

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 12, 2023

Emergency Warming Centre to open December 12 due to extreme weather forecast

DUNCAN, BC – With overnight temperatures in the Cowichan region expected to fall below 2 degrees Celsius on Tuesday night, the decision has been made to activate an emergency warming centre at Heritage Hall in the Cowichan Community Centre.

As was decided by Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board of Directors last month, related to Bill 31 of the Disaster and Emergency Management Act of BC, the Cowichan Community Centre (CCC) has been designated as the regional emergency warming centre for the upcoming winter season as an emergency response measure to cold winter temperatures. The Heritage Hall, located on the second floor of the Cowichan Community Centre (CCC) in the Municipality of North Cowichan, will serve as the warming centre space as required until March 31, 2024.

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. Emergency Management Cowichan has secured a 20-foot storage container on site for users of the centre to store excess personal belongings during their use of the centre. In addition to Lookout staff within the centre, Emergency Management Cowichan has contracted additional security both at the entrance to the centre and to roam the property during the full 12 hours of its operation. Additional security measures have been put in place within the CCC to ensure there is no access from Heritage Hall to the rest of the building. The RCMP will also have an increased presence on site while the centre is active.

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. Going forward, the emergency warming centre will only be activated when temperatures fall to 2 degrees Celsius or below, coupled with adverse weather conditions such as high wind, rain, or snow. When required, 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.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Kris Schumacher
Manager, Communications & Engagement
Kris.schumacher@cvrd.bc.ca
250.701.2631