider organization will review North Port Emergency Management weather updates received via email, the National Weather Service Forecast Office, and/or weather updates available on local TV/Radio broadcasts. Shelters will determine when their facility will open to provide shelter services to the homeless.
 - b. The shelter provider organization, upon determination to open as a shelter, shall conduct a review of the site checklist with a facility representative.
 - c. The shelter provider organization(s) forwards a copy of their facility information via email (preferred) to the volunteer program coordinator.
 - d. The volunteer program coordinator shall retransmit the information to the Sarasota County Call Center.
 - e. Sarasota County Call Center manager will distribute shelter information to staff and post on the SCGOV.net website.
 - f. Program Coordinator will compile a list of shelter sites with amenities and distribute the information to:
 - i. Sarasota County and North Port non-emergency dispatch for relay to law enforcement and fire/EMS agencies in the County/City.
 - The North Port Police Department should be notified if an inebriated individual requests shelter in a designated temporary cold weather shelter located in a church.
 - ii. Shelter provider organizations.

- iii. Sarasota County and City of North Port Emergency Management.
 - f. Feeding would be provided by the shelter provider organization.
- 3. Deactivation (*following weather event*):
 - a. The shelter provider organization monitors weather updates and determines when to terminate shelter services (list date and time of closure) and forward via email (preferred) to the volunteer program coordinator.
 - b. The volunteer program coordinator shall retransmit the information to the Sarasota County Call Center.
 - c. Sarasota County Call Center Manager will advise Call Center staff that the shelter is closing and remove data from the website.
 - d. The volunteer program coordinator will update list of shelters to reflect deactivation and distributes information to:
 - i. Sarasota County and North Port non-emergency dispatch for relay to law enforcement and fire/EMS agencies in the county.
 - ii. Shelter provider organizations.
 - iii. Sarasota County and City North Port Emergency Management.
 - d. The shelter provider organization, upon determination to close, shall conduct a re-review of the site checklist with a facility representative.

V. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Organization
 - 1. See City's Base Plan.
- B. Assignment of Responsibilities
 - 1. Emergency Management – alerts Red Cross and community as to cold weather warning, or incident requiring an open shelter.

2. North Port Police – As resources are available, can transport individuals to cold weather shelter in North Port and surrounding communities.
2. Red Cross – Red Cross helps establish temporary emergency shelters, which are used for events, such as cold weather and fire evacuation, and “post” shelters which are used to help after an event such as a hurricane. Training of volunteers (become a Red Cross volunteer), shelter survey and agreement.
3. North Port Community Health Action Team (CHAT) -- Maintain schedule of church availability.
4. Facility
 - a. It is up to facility if they store cots
 - b. Work with volunteer coordinator to staff
5. Volunteers
 - a. Identify Volunteer Program Coordinator
 - b. Create Contact List
 - c. Receive Red Cross Training and volunteer status

VI. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

- A. Reports & Records
 1. Shelter providing organizations shall transmit shelter counts to the volunteer program coordinator who should then prepare a report for transmission to City and County Emergency.
 2. Records of facility use (e.g., agreements, inspections, counts, etc.) shall be provided to the volunteer program coordinator by each shelter. Records will be maintained for a minimum of one year.
- B. Post-Incident Review
 1. An after-action report should be prepared by the volunteer program coordinator after each exercise and/or actual response to a cold weather event.

VII. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE**A. Responsibility**

Each agency identified in this Annex will develop Standard Operating Guidelines that address assigned tasks. North Port Emergency Management is responsible for reviewing and updating this annex as necessary.

B. Schedule for Annex Updating

This annex will be maintained in accordance with the following schedule:

1. The annex will be updated with each revision of the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
2. The annex will be reviewed after each exercise and/or actual response to a cold weather event, and modified as necessary.
3. The annex will be reviewed and revised, if needed, after each of the following types of events:
 - a. A major change in applicable Federal or State laws, regulations, or policies,
 - b. The findings of ongoing vulnerability and needs assessments in North Port and Sarasota County.