



DCDHS Emergency Weather Motel Program Guidance

Overview

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure timely, safe, and appropriate shelter placement for households seeking referral to the Emergency Motel Shelter Program.

The Emergency Motel Shelter Program provides hotel/motel placements for unsheltered households under two required conditions:

- Congregate shelter placement is unavailable to the household due to capacity, restrictions AND;
- There are current inclement weather conditions or environmental hazards that present a risk to health and safety.
 - Due to Holidays and weekends, forecasted conditions may be taken into consideration.

In partnership with the contracted service provider, the community referral agency is authorized to determine when motel referrals are necessary based on real-time conditions, forecasts, operational capacity and funding, consistent with this guidance.

Decisions should be guided by:

- National or local Weather Service alerts and forecasts
- Local emergency management guidance
- Observed environmental conditions
- Health and safety considerations for vulnerable populations (including infants, elderly caregivers, and individuals with respiratory conditions)
- Availability and suitability of congregate shelter space
- Preserving the integrity of life when it is immediately threatened by dangerous weather conditions



These conditions were approved by the County, are consistent with the contract. The County reserves the right to make changes as needed.

Eligible Weather and Environmental Conditions for Motel Referral

- Extreme Cold Weather
 - Temperatures at or below 25°F (-3.9°C), including wind chill factor
 - Ice or snow events that significantly impede safe travel
- Extreme Heat Conditions
 - Excessive Heat Warnings or Heat Advisories issued by the National or local Weather Service
 - Heat index conditions that present risk of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or dehydration
- Severe Storms and Tornado Risk
 - Tornado Watches or Tornado Warnings
 - Severe Thunderstorm Watches with risks of:
 - High winds (40+ mph)
 - Lightning strikes
 - Large hail
 - Forecasted storm systems that may reasonably escalate into life-threatening conditions
- Flash Flooding and Heavy Precipitation Events
 - Flash Flood Watches or Warnings
- Air Quality and Breathability Conditions
 - Environmental conditions significantly impact air quality or respiratory safety, including:
 - Air Quality Index (AQI) levels in the “Unhealthy” range (151+) or higher
 - Wildfire smoke, industrial pollution events, or hazardous particulate matter



Duration of Stay

The duration of the stay is determined by the referral agency and availability of funding. Stays may be extended to cover the entirety of a weather or environmental event that is expected to last through consecutive days. The referral agency has the right to terminate a stay if a household refuses congregate shelter or does not abide by program rules.

A household may be denied emergency hotel placement or have a current stay terminated if they refuse congregate shelter when offered without just cause.

Additionally, the contracted service partner will routinely make budgeting updates available for necessary planning.

Community Correspondence

- The HAA contract manager will draft correspondence regarding the availability of extreme weather hotel placement to the contracted service partner and the referral agency for agreement.
 - The HSC listerv will then be sent the notification for distribution among the homeless service consortium.