



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

EMERGENCY RESPONSE &
SHELTER OPERATIONS (ERSO) COMMITTEE

HYPOTHERMIA DEBRIEF CHECKLIST & NOTES

PURPOSE

To identify the list of topics that ERSO usually reviews as part of the Hypothermia Debrief activities. Issues flagged from prior meetings are summarized in the table.

DEBRIEF CHECKLIST & NOTES

Topic	Notes
Public Information Campaign	<p>Overall/General Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Leveraging the Shelter Hotline and 311 works well. Partners and the community are primed to leverage these resources. <p>Backup to Shelter Hotline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Shelter hotline outage for 1.5 hours early in the season flags need to establish backup/operational support from 311 (OUC)<ul style="list-style-type: none">To ensure preparedness, ICH recommends establishing backup protocols in partnership with UPO and OUC. <p>Gaps in Communicating Operational Shifts</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in communication around shifts in operations identified. For example, the availability of warming buses was not communicated well. During the initial deployment of warming buses, outreach workers and clients were confused about how long they could remain in location. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure timely communication in operational shifts, ICH recommends developing and adopting templates for standard operational shifts that can easily be tweaked and distributed as updates become available. <p>Language Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shelter system has a growing diversity of clients for whom English is not their first language. DHS is updating its phone systems to include the required six (6) languages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommendation to update the hotline cards to include the six languages (DHS has English and Spanish cards). ○ Recommendation to highlight: <p><i>Interpreters are available through Language Access Line Services, a professional, telephone-based interpretation service that provides interpreter assistance in more than 140 languages, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. UPO has access to Language Line Services through a toll-free number made available by DHS, 1-800-367-9559.</i></p>
Donating	<p>No notes at this time.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Question: were there any issues around donations?</p>
Volunteering	<p>No notes at this time.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Question: were there any issues around volunteering?</p>
Process for Calling Alerts	<p>7-Day Extended Forecast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first time, DHS requested, and NWS agreed to provide DHS a 7-day extended forecast to support planning for cold weather emergencies. • Was particularly helpful in coordinating with OSSE drivers, who can only support during Cold Weather Emergencies when

	school is not in session.
Communication of Alert Status	<p>No notes at this time.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Question: were there any issues around the communication of alert status?</p>
Capacity	<p>Identifying & Mobilizing Overflow Sites for Singles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need 6 – 8 weeks to organize appropriate vendors and activate DPR overflow sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure DPR overflow sites are ready by 11/01, ICH recommends that potential locations are identified and mobilized by 08/30. • The lack of notice and neighborhood involvement in the planning process created frustration and backlash from the community surrounding King Greenleaf. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure community support, ICH recommends community messaging and engagement at least 45-60 days before mobilizing DPR overflow sites. • Overflow locations activated at the start of the season included 2 faith-based sites not identified in the Winter Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that the Winter Plan is comprehensive, ICH recommends identifying and vetting the availability of faith-based options as part of hypothermia planning. • Test runs helped ensure a successful start to the overflow operations. To ensure successful operations, support planning, and budgeting for test runs across all overflow locations. <p>Efforts to Manage Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the season, DHS managed capacity in partnership with mission-driven/faith-based organizations (Church of the Epiphany and Salvation Army). • During the season, DHS managed capacity, by increasing occupancy at all low-barrier locations, (Adams Place, New York Ave.

	<p>Harriet Tubman, Blair, and Pat Handy Legacy.)</p> <p>Potential Impact of Increasing Densities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: Allowed DHS to avoid using King Green Leaf as an overflow site. • Con: Increase in density at Adams and NYA men’s shelters likely impacted occupancy. Census data showed an immediate dip in utilization, likely indicating that individuals felt overcrowded. This is particularly noted in the Adams Place Men’s Shelter.
Census Reports	<p>Data Quality Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect between actual and reported census flagged by turn-aways on nights with vacancies. • Likely related to lack of consistency in bed reservation policies and application of policies when counting available beds.
Conditions	<p>Potential Blind Spot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHS, DPR, and ICH held weekly meetings during the season to remain current on repairs, maintenance issues, and system outages as reported by DPR and DHS. • However, the ICH Shelter Conditions WG was on hiatus, and shelter conditions issues were not flagged during hypothermia check-ins at ERSO Committee meetings.
Locations	<p>Requests for geographic diversity in locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for a location in the downtown area for women or gender-neutral. • Request to deploy warming buses in proximity to main or large encampment areas. <p>Potential Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the Salvation Army and Church of the Epiphany good overflow locations? • As we build partnerships with mission-driven/faith-based organizations, do we need to consider looking at wards, 4, 3, and 1?
Operations	<p>Potential Blind Spot</p>

	<p>ICH Shelter Conditions WG was on hiatus, and shelter conditions issues were not flagged during hypothermia check-ins at ERSO Committee meetings.</p> <p>Two of the notes above likely apply to shelter operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed Reservation Policy: disconnect between shelter capacity reports and turnaways likely related to bed reservation policies and impact on the count. • Language access: demand for bilingual staff, available in-person, covering each shift. Primarily focus on Spanish-speaking staff to assist with increasing Spanish-speaking clients entering the shelter system.
<p>Security</p>	<p>Potential Blind Spot</p> <p>ICH Shelter Conditions WG was on hiatus, and shelter conditions issues were not flagged during hypothermia check-ins at ERSO Committee meetings.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we have enough security at all District-owned overflow locations? • Was there enough security at the mission organizations? • Are we doing transfers if someone is removed/terminated? What is the process?
<p>Food</p>	<p>Complaints Noted in Low Barrier Shelters During NYA Design Engagements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During outreach engagements, shelter residents indicated the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meals: portion sizes were too small, and options were not satisfying and ○ Beverages: insufficient drinking water; lack of hot water/coffee in the morning hours (particularly at 801 East because there is an industrial kitchen) <p>Potential Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the food at hypo-overflow DPR locations?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did food remain warm at these locations? • How is the storage of food?
Outreach	<p>Potential Blind Spot</p> <p>ICH Outreach WG was on hiatus, and outreach-related issues were not flagged during hypothermia check-ins at ERSO Committee meetings.</p>
<u>Other Services</u>	
Mental Health Services	<p>Significant challenges with clients in crisis reported across the system, including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-lethal overdoses are increasing at shelters and encampments. • Many clients are intoxicated or in crisis and need support as they sober/stabilize. • CRT is not dedicated to homeless services and may not be able to support due to demand for services
Detox and Recovery Supports & Services	
Health Services	Complaint received that Unity vans are not electrified and unable to provide adequate support to unsheltered residents.
Supplies	<p>No notes at this time.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Question: were there any issues around supplies?</p>
Transportation (Scheduled and On-Demand)	<p>This topic was discussed throughout the season at various committees and workgroups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve UPO on-demand pick-up response time. • It was noted in multiple ERSO meetings that clients waited for hours before a driver was available to pick them up, and in numerous instances, clients were not serviced at all, when an on-demand call was made. • Consider supplying cell phones for each location- to alleviate staff using personal cell phones, thus allowing UPO to have a
Transportation (Scheduled and	

On-Demand)	<p>central to call for the hourly count for each location.</p> <p>Family Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA-F has two drivers to assist in transporting families (AM driver & PM driver)-Working Well • A suggestion to add the OMS Welcome Centers to the individual pick-up schedule (their hours of operation are the same as VWFRC).
Training	<p>No notes at this time.</p> <p>Potential Discussion Question: were there any issues around training?</p>
Consumer Complaints	<p>Complaints received by ICH have been noted in the relevant sections throughout.</p>
Client deaths	<p>OCME Data</p> <p>During the time period of November 1, 2022, thru March 1, 2023, we had two deaths, in which the primary cause of death was due to hypothermia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week of November 13-November 19 • Week of November 27-December 3 <p>Key Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it significant that the deaths took place early in the season? Are clients more vulnerable earlier? • Do we need to intensify outreach engagements during the initial transition into hypothermia season or when we are expecting significant swings in temperature?
Other Items	

Support tracking outstanding items	
Support updating Winter Plan	
Support on consumer engagement events	