



**Municipality of Anchorage  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons**

## **Introduction:**

This document outlines measures for the Municipality of Anchorage and its Community Partners to coordinate public and private resources when outside temperatures pose an immediate danger to the life and health of unsheltered people, especially families and those living with medical or mental health conditions that render them more vulnerable in inclement weather.

This document provides criteria which will:

- Initiate the Municipality of Anchorage's Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons (The Plan), as authorized by Anchorage Municipal Code Title 16, Chapter 16.120, Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons (AMC 16.120), as Amended
- Outline response & operating protocols for the Anchorage Safety Patrol & Anchorage Safety Center (ASP/ASC) when The Plan is in effect
- Enable Bean's Café (Beans) to temporarily shelter clients of Brother Francis Shelter (BFS) if BFS reaches capacity while The Plan is in effect, and to act as a temporary overnight cold weather shelter for homeless persons
- Enable Anchorage Churches, designated by the Director of the Municipal Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), or their designee, to act as temporary overnight cold weather shelters for families and sober individuals when The Plan is in effect ( when the outside temperature is 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below, by ambient or wind-chill measures)
- Enable social service facilities, designated by the Director of the Municipal Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), or their designee, to act as temporary overnight cold weather shelters for homeless persons while The Plan is in effect ( when the outside temperature is 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below, by ambient or wind-chill measures)

The objective of The Plan is to safeguard the lives of vulnerable homeless individuals by providing temporary shelter during inclement weather conditions that pose a threat to those living without adequate shelter, especially those at higher risk of death due to exposure.

## **Initiating The Plan:**

When the outside temperature in the Municipality of Anchorage reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, by ambient or wind-chill measures, according to the National Weather Service (NWS), Merrill Field Airport station, The Plan is automatically initiated under AMC 16.120, as Amended. If the NWS Merrill Field Airport station is offline, temperature readings from the NWS Lake Hood, Elmendorf, or Ted Stevens International Airport stations may be utilized.

While official notification from the Municipality is not necessary to initiate the plan, the Director of DHHS, or their designee, will develop and maintain a contact list for those Municipal Departments and Community Partners affected by initiation of The Plan, so Municipal Departments and Community Partners are able to coordinate their efforts.

## **Protocols For ASP/ASC, BFS & Beans Café Under The Plan:**

### **ASP/ASC:**

- When the outside temperature reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, by ambient or wind-chill measure, as measured the National Weather Service, ASP/ASC protocols under The Plan are in effect, until the outside temperature reaches 33 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- When the initiating temperature threshold is reached, the on-duty ASC EMT will immediately notify all on-duty ASP personnel that The Plan is in effect.
- The evening BRAC-out will be coordinated via a phone call to BFS to ascertain that there is sufficient space and beds for individuals departing sleep-off. The Safety Center shall not ask or require any person admitted after 8:00 pm to leave before 8:00 am the following day without good cause, regardless of intoxication or incapacitation level. Persons may leave voluntarily if otherwise released by staff.
- The morning BRAC-out will be coordinated with the opening time of Beans Cafe
- If a homeless individual comes to the ASC while The Plan is in effect, who is not a “client” (i.e. is not incapacitated by alcohol), depending on the time of day and options available, ASC staff will attempt to facilitate getting that person to another suitable shelter.
- When the outside temperature reaches 33 degrees Fahrenheit or above, as measured by the National Weather Service, the on-shift EMT will notify all on-duty ASP staff that services will return to normal operations as per Policy and Procedures.

### **BFS & Beans Café:**

- When the outside temperature reaches 45 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, by ambient or wind-chill measure, as measured by the National Weather Service, protocols under The Plan for BFS and Beans are in effect until the outside temperature reaches 46 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- While The Plan is in effect, if BFS reaches capacity, clients can be temporarily moved to Beans.
- While The Plan is in effect, Beans may act as a temporary shelter, regardless of Conditional Use Permit and Title 21 requirements, under AMC 16.120, as Amended
- While initiation of The Plan may exempt Beans from certain zoning regulations, the facility must be certified by the Anchorage Fire Department, and meet other requirements which may be deemed necessary by the Director of DHHS, or their designee, before Beans can accept overflow clients from BFS.
- When the outside temperature reaches 46 degrees Fahrenheit or above, as measured by the National Weather Service, the on-shift supervisors will notify all BFS and Beans staff that services will return to normal operations as per Policy and Procedures. Zoning requirements are once again in effect. The exemptions are only in effect when The Plan is activated, however, no client will be asked to leave before 8 am without cause.

### **Protocols For Anchorage Churches Designated Under The Plan:**

- When the outside temperature reaches 45 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, by ambient or wind-chill measure, as measured the National Weather Service, as outlined in AMC 16.120, as Amended, Anchorage Churches who have been designated by the Director of DHHS, may act as temporary cold weather shelters regardless of Conditional Use Permit and Title 21 requirements, as permitted by AMC 16.120
- While initiation of The Plan may exempt designated Churches from certain zoning regulations:
  1. Facilities must be designated by the Director of DHSS, or their designee.
  2. Designation is at the discretion of the Director of DHHS, or their designee. Nothing in AMC 16.120 requires designation. Satisfaction of the requirements in AMC Title 16, Chapter 16.120 does not guarantee designation.
  3. The facilities must be certified by the Anchorage Fire Department as suitable for a temporary cold weather shelter
  4. Volunteers & paid staff must be adequately trained (as determined by DHHS)
  5. Applicants shall submit a written plan and protocols consistent with the Municipality's Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons, AMC Title 16, Chapter 16.20, DHHS Policy # 2010-001, AFD Fire Prevention Division Policy # 2010-002, and all other applicable codes, laws and ordinances. Said plans and protocols must be approved by DHHS.
  6. The plan and protocols shall include provisions indicating cooperation with other cold weather and emergency shelter providers identified by DHHS, and point of entry protocols.
  7. The plan and protocols for churches shall include provisions limiting use of their facilities as a temporary cold weather shelter for homeless families and individuals who are not under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances not prescribed to the individual. The Anchorage Police Department and/or Community Service Patrol should be notified if an inebriated individual requests shelter in a designated temporary cold weather shelter located in a church
  8. The facilities must meet any additional requirements deemed necessary by the Director of DHSS, or their designee

### **Protocols For Social Service Facilities Designated Under The Plan:**

- When the outside temperature reaches 45 degrees Fahrenheit, or below, by ambient or wind-chill measure, as measured the National Weather Service, as outlined in AMC 16.120, Anchorage social service facilities who have been designated by the Director of DHHS, may act as temporary cold weather shelters regardless of Conditional Use Permit and Title 21 requirements, under AMC Title 16, Chapter 16.120, as Amended
- While initiation of The Plan may exempt designated social service facilities from certain zoning regulations:

1. Facilities must be designated by the Director of DHSS, or their designee.
2. Designation is a discretionary decision of DHSS; nothing in AMC 16.120 requires designation. Satisfaction of the requirements in AMC Title 16, Chapter 16.120 does not guarantee designation.
3. The facilities must be certified by the Anchorage Fire Department as suitable for a temporary cold weather shelter
4. Volunteers & paid staff must be adequately trained (as determined by DHSS)
5. Applicants shall submit a written plan and protocols consistent with the Municipality's Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons, AMC Title 16, Chapter 16.20, DHHS Policy # 2010-001, AFD Fire Prevention Division Policy # 2010-002, and all other applicable codes, laws and ordinances. Said plans and protocols must be approved by DHHS.
6. The facilities must meet any additional requirements deemed necessary by the Director of DHSS, or their designee

Churches and social service facilities designated as temporary cold weather shelters under AMC 16.120, as Amended may not accept/shelter unaccompanied (by a parent or legal adult guardian) youth under the age of 18. The State of Alaska requires that shelters accepting unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 be licensed to do so by the state. If an unaccompanied youth between the ages 13-17 arrives at a designated church or social service facility seeking shelter, staff/volunteers should immediately notify Covenant House Alaska: 907-272-1255. If an unaccompanied youth under the age of 13 arrives at a designated church or social service facility seeking shelter, staff/volunteers should immediately notify the Office of Children's Services: 907-269-4000, or if they are not available, the Anchorage Police Department: 907-786-8900.

When the outside temperature reaches 46 degrees Fahrenheit or above, as measured by the National Weather Service, The Plan is no longer in effect. While normal zoning requirements are once again in effect, no client will be asked to leave before 8 am without cause

**Summary:**

While the objective of The Plan is to safeguard the lives of vulnerable homeless families and individuals by providing temporary shelter during inclement weather conditions that pose a threat to those living without adequate shelter, all applicable Municipal and State health and safety codes and regulations remain in effect and must be adhered to. The Plan allows some exemptions from zoning regulations, but not health and safety codes and regulations.