

## News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 2023

### **Emergency Warming Centre to open December 22 due to cold weather forecast with updated activation criteria**

**DUNCAN, BC** – With overnight temperatures in the Cowichan region expected to hover around 0 degrees Celsius on Friday night, the decision has been made to activate an emergency warming centre at Heritage Hall in the Cowichan Community Centre.

The emergency warming centre at Heritage Hall is an emergency response operation, and supplements other overnight shelters available to the unhoused population of the Cowichan region. The emergency warming centre will open for a 12-hour period as of 9 p.m. this evening with a capacity for 20 spaces, based on staff ratios determined by the Lookout Housing and Health Society, who have been contracted to manage the centre.

Based on consultation with Lookout Housing and Health Society, Island Health, and other community partners, the criteria for activating the emergency warming centre has been updated to include:

- Temperatures near zero with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for homeless people to remain dry; and/or
- Sleet/freezing rain; and/or
- Snow accumulation of an amount that will not melt within 24 hours, even with higher temperatures; and/or
- Sustained high winds that warrant an Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Special Weather Statement or Weather Warning for Duncan; and/or
- Temperatures at or below **0 Celsius**; and/or
- Forecast of three or more days of consecutive winter rain

When activated, the opening status of the emergency warming centre will be posted to the Emergency Management Cowichan website by 1 p.m. the day of activation.

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*For more information, please contact:*

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