

TOWN OF ANNAPOLIS ROYAL POLICY

TITLE: Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter Policy	
POLICY NO.: #2024-04	SUPERSEDES:
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 20, 2024	APPROVED BY COUNCIL MOTION NO.:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance and information to staff and volunteers with regard to the establishment and control of Comfort Centres and Emergency Shelters.

During an emergency there may be the need for citizens to find respite from adverse weather conditions or in severe cases temporary shelter. It is the direction of this policy to ensure that there are facilities throughout the Town of Annapolis Royal that are equipped for this purpose. For example, as a result of extreme weather events members of the public may find themselves without power, sometimes for extended periods, or otherwise affected by climate. While these events do not warrant the activation of a Reception Centre or Emergency Shelter, there may be a need to open a Comfort Centre whereby services provided may include shelter from the weather, nourishment, companionship, or information. Major disaster situations, such as widespread floods, fires or large evacuation may require the opening of a Reception Centre or Shelter to provide a level of service above that offered at a Comfort Centre

2. Scope

This Policy is applicable to the Annapolis Hub facility that is recognized or considering to be recognized as a Comfort Centre/Emergency Shelter. The Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC) will maintain and update the database of Comfort Centres/Emergency Shelters in Annapolis County.

3. Definitions

“Annapolis REMO” means the municipal emergency management organization for the participating municipal units of Municipality of the County of Annapolis, Town of Annapolis Royal and Town of Middleton, created pursuant to s. 60 of the Municipal Government Act (Nova Scotia) and a Municipal Services Agreement dated April 13, 2022.

“Comfort Centre” means a building owned and operated by the Town of Annapolis Royal with the appropriate infrastructure to provide local residents a short stay during a power outage to provide warmth, a warm drink, light refreshments, access to washrooms, ability to recharge small electronic devices, receive information respecting the emergency and similar services.

These facilities are not overnight facilities with operation typically between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm subject to the availability of volunteers.

“**Emergency**” means a present or imminent event in respect of which Annapolis REMO believes prompt coordination of action or regulation of persons or property must be undertaken to protect property or the health, safety or welfare of the people of Annapolis County.

“**Emergency Shelter**” means a facility capable of providing the needs for emergency accommodation, food, clothing, personal needs, reunification as well as a registration and information dissemination area. An Emergency Shelter is operated by the Canadian Red Cross (“CRC”), under the direction Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

“**Reception Centre**” (also evacuation centre) is designed to receive evacuees who have been forced from their homes as the result of an emergency or disaster. Evacuees are registered by the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) and overnight accommodations and other supports are arranged through Provincial Emergency Social Services and the CRC.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 During differing types and phases of an emergency incident in the Town of Annapolis Royal there may be both Comfort Centres and Emergency Shelters.
- 4.2 The Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre may be opened by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate on its own OR may be activated at the request of Annapolis REMO. Community members take the lead on organizing and operating the Comfort Centre - neighbors helping neighbors. It is intended to provide a location where community members can gather for a period of time during the day time hours. A Comfort Centre is not opened with the intention of providing meals or as an overnight shelter.
- 4.3 The Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre is intended to provide:
 - a place to get warm;
 - electronic device charging capabilities;
 - washroom facilities;
 - check on each other, and share information; and
 - updates on weather and power resumption
- 4.4 The Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre is not an overnight emergency shelters. If, during the daytime operations, the Comfort Centre volunteers identify a requirement for overnight emergency shelter, request shall be made to Annapolis REMO, at which time arrangements will be made to provide overnight emergency shelter if requirements are met.
- 4.5 The Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre should not open before or during a storm, especially if agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or the local transportation authority is requesting residents stay off the roads.
- 4.6 Following the international standard for emergency preparedness, it is recommended residents prepare personal preparedness kits for their family and pets and be prepared for up to 72 hours. It is further recommended that the Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre opens after 72 hours have passed. In extenuating circumstances, there may be a need to open a Comfort Centre prior to 72 hours.
- 4.7 During a pandemic, the facility will adhere to all public health guidance to prevent

the spread of communicable diseases.

4.8 The Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre facility will be opened by the Director of Municipal Operations and Development (DMOD) from direction by the CAO or designate and will be staffed with volunteers from within the community as prearranged by the Town of Annapolis Royal.

4.9 The CAO/ DMOD will evaluate if it will be safe for residents to get to the Comfort Centre and should only open if there is a defined community need for the services and resources the Comfort Centre can provide.

4.10 Once a decision has been made to activate or deactivate a Comfort Centre, the Annapolis Hub Comfort Centre the CAO or designate shall contact the Annapolis REMO Regional Emergency Management Coordinator. REMO will provide information to Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (NSEMO) and will advise the public on the County's website, social media and to media sources.

4.11 If Annapolis REMO requests that a community group activate its Comfort Centre, reimbursement will be provided to the Town of Annapolis Royal by Annapolis REMO for reasonable expenses incurred during the period that the Comfort Centre is activated. These would include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- food, beverage and related supplies;
- generator fuel; and
- hygienic / cleaning supplies

4.12 When Annapolis REMO activates a Comfort Centre, the decision to open or close a Comfort Centre will be made by Annapolis REMO and will be provided to Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office and will advise the public on the County's website, social media and to media sources.

5.1 Emergency Shelters “Shelters”

5.1.1 In large-scale emergencies where there is a need to evacuate a community, a decision to open, and location for, an Emergency Shelter and/or Reception Centre is made by Annapolis REMO in consultation with emergency service partners and first responders. Typically, these centres/shelters are activated when an emergency event exceeds the 10 / 25 rule (10 houses, apartment units or 25 people affected). Emergency Shelters are used as a last resort in an evacuation situation. Initially, residents are encouraged to seek shelter with friends, family, hotels or other alternate accommodations.

5.1.2 Once the decision to open is made the Nova Scotia Dept. of Community Services and CRC will be contacted by the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator or designate, to initiate their response protocols.

5.1.3 The setup and operation of the Reception Centre/Emergency Shelter will be the responsibility of the CRC. Facility space for the Emergency Shelter is designated and activated by the Annapolis REMO.

5.1.4 A Shelter may be set up to provide any combination of the following services:

- emergency food;
- emergency lodging;
- emergency clothing;
- personal services;
- family reunification; and

- reception / registration & information.

5.1 Shelters shall follow all provincial public health guidelines, and the CRC trains volunteers that support emergency shelters.

5.1 The decision to de-activate a Reception Centre/Emergency Shelter will be made by Annapolis REMO in consultation with the Red Cross and other emergency service partners and first responders.

5.2 Emergency Shelter Inventory Guidelines

5.2.1 The Annapolis REMO shall identify and maintain an Emergency Shelter inventory of potential facilities for use in an evacuation.

5.2.2 Annapolis REMO staff will identify facilities which meet the guidelines for a Shelter (as per Section 5.2.4 below) and develop signed Facility Use Agreements with the facilities.

5.2.3 Facilities shall have access to working services such as electricity, telecommunications, potable water and sewage in order to be considered for inclusion in the Shelter inventory.

5.2.4 As well, the following guidelines must be met for Annapolis REMO, CRC and Dept. of Community Services to recognize a facility as a Shelter in an emergency:

- be structurally sound and have sufficient fire safety alarms / systems and emergency exits in accordance with building codes;
- backup power supply which is maintained and tested regularly;
- adequate power backup system capacity to provide lighting, heat, and AC if in the summertime;
- full kitchen for preparing and storing food (fridges, freezers, stoves, etc.);
- washroom facilities with multiple toilets, sinks and showers;
- sufficient space to provide multiple sleeping space to position cots;
- sufficient space for reception and registration;
- if on a private well system, must meet facility requirements for well testing with Dept. of Environment and Dept. of Public Health (records kept);
- if the facility has a septic system, it must be serviced regularly (records kept);
- staff (liaison, cleaning staff and security) available to assist in operating the facility for an extended period (more than 24 hours);
- advanced first aid equipment and supplies;
- availability in shoulder seasons for hurricanes and winter storms by having supplies on hand (fuel for generator, important information, etc.);
- building and grounds accessible for all persons (wheelchair ramp, elevator if it has multiple floors);
- snow removal plan in place to ensure access to the comfort centre.
- sufficient parking readily available.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that this policy was duly passed by a majority vote of the whole Council at a duly called Council meeting held on the 20 day of March 2024.

GIVEN under the hand of the CAO and under the seal of the Town of Annapolis Royal the 21 day of March 2024.



Sandi Millett-Campbell
Chief Administrative Officer

