



## SEVERE WEATHER SHELTERS

### Guiding Assumptions:

1. The Health Department Director will determine when severe cold weather conditions pose life-threatening circumstances and severe weather shelter(s) should open. The guidelines below will be used in the decision-making process.
2. The temperature threshold of 28°F forecasted as the overnight low will activate the opening of a severe weather shelter. Precipitation of 2" forecasted or on the ground if freezing temperature (32°) threshold is reached is also an activation factor.
3. Temperature ranges collected at the Bellingham Airport from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will be the only source utilized for determining whether the weather threshold is met.
4. Wind Chill used as a factor for weather threshold is extremely variable due to gusts, nine micro-climates in the county, and challenges with forecasting sustained winds. Wind Chill will be considered and the negotiated contract(s) will define the parameters of when wind conditions may activate shelter opening.
5. Contracted organizations will have final say on whom they serve, within the guidelines of the contract. More vulnerable populations will be prioritized. Capacity constraints of contracted organizations may also limit the number of days a severe weather shelter can be offered.
6. Unique requests (i.e., pets, couples, meals) will be considered, but may not be accommodated due to insufficient contracted organization capacity.
7. Twenty-four hours advance notice, when possible, will be provided to the contracted organization(s) when requesting the opening of a severe weather shelter.
8. Severe Weather shelter(s) will be deactivated when thresholds for forecasted severe weather are no longer met
9. Nothing prohibits organizations from opening their own shelters during severe weather, but public resources will not be offered without a prearranged contract.



## **ADDENDUM for Winter 2022/2023**

### **Additional Guidance for Day-Use Warming Center Activation**

The Whatcom County Health Department activates the Overnight Shelter and the Day-Use Warming Center using pre-established criteria to protect health and safety, including the guidance on Page 1 of this document. In November 2022, the Whatcom County Health Department and the City of Bellingham developed additional guidance to activate the Day-Use Warming Center, to be located in the Lecture Room at the Bellingham Public Library Central Library for the 2022/2023 winter season. The Whatcom County Health Department will use this guidance when making decisions to activate this program.

<b>Temperature</b>	Forecast anticipates <i>high</i> of 28 degrees or lower, based on NOAA forecast for Bellingham International Airport/98226. All other weather guidance remains per Severe Weather Guiding Assumptions 2022.
<b>Duration</b>	Forecast anticipates <i>two days or longer</i> of temperatures meeting guidance above. All other weather guidance remains per Severe Weather Guiding Assumptions 2022.
<b>Closures</b>	The Day-Use Warming Center in the Library Lecture Room will operate independent of Central Library open hours. If the Library is closed, the Day-Use Warming Center should be activated per this document and Severe Weather Guiding Assumptions 2022.
<b>Staffing</b>	Activation of Day-Use Warming Center is contingent on contracted provider capacity to be adequately staffed (paid and volunteer), especially in shoulder months (November and March/April).
<b>Activation</b>	The decision to activate will be made at least 24 hours in advance on weekdays and at least 48-60 hours in advance on weekends and holidays.