

Operating an Emergency Warming Shelter



What is a Warming Center?

- **A Community Warming Center**, as defined here in Waldo County, ..
 - An accessible facility that is open to the public
 - Opened during a wintertime extended power outage
 - Support those whose homes are without heat
- Alternately, others may come
 - For a hot meal
 - To learn more about what is going on
 - To socialize and communicate with others

What a Warming Center is not

- Not an overnight Emergency Shelter
- Does not provide medical assistance
- Does not provide mental health assistance
- Does not provide social services or general assistance

The difference between a Warming Center and an Emergency Shelter

- A warming center will be hosted by a municipality and supported by local volunteers
- An emergency shelter will be hosted by the County and supported by the American Red Cross

The difference between a Warming Center and an Emergency Shelter

- A warming center will be open for a few hours a day
- An emergency shelter will open 24 hours a day

The difference between a Warming Center and an Emergency Shelter

- A warming center is a place for the community to gather during the day
- An emergency shelter provides sleeping accommodations for those without an adequate place to sleep

Can they co-exist?

- Yes!
- The Warming Center and Emergency Shelter could share a cafeteria, kitchen, and meeting space.
- However, we would not want Warming Center visitors spending time in the Shelter dormitory.

Who Can Help?

- Municipal Employees
- Faith-based organizations
- Volunteer community organizations
- Local Businesses
- YOU!

Liability

- The municipality hosting the Center assumes liability and costs
- Volunteers activated by Emergency Management are covered for Worker's Comp and General Liability by the State

Training

- Staff Orientation (this presentation)
- First Aid/CPR (recommended)

Warming Center Activation

- The municipal emergency management director (EMD) determines a need exists
 - Will the power be out for several days?
 - Will the temperatures be very cold?
 - Does it appear that residents will use it?

Warming Center Activation

- The municipal EMD will coordinate with the County EMA program.
- The County EMA will coordinate with CMP, the NWS and the State EMA program.
- The City/Town Manager or Board of Selectmen will authorize

Warming Center Activation

- The following will be contacted -
 - The facility owner of the Warming Center
 - The Center volunteers
 - The Public Safety Dispatch Center
 - Local print, online, radio and TV media
 - Suppliers

Warming Center Activities

- The following management activities will occur-
 - Assign a Center Manager
 - Sign in/out volunteers
 - Determine hours of operation
 - Assign staff positions
 - Determine what services will be provided
 - Develop a work plan and schedule

Warming Center Activities

- The following management activities will occur-
 - Determine what supplies and equipment will be needed
 - Ensure backup power is functioning
 - Maintain contact with the host EMD
 - Track expenditures
 - Document major activities and decisions

Warming Center Activities

- The following operational activities will occur-
 - Prepare/stock bathrooms & showers
 - Prepare snacks, refreshments, meals
 - Prepare eating areas
 - Set up entertainment/recreational activities
 - Post outdoor and indoor signage

Warming Center Activities

- Public Outreach-
 - Very difficult during a power outage to get the word out
 - Outdoor signage
 - Social Media
 - Encourage residents to check in on their neighbors and spread the word
 - Advertise it as a Community Event, like a public supper (only free)

Warming Center Activities

- Feeding
 - Determine drink selection (no alcohol!)
 - Determine snack selection
 - Be aware of food allergies
 - Determine if staff, facility and supplies will allow for meals
 - Keep meals easy to prepare

Warming Center Activities

- Entertainment/Recreation
 - Keep simple
 - Avoid religious and political orientation
 - Board/Card Games
 - Books, coloring books, toys
 - Avoid video games
 - Could show movies, but would want separate room

Warming Center Activities

- Information Sharing
 - Set up several bulletin boards
 - Updates on power outage restoration
 - Weather reports/ storm information
 - Local events
 - Where to get government assistance
 - An Assistance Board – residents could post offers for service (snowplowing, free firewood, animal care, etc)

Warming Center Activities

- Information Tracking
 - Sign in/out all volunteers – critical for liability coverage and accountability
 - Sign in/out all visitors – also critical for liability, for tracking logistics and for getting additional resources
 - Expenditures/receipts/donations

Warming Center Activities

- Demobilization
 - Turn in Sign in/out sheets
 - Turn in bills/receipts
 - Clean up the facility
 - Restock Kitchen/bathroom supplies

Warming Center

- Will provide an important emergency service to your community
- Will turn a disaster into something less harmful to the community

“If a disaster happens and no one is impacted – is it really a disaster?”