



Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness's Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter Policy

September 27th, 2022

The Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter Policy is intended to provide a safe environment for Chester County residents experiencing homelessness during times of extreme weather events that are threat to human life or well-being. This policy is not intended to supersede any other county policy or department of emergency services policy.

Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter Policy will be implemented in Chester County at any time the forecasted weather poses a threat to human life or well-being. This includes when temperatures are extremely low, high, any additional weather related event, or natural disaster that poses a threat to human life or well-being. Based on these factors, participating Emergency Shelters will check the weather forecast by 9:00 AM daily and determine if the Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter policy is to be implemented to provide warming centers and offer cold weather beds.

Emergency Shelters contracted with the Chester County Department of Community Development have agreed to institute the Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter Policy guidelines when:

1. temperatures are forecast to be 35 degrees or below, including the wind chill factor
2. temperatures with a heat index of 90 degrees or above, including humidity

During extreme weather conditions, Emergency Shelters will make their extreme weather beds available, as applicable. Anyone on an Emergency Shelter List in Chester County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) who is identified as street homeless/living in a place not meant for human habitation will be prioritized for any available emergency shelter beds.

Extreme weather placements are for one night only. If the Emergency Shelter has an open standard bed available after an extreme weather placement, they can transition the individual or family to that bed. If it is determined that the extreme weather will persist, Emergency Shelters are to provide the current individual or family extreme weather placement until the extreme weather subsides.

Third party referrals (Hospitals, Mental Health Facilities, Drug & Alcohol Facilities, etc...) must still go through 2-1-1 in order to be seen by the Street Outreach Team. No third party extreme weather or standard Emergency Shelter referrals will be accepted unless they come from 2-1-1.

Note that an exception to this policy is if an individual or a family shows up at a shelter during extreme weather conditions as described in the first paragraph after standard 2-1-1 or Street Outreach business hours; they should be given an extreme weather bed/unit if one is available and directed to contact 2-1-1 the next business day to get on the Emergency Shelter List.

The Street Outreach Team has the discretion to administer hotel/motel vouchers to those that are sleeping on the street or in a place not meant for human habitation when Emergency Shelter space is unavailable, on a case by case basis. When emergency shelter becomes available, the individual must leave the hotel and accept the shelter referral. Failure to accept emergency shelter will lead to loss of the hotel voucher.