

Below is a set of key decision points to help communities define what triggers a winter emergency response and how weather alerts are communicated to key stakeholders. The Winter Emergency Response Activation and Communications Plan below provides clear direction about the timeframe within which an alert will be issued, which entity is responsible for making the alert determination, and how and to whom it will be communicated.

Key Decision Points

1. Identify activation thresholds that trigger the winter shelter emergency response.

Community examples include:

- Temperature at 32 degrees or below.
- Temperature forecast is at or below 42 degrees with a 50 percent probability of rain.
- Severe windchill warnings.
- Forecast predicts at least one inch of snow in most areas.
- Forecast predicts several days of persistent rainfall accompanied by flash flooding.
- Season overflow shelters open for a defined period of time during winter months.

2. Determine agency roles and responsibilities for key winter emergency activities.

Activities may include:

- Monitoring inclement weather events.
- Declaring and ending the winter emergency response.
- Notifying partners of winter emergency response activation.

3. Create a list of essential partners to notify.

Key partners may include:

- Homeless service providers, including outreach teams responsible for engaging people living in unsheltered locations and encouraging them to access shelter during inclement weather events.
- Police and fire departments.
- Emergency management agencies.
- Public health departments.

4. Document methods used to communicate the winter shelter emergency response.

When the winter emergency response has been activated, all key stakeholders involved in protecting the health and safety of people experiencing homelessness must be notified. Modes of communication to critical partners include:

- Direct outreach via phone, text, or email.
- Service provider list-serve.
- Updating pertinent websites.
- Social media.
- Local media, press releases.

Winter Emergency Response Activation and Communications Plan

Activation Threshold *[Define what triggers activation of the winter emergency response]*

Alert Schedule *[Define the timeframe within which the winter emergency alert must be communicated to key partners]*

Roles and Responsibilities

Activity <i>[Adapt the following list of activities based on local considerations]</i>	Agency	Contact	Email, Phone
<i>Monitoring inclement weather events</i>			
<i>Declaring/ending winter emergency</i>			
<i>[Other...]</i>			

Communications Plan

Essential Partners <i>[Adapt the following list of partners]</i>	Communication Method	Lead (Name/Email, Phone)
<i>Homeless services providers</i>	<i>[e.g., email distribution list]</i>	
<i>Police and fire departments</i>	<i>[e.g., direct outreach]</i>	
<i>Emergency management</i>	<i>[e.g., direct outreach]</i>	
<i>Public health departments</i>	<i>[e.g., direct outreach]</i>	
<i>General public</i>	<i>[e.g., local radio stations, press releases, social media]</i>	