

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Executive Office of the Mayor

Office of Communications



PRESS RELEASE

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Mayor Gray Announces Additional Measures to Help Homeless During Extreme Hypothermia Emergency

Services Are Available to Those Who Need a Warm Place to Stay During Dangerous Weather

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – In response to a severe cold weather emergency, Mayor Vincent C. Gray has marshaled all necessary government services to ensure the safety of the District’s homeless population in need of emergency shelter.

The District is operating several overflow shelters and emergency warming centers that will be kept open overnight for any homeless residents needing accommodations. The overflow shelter sites are as follows: Banneker Recreation Center, Kennedy Recreation Center and Columbia Heights Recreation Center. An individual may contact the District’s Hypothermia Shelter Hotline (1-800-535-7252) for a shelter or warming center with available space.

In addition, Metrobuses that have been specially designated as warming buses will be located in various locations. The locations include: 935 Pennsylvania Ave NW (in front of the FBI Building); Union Station; McPherson Square (15th and K Streets NW); the West End Library (1101 24th Street NW); and the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Milwaukee Place SE. Each location will include a portable restroom.

Mental-health advisors will also accompany District mobile homeless services staff tonight to make referrals to local shelters or medical facilities.

“Our hypothermia response teams were on the street last night and will be out again this evening to make sure that no one is left out in the cold,” said Mayor Gray. ***“I accompanied one of the mobile units last night, and we helped over 30 individuals find shelter or medical attention. I applaud our outreach teams and first responders and continue to remind residents to be on the lookout for any vulnerable neighbors.”***

To report immediate need for shelter, an individual should contact the Hypothermia Shelter Hotline at 1-800-535-7252 or 311. In the interest of time, the public is encouraged to use e-mail (uposh@upo.org) and Twitter (@dchypothermia) to request support for persons who are homeless and include the time when the reporter saw the person, the location of the sighting, and a description of the person's appearance (such as clothing).

Residents and visitors are encouraged to stay indoors or find a public facility available for warming. D.C. Public Library (DCPL) branches, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities, and the Office on Aging's (DCOA) Senior Wellness Centers are all places where the District government encourages residents in need to stay warm; they are open to the public during normal business hours.

- For a list of DCPL locations and operating hours, [follow this link](#).
- For a list of DPR recreation centers and hours, [follow this link](#).
- For a list of DCOA Senior Wellness Centers, [follow this link](#).

The District government, through the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA), declares a hypothermia alert when the temperature reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below, including the wind chill. Extreme cold can cause significant impacts to individuals residing in facilities without adequate heat and for those living on the streets. Pets should also be brought indoors during hypothermia alerts. To report cruelty, neglect and animal emergencies 24 hours a day, call the Washington Humane Society at 202.723.5730.

If major power outages occur throughout the city, HSEMA may activate a DPR site as an emergency warming shelter for that neighborhood or area. Emergency warming shelters are overnight shelters open for the number of people affected by the cold emergency with sleeping cots, food, snacks and additional assistance provided as needed.

For more information on ways to prepare for, and respond to, extreme cold, [visit HSEMA's website here](#).

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