



Santa Cruz Warming Center Program Plan and Protocols (A work in progress)

This plan establishes The Warming Center Program and the Protocols that guide its operation.

A **warming center** is a short term emergency shelter that operates when temperatures or a combination of precipitation, wind chill, wind and temperature become dangerously inclement. Their paramount purpose is the prevention of death and injury related to exposure to the elements including acute trauma from falling objects such as trees. A more prevalent emergency which warming centers seek to prevent is **hypothermia**, the risk for which is aggravated by factors such as age, alcohol consumption, and homelessness.

In 2013 in Santa Cruz County at least 37 homeless people died outside and many of those were from the effects of hypothermia. It is fair to say that many people would still be alive in Santa Cruz today if a Warming Center Program had been enacted earlier.

In mid-December a meeting was called to discuss the possibilities of establishing such a program in Santa Cruz. This meeting produced a group of citizens (The Warming Group) who continued to meet and plan what is now the Santa Cruz Warming Center Program.

We agree that no one freezes in Santa Cruz.



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❑ Elements of the Warming Center Program

Activation Phases

Phase 1 Seasonal Readiness

Seasonal readiness occurs during the months of November to February in order to prepare for and maintain a state of increased readiness.

1. Create or Refresh Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with key stakeholders such as local governments, police, homeless services etc.
2. Verify best modes of contact for emergency services and media to alert the public about eminent Warming Center activation.
3. Release pre-scripted warming center news blurb to all media outlets to be broadcast when an alert is issued.
4. Review of existing plan and protocols.
5. Identify facilities that can be used for warming centers and contact facility owners.
6. Verify availability of current warming center site locations.
7. Initiate awareness campaign about 2-1-1 emergency hotline.
8. Orientation and training of Volunteers. (Homeless Services Center?)
9. Orientation and training of Activation Management Team.
10. Establish link with Office of Emergency Services OES and National Weather Service NWS for weather alerts.
11. Inventory of bedding materials.
12. Fundraising.
13. Develop and implement a plan that identifies potential site locations that are ADA compliant.
14. Create and maintain warming center website to notify the public of locations and hours of operation of warming center program.
15. Develop any additional public safety materials (in various accessible formats) that include posters, flyers and public media announcements.

Phase 2 Cold/Freeze Alert

Phase 2 is a **Standby/Watch Alert** that is activated when temperatures begin to approach the **Activation/Temperature Trigger Threshold**.

Phase 1 actions continue during this phase in anticipation of activating Phase 3 of this plan.

1. **Standby/Watch Alert** is enacted due to the **Temperature Trigger Threshold** approach.
2. Warming Center Program Management Activation Team, Volunteer Coordinator and Location Managers are notified of alert status.

Phase 3 Activation

Activation by the Activation Management Team following a NWS forecast that reaches or surpasses the Temperature Trigger Threshold.

1. If a Temperature Trigger has been reached the **Warming Center Activation Alert** is activated by the **Activation Management Team**.
2. Warming Center site location(s) are notified. Specific sites are identified for the specific nights of the alert.
3. Volunteer Coordinator is contacted. Volunteer Coordinator contacts the entire list of volunteers ensuring there are enough people to staff site locations. If Volunteer Coordinator is unable to be reached in a specific amount of time, the management team must fulfill the duties of the volunteer coordinator.
4. Once it is clear which locations have been identified, Warming alert is put out to all media, homeless services, local governments, police, sheriff, local aid agencies etc. Ideally there is a county OES emergency system that issues a prime alert to the many parties.
5. United Way's 2-1-1 emergency info hotline is contacted to put out alert including specific locations and times of warming center.
6. Contact Materials Logistics (bedding) team to deliver/prepare floor mats and bedding to the appropriate materials.
7. Add alert info to warming center website.
8. Confirm that site location(s) are open and that location managers are on site.
9. Confirm that bedding materials have arrived at site location(s).
10. Confirm that volunteer coordinator has the appropriate number of volunteers and that they have begun arriving at the site location(s).
11. Confirm that site location(s) are operating well. Offer back-up support and monitor site locations remotely.
12. Confirm following morning clean-up of site location(s).
13. After Temperature Trigger Threshold has been relaxed, confirm that site location(s) are clean.
14. Confirm that materials have been cleaned and have been transported back to storage location.
15. Conduct an analysis of program's use following the Activation Phase.



Activation System

Activation Management

Activation Management includes the Management Team as well as the plans and protocols that guide the system.

Activation Management Team

The Activation Management Team is a group of individuals who are responsible for managing the Warming Center Program.

Responsibilities of the Management Team include:

Phase 1 Operations

Responsible for ensuring that all Phase 1 activities are complete directly or by delegation with supervision.

Phase 2 Operations

Responsible for Phase 2 operations.

Phase 3 Operations

Responsible for Phase 3 operations directly or by delegation, including:

- Monitor the National Weather Service temperature forecasts. Potential OES assistance.
- Issue the Activation Alert once the Temperature Trigger Threshold has been reached. Potential OES assistance.
- Contact the warming center site location(s)
- Contact the United Way 2-1-1 emergency hotline
- Contact all media to issue activation alert
- Contact all aid agencies, local governments, police, sheriff etc. about warming center activation alert.
- Contact volunteer coordinator/volunteers
- Contact Materials/Logistics Manager



Activation Trigger: Temperature Threshold and Activation Algorithm

Activation is a centralized decision based on an Activation Algorithm (which is based on a set of factors) or an Activation Trigger (a drop to a specific temperature). The Warming Group is researching how many “freezing days” there have been in a given year. It is important that the Activation Trigger not be set too high or too low.

The Warming Group is reaching out to the County of Santa Cruz Office of Emergency Services to possibly be responsible for this Activation Trigger.

Activation Triggers (tentative)

Temperature Threshold (tentative):

A forecast of 32 degrees or lower.

Activation Trigger Algorithm (tentative):

40 degrees + rain and high wind

40 degrees following several days of continuous rain

Alert Communications

This is the set of phone numbers and contacts that are made as soon as an Activation Alert has been made and site locations have been confirmed. Alerts are given to the community at large, aid agencies, local governments and police and fire departments to facilitate the greatest amount of awareness that the Warming Center has been activated.

The Warming Group is reaching out to the County of Santa Cruz Office of Emergency Services for help with this.

Alert contacts would include:

Homeless Services Center

Homeless Persons Health Project

All Media including print, TV, Radio, and internet
Local Governments
SCPD, SCFD, City Parks, Sheriff's Dept.,
Hospitals, EMS
2-1-1 Emergency Information Hotline
Warming Center website and facebook page
etc.

2-1-1 Emergency Warming Center Information Hotline

The United Way has graciously agreed to activate this info hotline when a Warming Center Activation has been alerted. Once an Activation has been alerted and site locations have been confirmed then this Information Hotline will be activated with the assistance of United Way.

Warming Center Program Locations.

The Warming Group has reached out (and continues to do so) to numerous locations in the Santa Cruz area including churches, community centers, city and county buildings, meeting halls etc.

To date, these locations have tentatively expressed a willingness to participate in this program:

- The Circle Church (Disciples of Christ) - Santa Cruz
- Calvary Episcopal Church - Santa Cruz
- Peace United (formerly First Congregational)
(tentative)

... The Warming Group continues to reach out to new locations.



Volunteer Coordination

The Warming Center Program is staffed by a group of local residents

who've committed to go through a short training session and are willing to be on a list of on-call volunteers who, when an Activation Alert has been enacted, will be called to staff an overnight shift at a warming center site location. There may be a financial stipend for this.

Volunteer Coordinator

This role is responsible for facilitating volunteer training, contacting the volunteers when the program is Activated, and monitoring (possibly remotely) while the centers are open and staffed. There is also a responsibility that the site location is returned to its pre-use condition.

Types of Volunteers

- The site location may have its own person responsible for the facility.
- A “trained” volunteer who is experienced with the population being served.
- A “support” volunteer who may be new and inexperienced.

Volunteer Training

It is the intention of The Warming Group to work with Homeless Services Center to facilitate the effective use of such a program. We are reaching out to HSC for assistance in Volunteer Training.

Potential Sources of Volunteers

- Santa Cruz Volunteer Center
1740 17th Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
Phone: 831-427-5070
Email: volunteer@scvolunteercenter.org
Christina Thurston
- The faith community.
- Homeless Services Center
- Homeless Garden Project

Materials (bedding, floor mats) Logistics

Ideally, The Warming Center Program will offer floor mats or some type of sleeping pad for comfort as most locations will have uncomfortable concrete, wooden or linoleum flooring. It is an important value of a warming center to be warm and relatively comfortable. Many people who sleep outside may already have bedding but many may not. The Warming Group has reached out to the American Red Cross for help with this.

Logistics include:

- Bedding donation intake
- Fundraising, purchase of floor mats and bedding
- Storage of materials
- Transport of materials to Warming Center
- Transport to storage
- Cleaning of bedding

Code of Conduct

ensure
beneficial.

To ensure the safety of individuals and the facility and to that all laws are being followed, a Code of Conduct is

From Egan Warming Center Eugene, Oregon:

Code of Conduct:

- Keep center clean
- No weapons
- No drugs or alcohol
- No violence
- No smoking inside the center
(follow site location regarding smoking areas)
- Guests are expected to be courteous to other guests and volunteers.

Outreach to community about the program and the 2-1-1 emergency hotline.

To ensure that the most possible people know about the program, outreach to areas where homeless people congregate and to the general public is recommended.

Outreach will include:

- Press Release to all media,
- Homeless Service Center
- Homeless Person's Health Project
- Churches
- Food kitchens
- Parks and downtown areas
- Local governments, police etc.

The following sections are being worked on currently.
Stay tuned.

Memoranda of Understanding

Local Governments and Law Enforcement
Local aid agencies
Emergency Medical Services
Media

Insurance

Financial

Fiscal Agent
Fundraising

- ❑ **State and Local Governmental Emergency Plans for Freezing Nights**
 - California Office of Emergency Services**
 - Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services**
 - City of Santa Cruz Emergency Operations Plan**
 - City of Santa Cruz Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Santa Cruz Warming Center Program

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