



# EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE: COLD WEATHER PLAN

## VERNON BC | WINTER 2024-25

**Developed By:** Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan,  
Turning Points Collaborative Society, Upper Room Mission, Okanagan Regional  
Library – Vernon Branch, and the COOL Team.



Social Planning Council  
for the North Okanagan

# EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE: Cold Weather Plan

Vernon BC | Winter 2024-25

## Definition of Extreme Weather/Cold Weather Event:

If the temperature/windchill drops to -10 degrees (as per Provincial guidelines for additional funding) and/or if there are concerns for health and safety (as per available local resources and capacity).

## Inventory of Resources Regardless of Temperature (November 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025):

### RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE SLEEPING OUTSIDE (NOT IN A SHELTER):

- **Welcoming Places to Hang Out/Get Warm:**

Upper Room Mission (URM):

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Saturday: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Okanagan Regional Library Vernon Branch (ORL):

Monday, Friday, Saturday: 10:00 am - 5:30 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

Sunday: 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Various Service Providers:

Monday to Friday – hours vary but primarily 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (as per the Vernon Survival Guide)

- **Access to Meals** – the Upper Room Mission and various faith and volunteer groups provide access to at least 2 meals per day, 7 days per week:

Emergency Meal Programs:								
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Stat Holiday
Breakfast	URM	URM	URM	URM	URM			
Lunch	Common Threads			Common Threads		Street Lunch	Street Church	Street Church
Early Supper	URM	URM	URM	URM	URM	URM		
Later Dinner							POH	FTS

### Sponsors:

**URM** | Upper Room Mission

**Saturday Street Lunch** | Partnership of Various Faith Groups located at the Anglican Church

**Street Church** | North Okanagan Community Chaplaincy

**FTS (Feed the Streets)** | Faith Group Volunteers

**POH (Packman Opens Hearts)** | Private Citizen Volunteers

**Common Threads** | Alliance Church

- **Access to Showers and Laundry** – Upper Room Mission has a laundry program on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and access to showers on Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. The URM has plans to add two more shower stalls and is in the process of fundraising to expand the service to seven days per week.
- **Access to Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Services (OPS)** – IH Downtown Mental Health and Substance Use services are available Monday to Friday from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The Cammy Lafleur Street Clinic is open Monday to Friday from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Various other service providers and outreach teams hand out harm reduction supplies, as outlined in the Vernon Survival Guide.
- **Cold Weather Supplies (clothing, blankets, tents etc.)** – Cammy LaFleur Street Clinic, Upper Room Mission, First Baptist Church and the Vernon Alliance Church accept community donations. Various service providers and outreach teams distribute cold weather supplies as needed, and as available.

#### **RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE STAYING IN SHELTERS:**

- **Turning Points Collaborative Shelters (24/7):**
  - Main Shelter – 60 pods (self referral)
  - Our Place - 26 beds (internal referral/transfers)
  - Motel Program –26 beds (internal referral/transfers)
  - The Main Shelter and Our Place offer showers, laundry, meals, an OPS and harm reduction supplies, and cold weather supplies, as needed. The Motel Program does not provide meals and does not have an OPS.
- **URM Winter Shelter (7:00 pm – 7:00 am – seven days per week)**
  - Winter Shelter – 15 beds (will expand to 20 beds as winter progresses)
  - The URM Winter Shelter has access to showers, laundry, meals, and cold weather supplies. Although there is no substance use on site, all are welcome. There are limited harm reduction supplies, and the facility does not have an OPS.

<p><b>Extreme Weather Response - Resources to Be Activated at – 10 Degrees:</b> (Temporary measures until temperatures return to normal range.)</p>
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- **Warming Bus - A1 Bus Ltd. and Turning Points Collaborative (TPC):**
  - 10:00 pm – 7:00 am (TPC staff member from 11:00 pm – 7:00 am) – funding to be confirmed
- **Warming Space at the TPC Main Shelter:**
  - People not registered with the Shelter can come inside for a warm drink/soup while waiting for the URM Winter Shelter to open or the Warming Bus to begin operating.
- **Additional Shelter Beds:**
  - TPC Main Shelter (up to 10 beds).
  - URM Winter Shelter (up to 5 beds).
- **Service providers will source and distribute extra cold weather supplies, as needed and as available.**
- **Outreach teams will initiate additional wellness checks on people sleeping outside, as needed.**

## Communications Protocol:

- **Procedure for activating an Extreme Weather Response:**
  - Partner organizations will track weather reports to see if conditions are meeting extreme weather definition (according to specific funding sources) to activate additional services.
- **Communication procedures between providers during an Extreme Weather Response:**
  - Partners will use the COOL Team email distribution list for easy communication with service providers, the Bylaw Department and the RCMP. Social Planning Council will assist with communication between partner agencies, as needed.
- **Plan for outreach to people who are homeless and do not regularly access services:**
  - COOL Team partners/outreach will let people know when additional extreme weather services are activated and deactivated.
- **Procedure for dealing with media inquiries:**
  - Each partner organization will handle media inquiries for their component of the extreme weather plan.

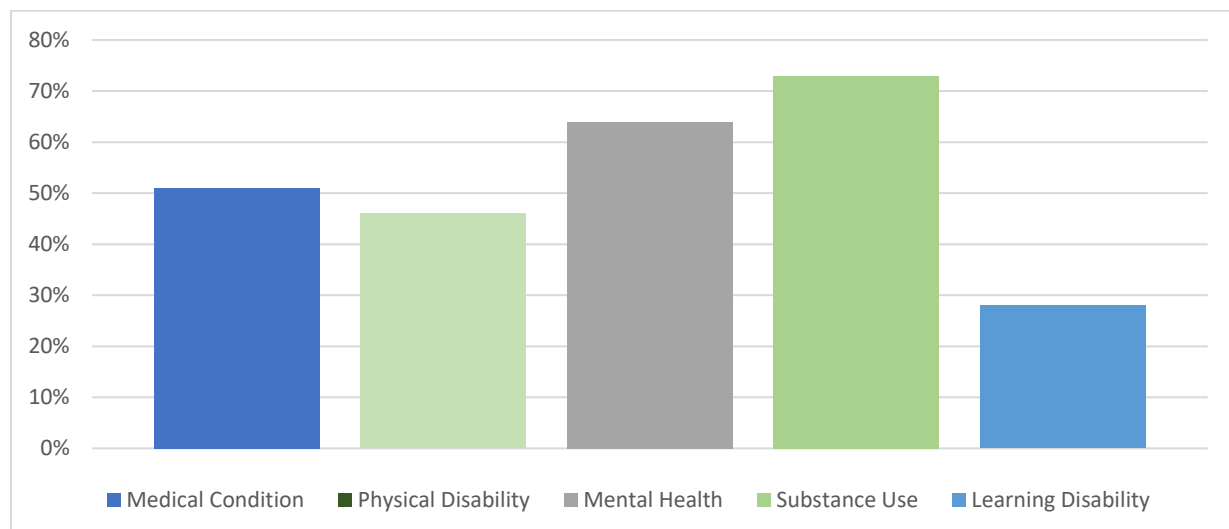
## Anticipated Need/Demand for an Extreme Weather Response:

### REASONS PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS:

According to the *Province of BC's Point-in-Time Count for Vernon BC (May 2023)*, the top three reasons people identified for their housing loss were:

- 27% - Substance Use Issue
- 25% - Not Enough Income
- 25% - Landlord/Tenant Conflict

In addition, people identified the following health concerns:



**Number of Different Individuals Accessing Services (2020 -2023)**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Province of BC: Point in Time Count (Early May)		224		279
TPC Main Shelter (Annual Statistics)	232	501	445	*341
TPC Our Place (Annual Statistics)				* 98

\*In 2023 the TPC Main Shelter went from 86 pods to 60 pods. To ensure access to the same number of shelter beds, the capacity at Our Place was increased to 26 beds. There is overlap between people staying at the Main Shelter and Our Place.

**Number of Shelter Beds (November 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025)**

TPC Main Shelter	60 pods
TPC Our Place	26 beds
TPC Motel Program	26 beds
URM Winter Shelter	20 beds
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132 beds</b>

**Additional Shelter Beds/Warming Bus Seats (temperature/wind chill at -10 degrees)**

TPC Main Shelter	Additional 10 beds
URM Winter Shelter	Additional 5 beds
Warming Bus	25 seats
<b>SUB TOTAL:</b>	<b>40 beds/seats</b>

**TOTAL: 172 beds/seats**

**Access to Warm Spaces for People Sheltering Outside**

**URM and Okanagan Regional Library Hours are Highlighted - November 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Stat Holiday
9am								
10am								
11am								
12pm								
1pm								
2pm								
3pm								
4pm								
5pm								
5:30pm								
6pm								
7pm								
8pm								
9pm								

### **IDENTIFIED GAPS FOR PEOPLE SLEEPING OUTSIDE DURING THE WINTER:**

- Based on historical data and current shelter capacity, there are not enough shelter spaces or affordable housing options to accommodate everyone who is unhoused in Vernon this winter.
- In addition to lack of overnight shelter, people sleeping outside have significant gaps to warm spaces during the morning and evening (particularly from Friday to Sunday) and on Statutory Holidays. People registered with the URM Winter Shelter will also lack access to warm spaces in the early morning and the early evening.
- Currently, shower and laundry services are limited to weekdays, and public washrooms close overnight. Lack of places to store belongings during the day continues to be a challenge.
- People sleeping outside are reporting security concerns in public spaces over night, particularly Polson Park. If Polson Park is not a viable option, this puts more pressure on other public spaces where overnight sheltering is permitted.
- Individuals often do not sleep well outside (due to the cold and safety concerns) and then during the day, they lack warm places where they can rest or nap.

### **ADDRESSING GAPS DURING EXTREME WEATHER EVENT:**

- When temperatures drop significantly, service providers make every effort to source and distribute extra cold weather supplies such as tents, blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothes. Outreach teams perform wellness checks on people sleeping outside, as needed.
- Additional beds at the TPC Main Shelter and the URM Winter Shelter (as well as activating the Warming Bus) allow more people to come inside when temperatures plummet.
- The Turning Points Collaborative Main Shelter also provides a warming space to bridge gaps during an extreme weather event. People not registered with the Shelter can come inside for a warm drink/soup while waiting for the URM Winter Shelter to open or for the Warming Bus to begin operating.

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

- One of the main challenges for service providers and faith groups responding to keep people warm during the winter months, is the lack of consistent and easily accessible funding to expand services to people sleeping outside, as needed.
- Confirmed and ongoing funding from senior levels of government would allow community partners to expand their hours during the winter months, and to plan for additional services during extreme weather events. This could include: increased hours at the Upper Room Mission; shower and laundry services seven days per week; and extended hours at the Okanagan Regional Library during extreme weather events.
- Community donations of cold weather supplies (including clothing, blankets and tents) are an invaluable resource. Annual grants from Interior Health for cold weather supplies have been very helpful to supplement the inventory that is not provided through community donations.

## Additional Resources:

- [Severe Winter Weather and Storm Preparedness Guide | Prepared BC](#)
- [Extreme Cold | Government of Canada](#)
- [Get prepared for winter weather and storms | Prepared BC](#)
- [Your Health This Winter | HealthLinkBC](#)
- [Cold Temperature Exposure | HealthLinkBC](#)
- [Cold Stress | WorkSafeBC](#)

## Community Support/List of Places to Donate Cold Weather Supplies

The following organizations accept community donations and then distribute the supplies to people sleeping outside during the winter.

### Upper Room Mission:

**Location:** 3403 27<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vernon, BC

**Hours:** Monday to Friday from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (drop off at front desk with a staff member - please do not leave outside)

#### **Types of Donations:**

Warm socks, hand and foot warmers, long warm pants (men and women's sizes small to large are most needed), winter jackets, snow pants, boots, blankets (no pillows please), tarps, rain boots, rain jackets, hoodies and sweaters (with a hood is better), scarves/neck warmers, toques, mitts. Please ensure donations are in good condition and clean.

### Cammy LaFleur Street Clinic:

**Location:** 2800 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Vernon BC

**Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:00 am-3:00 pm (call ahead at 250-938-3518 to arrange a drop off time)

#### **Types of Donations:**

All clothing (except kids clothing), bedding and towels, toiletries (even lotions, shampoos etc. that have been opened), makeup, footwear of all kinds, purses and bags or luggage, jackets and outdoor gear, tents and sleeping bags, nonperishable food.

### First Baptist Church/North Okanagan Community Chaplaincy:

**Location:** 1406 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Vernon BC

**Hours:** Monday to Friday, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (please indicate the donations are for the Street Church)

#### **Types of Donations:**

Sleeping bags, tents, warm clothing of all kinds including winter coats, boots, gloves, socks, scarves and toques.

### Vernon Alliance Church/Common Threads:

**Location:** 2601 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Vernon BC

**Hours:** Monday to Thursday, 7:00 am – 4:00 pm (the clothing donation chute is OPEN for donations)

#### **Types of Donations:**

Warm clothing of all kinds. They will also gladly receive toiletries, bedding, towels, and outerwear to distribute to those in need. Please note that they cannot accept housewares, furniture or decor items.