

**City of Sonoma**  
**Emergency Warming Center Activation Guidelines for the**  
**2023 – 2024 Winter Season**

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**PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines and procedures to open an “Extreme Weather Warming Center” in the City of Sonoma for the unsheltered population.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Extreme Cold Weather Event**– For the purposes of these guidelines, an Extreme Cold Weather Event for the City of Sonoma is as follows:

- Three (3) consecutive days with overnight lows below 32 degrees Fahrenheit as forecasted by the [National Weather Service \(“NWS”\) for the City of Sonoma](#); or
- Forecast temperatures to drop below an average nighttime (7 PM to 7 AM) low of 37 degrees for two consecutive days with accompanying forecasted hazardous conditions during the overnight period (7 PM to 7 AM) that include one inch (1”) or more of rain, a Flash Flood Warning or snowfall, as forecasted by the [National Weather Service \(“NWS”\) for the City of Sonoma](#);

**and** at least one of the following:

- NWS issues or is forecasting a cold-related Warning (Freeze, Cold, Frost or Wind Chill);
- Forecast overnight low temperatures are accompanied with daytime temperatures of 40°F or lower;
- Unanticipated or planned power outages are occurring or are forecasted that affect 200 or more customers within the City of Sonoma;
- Department of Health Services issues a Health Emergency related to cold weather and/or a Public Health Order related to cold weather.

**Extreme Weather Warming Center** – An indoor or outdoor location that provides heated space to seek temporary relief from the wet/cold when an Extreme Cold Weather Event occurs.

**POLICY:** The City of Sonoma recognizes that in the event of an Extreme Cold Weather Event unsheltered individuals may need assistance to stay warm. To meet this need, the City of Sonoma may supplement existing Sonoma County’s Winter Shelter operations by operating an Extreme Weather Warming Center at times as necessary.

## PROCEDURES:

1. Determination of Warming Center Opening. The City Manager (or designee) will determine the need to open an Extreme Weather Warming Center during an Extreme Cold Weather Event or any combination of weather events and other extenuating circumstances which present extreme levels of risk to the public, including the unsheltered population. In making the determination to open an Extreme Weather Warming Center, the City Manager (or designee) may consult with the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services (DHS), County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management (DEM), Sonoma Valley Fire District (SVFD) and Sonoma Police Department (SPD), or other agencies, or nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) as needed in the City Manager's discretion.
2. Staffing. The coordination and opening of an Extreme Weather Warming Center will be executed by City staff and contract personnel as assigned and directed by the City Manager. The City Manager will appoint a Warming Center Manager to oversee the establishment and management of the Warming Center operations. Warming Center staffing or work assignments may be necessary on any day and at any time of the day or night, including weekends and holidays.
3. Warming Center Location. The primary location for an Extreme Weather Warming Center is the City's Haven Building located at 151 First Street West, Sonoma. Other locations may be utilized as directed by the City Manager (or designee).
4. Operational hours for an Extreme Weather Warming Center will typically be between 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. but may vary based on weather conditions, space availability and other factors.
5. Public Outreach. The City Manager, the Warming Center Manager and the City's Public Information Officer will coordinate the issuance of public notifications including media releases, social media messaging, publication to City websites/news items and direct communication with community partners and service providers for unhoused individuals.

Information that is disseminated to the public and is vital to the health and safety of the community should be coordinated for translation into alternative language(s), as necessary, by the Communications Officer and made available to the City Council, Sonoma County Emergency Services, Sonoma County Public Health, Homeless Service Providers, and the Shelter Operator (when applicable) prior to the final media release to the public.

Note: In the event immediate translation is needed, and the services are unavailable, it is acceptable to utilize the translation feature on the public facing website ([www.sonomacity.org](http://www.sonomacity.org)) for translation purposes.

Individuals seeking an Extreme Weather Warming Center will be advised:

- a. The Extreme Weather Warming Center is a place to warm up and charge portable personal electronic devices (mobile phones, tablets, portable computers, etc.).
  - b. Cots for sleeping will be provided.
  - c. Light snacks and beverages may be provided.
  - d. Food brought by registrants that is ready to eat and does not require refrigeration is permissible; cooking, meal service and kitchen access is not available.
  - e. The City of Sonoma or its contractor(s) will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
  - f. Individuals utilizing the Warming Center must be previously listed or otherwise added to the “by-name list” system used by Sonoma Valley homeless providers and the City of Sonoma.
  - g. Individuals utilizing the Warming Center must comply with the City’s Warming Center -Standards of Behavior (see last page).
  - h. Well behaved pets may be permitted at the Extreme Weather Warming Center at the sole discretion of the City’s Warming Center Manager. Service animals are allowed. Additional pet restrictions or pet boarding requirements may apply and will be provided to registrants at the time of registration.
6. Pet Crates / Kennel Space. The Warming Center Manager will contact the Sonoma Police Department and Pets Lifeline to determine their availability of crates and/or kennel space, if needed.

(End)



## City of Sonoma

# WARMING CENTER - STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

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For the enjoyment and safety of everyone, the City of Sonoma expects all participants to treat the people and facilities connected with a Warming Center with respect and abide by all rules and direction from Warming Center staff. City staff, or the City's Warming Center operator, reserves the right to refuse services to anyone for failure to abide by these standards.

The following are examples of behavior that fail to meet the expectations of the Standards of Behavior policy:

- Disruptive, disrespectful, inappropriate behavior, acts of violent behavior or any behavior which interferes with the enjoyment or intent of the programs or facilities offered to the residents of Sonoma will not be tolerated.
- Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to:
  - failure to abide by all rules,
  - any form of harassment,
  - offensive language,
  - disobedience,
  - disruptive behavior,
  - physical harm to others or property,
  - the threat of physical harm, or any behavior which may impact the safety of any employee or participant of activities offered, or
  - any demonstration of behavior which interferes with the smooth operation of programs and facilities.
- Smoking is not permitted within City facilities or parks