



**MIAMI DADE COUNTY
HOMELESS TRUST
COLD WEATHER
ACTIVATION,
RESPONSE
AND
RECOVERY**

COLD WEATHER ACTIVATION RESPONSE AND RECOVERY Policies and Procedures

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust that outreach services are provided to on-the-street homeless persons during cold weather events that trigger an emergency response. These services are to include the dissemination of information to homeless persons, the dissemination of information on available bed space, and the transportation of homeless persons to and from cold weather shelters.

II. PURPOSE:

Sets forth the policies and procedures for cold weather outreach, as coordinated by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (MDCHT) and implemented by its contracted outreach and emergency shelter providers.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Cold weather: For outreach purposes, defined as ambient temperatures at or below 50 degrees (sustained), with or without wind chill.

Cold weather outreach: Outreach provided in response to a cold weather emergency, which may supplement typical outreach services and varies depending on the continuity of an individual event, from the distribution of information to the transportation of homeless persons to cold weather shelters.

Cold weather shelter: Additional bed space provided at existing homeless emergency shelter providers through an expansion of daily capacity.

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System used to record encounter data.

Notification forms: Forms distributed to homeless persons with information on how to access cold weather shelter/assistance.

Wind-chill: Wind velocity that impacts cold weather by causing a drop in ambient temperature.

IV. ACTIVATION AND RESPONSE PROCESS

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Office is responsible for monitoring forecasted weather conditions (from the National Weather Service) and notifying the MDCHT if the forecast calls for cold weather at or below 50 degrees with or without wind-chill.

The MDCHT will review information provided by OEM, together with any other available forecast information or variables, and determine whether a full or partial cold weather emergency activation is warranted. The MDCHT's determination will be communicated with the OEM Duty Officer.

A. Continuum of Care Activation and Response

1. Following a decision to activate a cold weather response, the MDCHT will:

- a) Contact homeless emergency shelter providers:
 1. Provide information on cold weather forecast

2. Ascertain expanded cold weather shelter capacity
3. Develop a listing of expanded capacity for distribution to outreach providers
4. Update after hours/emergency contact names and numbers for emergency shelter personnel

b) Contact outreach providers and:

1. Provide information on cold weather forecast.
2. Confirm cold weather activation and outreach response, to include mobilization, homeless identification and engagement, and transportation assistance to persons seeking shelter from the cold.
3. Update after hours outreach providers contact names and phone numbers, and information regarding Homeless Helpline staffing.

c) Prepare and send memorandum with expanded bed capacity information, contact names and numbers, including that of the OEM Duty Officer, and information about the Homeless Helpline and extended hours, to emergency shelter providers, outreach providers, OEM and the 311 Answer Center.

d) Monitor reports from OEM on status of weather. Report any changes to outreach providers as soon as information is available.

e) Compile information in HMIS on cold weather efforts.

Outreach providers will:

a. Day One of cold weather day:

1. Prepare appropriate notification forms and distribute forms to homeless persons during regular outreach hours.
2. Conduct regular outreach; complete HMIS assessments for new clients; add cold weather services in HMIS; transport and place persons requesting assistance during regular outreach hours.
3. Provide after-hours outreach staffing, including Homeless Helpline staffing, based on demand and availability.

b) Day Two of consecutive cold weather day:

1. Advise staff of extended outreach hours
2. Prepare appropriate notification form and distribute forms to homeless persons during regular outreach hours, to include information on extended cold weather conditions, the availability of shelter beds, and transportation to and from cold weather shelters.
3. Complete HMIS Assessments; add cold weather services in HMIS; transport homeless persons requesting cold weather shelter during regular and extended outreach hours as needed

c) Day Three, and any additional consecutive cold weather days:

1. Advise staff of extended outreach hours, as available and necessary

2. Prepare notification form and distribute form to homeless persons during regular outreach hours, to include information on extended cold weather conditions, the availability of shelter beds, and transportation to and from cold weather shelter.
3. Transport homeless persons requesting cold weather shelter during regular or extended outreach hours as needed

Emergency shelter providers will:

- a) Emergency Shelters (ES) will enter a cold weather service in HMIS for persons who walk-in without an outreach encounter, including law enforcement referrals.
- b) Make reasonable accommodations to provide a healthy and safe environment for all clients
- c) Notify MDCHT of available expanded capacity
- d) Seek to retain in emergency shelter or exit to permanent housing clients placed through emergency activation procedures, as space, programming requirements, clients and funding permit.
- e) Use HMIS to record information on additional services provided or entry into vacant shelter beds during the cold weather emergency

D. Department Activation and Response:

1. Pre-emergency requirements:

- a) Assist in the coordination of outreach efforts
- b) Keep cell phones "on" at all times for possible communication
- c) Distribute copies of all advisories to all MDCHT staff, emergency shelter and outreach provider, OEM Duty Office and 311 Answer Center
- d) Confirm emergency contact numbers (home, cell, phone, etc.) for all staff and provide updated list to staff.

2. During the Emergency:

- a) Contact OEM Duty Officer for updates and/or with cold weather advisories.
- b) Confirm that all outreach teams have been alerted and are scheduled for cold weather outreach.
- c) Confirm that emergency providers have been advised of cold weather activation to expand their daily bed capacity for the night, or if needed, extended cold weather days.

3. Post emergency response:

- a) Using HMIS, confirm the number of cold weather placements
- b) Using HMIS, track retention and outplacement, and other System Performance Measures, as needed, for persons served during cold weather activations.