



9

BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES

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9.1 PERSONAL NEEDS

9.1.1 Bedding

- (a) Upon admission, shelter providers will offer each client clean bedding consisting of a minimum of two (2) sheets, one (1) blanket, one (1) pillow, one (1) pillow case and one (1) towel that is at least 0.45 m. x 0.75 m. (18 in. x 30 in.) in size. Additional bedding will be provided if necessary. Clients who use cribs must be provided with clean crib sheets.
- (b) Shelter providers will establish a schedule for regular laundering and changing of bedding, crib sheets and towels that accounts for regular use, soiling and contamination.
- (c) Shelter providers will provide laundering facilities onsite or have a contract in place with a laundering service for bedding and linens.
- (d) If laundry facilities are available onsite, clients may launder their own clothes, bedding and towels as long as instructions about the safe use of the laundry facilities are provided.
- (e) If clients are not able or willing to launder their bedding and towels then shelter providers will launder the bedding and towels on a client's behalf.
- (f) Shelter providers will offer laundry soap or may require clients with an income to purchase these supplies.

9.1.2 Toiletries and Hygiene

- (a) Shelter providers will assist clients to obtain items needed to maintain basic hygiene and grooming. At a minimum, emergency shelter providers will offer each client soap, shampoo, a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving products (e.g., razors), hygiene pads/tampons and incontinence products as appropriate upon admission or no later than twelve (12) hours after admission.
- (b) Shelter providers will provide toiletries and hygiene products that are low fragrance or fragrance-free and hypoallergenic, where possible.
- (c) Emergency shelter providers will continue to provide toiletries and hygiene supplies based on the client's need for the duration of the client's shelter stay.

- (d) Shelter providers may discontinue providing toiletry and hygiene products if a client's service plan requires it or if a client has an income and is able to purchase them.
- (e) Transgender clients may have a need for toiletries and hygiene supplies that is greater than other clients. Shelter providers will work with transgender clients to provide additional supplies.

9.1.3 Clothing and Sundry Items

- (a) Based on a client's need, shelter providers will help clients obtain basic clothing and footwear appropriate for the season.
- (b) Clients may be offered public transit fare with the amount and frequency determined by their service plan.
- (c) Clients with an income may be required to contribute toward the cost of their transportation needs.
- (d) Where there is no service plan, clients may be offered public transit fare based on their immediate needs and the shelter's policies.

9.2 FOOD, DIET AND NUTRITION

- (a) In order to promote a healthy diet among clients, shelter providers will
 - (i) Offer clients safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs
 - (ii) Refer clients, particularly pregnant, breast feeding and elderly clients, to food and nutrition supports (e.g., prenatal program, community kitchen, etc.) to supplement their diet, if necessary
 - (iii) Ensure meals and snacks are of a size, quality, variety and nutritional value to meet the recommended guidelines of Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources)
 - (iv) Avoid serving food with poor nutritional value (e.g., foods high in processed sugar, fat and salt)
 - (v) Not use or withhold food to influence behaviour (either as reward or punishment)
 - (vi) Consult with a registered dietitian, on an annual basis or more frequently as needed, for support in menu planning, training and other food services, and other food security and nutrition-related supports
 - (vii) Post in a conspicuous place in or near the dining area of each shelter a copy of section 9.2 Food, Diet and Nutrition, a current copy of Canada's Food Guide, a daily menu that will list potential allergens (e.g., peanuts, nuts, eggs)

and shellfish) in the listed menu items (where possible) and a notice stating whether the shelter can or cannot guarantee allergen-free food.

- (b) Shelter providers must offer meals to clients in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2.1 Meal Program.
- (c) Shelter providers that are not able to offer meals onsite as part of a meal program will
 - (i) Seek the approval of SSHA and provide clients with a food allowance to purchase food and ensure adequate facilities are available and accessible for clients to safely store and prepare their own meals
 - (ii) Have a board-approved policy and management procedures for calculating food allowance amounts, eligibility criteria, an issuance process and reporting requirements
 - (iii) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

9.2.1 Meal Program

- (a) Shelter providers that do not provide meals as part of their shelter service are exempt from all requirements of section 9.2.1 Meal Program.
- (b) Shelter providers will plan meal menus at least one (1) week in advance.
- (c) Adult and youth clients will be offered three (3) meals and a minimum of one (1) healthy snack per day. Children must be served three (3) meals and two (2) to three (3) healthy snacks per day.
- (d) Shelter providers must be able to provide food to a client outside of regularly scheduled meal times.
- (e) Shelter providers will ensure that clients can provide input and feedback in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 6.1 Client Input, and to incorporate this feedback into menu planning whenever possible.

9.2.2 Dietary Restrictions and Accommodation

- (a) Clients with food allergies, food intolerances, religious dietary restrictions, or medically prescribed diets will be accommodated where possible.
- (b) If it is not possible to accommodate these dietary needs, shelter providers will work with clients to develop a dietary plan that meets the client's needs including, but not limited to, applying for special diet allowances or referring clients to nutrition support programs.

- (c) A client who has been medically diagnosed as undernourished or underweight will be offered additional food servings and/or a high-protein or high-calorie dietary supplement over and above regular meals.
- (d) Shelter providers serving pregnant or breastfeeding clients will
 - (i) Have a board-approved policy on handling and storing expressed breast milk and must provide adequate storage facilities (i.e., refrigerator) for the expressed milk
 - (ii) Not store expressed breast milk in the same refrigerator as client medications
 - (iii) Offer the client additional food at meal times and healthy snacks at all times in between, meal-time flexibility, menu alternatives and/or safe storage for purchased foods to help meet their dietary needs
 - (iv) Refer clients, particularly pregnant, breast feeding and elderly clients, to food and nutrition supports (e.g., prenatal program, community kitchen, etc.) to supplement their diet, if necessary
- (e) Shelter providers will ensure that baby formula and the proper preparation equipment and safe storage space is provided for clients with newborns or infants who are not breastfeeding.
- (f) Shelter providers that serve clients with infants must make infant appropriate foods available (e.g., iron fortified cereals and/or soft cooked, pureed, mashed foods).
- (g) Shelter providers that issue food allowances to families, as described under section 9.2 Food, Diet and Nutrition, will stock a supply of infant appropriate foods for emergency use.
- (h) Clients who do not eat meat will have access to protein-based vegetarian food options (e.g., beans or soy-based products) at every meal and at snack time. Vegetarian food options must meet the basic nutritional requirements of the Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).
- (i) Food preparation will, as much as possible, reflect the cultural diversity of shelter clients. Every attempt will be made to mark special cultural holidays and traditional occasions with special meals.

9.2.3 Food Safety

- (a) Shelter providers will ensure that all foods are prepared, handled, stored and transported in a safe and sanitary manner to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and prevent the spread of food-borne illness in compliance with Toronto Public Health food preparation requirements.
- (b) Shelter providers will ensure that shelter staff who handle or prepare food and all supervisors of staff who handle or prepare food have a valid Food Handlers' certificate.

- (c) Shelter providers will ensure that clients and/or volunteers involved in food preparation are supervised by a certified food handler.
- (d) Shelter providers that prepare food onsite will be subject to regular inspections by Toronto Public Health.
- (e) Shelter providers will ensure donated foods are safe, of good quality and come from an inspected source.
 - (i) Food must be received in containers with tight-fitting lids or other suitable methods to protect it from contamination or adulteration.

9.3 CLIENT PRIVACY AND PERSONAL SPACE

- (a) Shelter providers will provide lockers or other secure forms of storage for clients to store their belongings (e.g., locked storage room, safekeeping program).
- (b) Shelter providers will install and maintain appropriate window coverings to ensure client comfort and privacy.
- (c) Shelter providers will ensure that all textiles used as interior treatments for rooms and furniture (e.g., window coverings, upholstered furniture, carpet/rugs) are pest resistant and fire/moisture retardant.

9.3.1 Sleeping Areas and Beds

- (a) Shelter providers will ensure that designated sleeping areas are physically separated from dining areas and other communal areas unless alternative sleeping arrangements are approved for limited use by SSHA (e.g., during an Extreme Weather Alert).
- (b) Shelter providers will create or enhance the privacy of a client's sleeping area including, but not limited to, using screens, half walls, rearranging furniture or the layout of the sleeping area in order to create a more private space.
- (c) Shelter providers will provide a minimum of 3.5 m.² (37.7 ft.²) of personal space per client in sleeping areas to decrease the transmission of communicable diseases and conflict between clients (see Appendix A: Sleeping Area / Personal Space Examples). Shelter providers are encouraged to exceed this standard by providing more space between beds and discouraging the use of large dorms.
- (d) Shelter providers will prepare floor plans that illustrate the spacing of the beds in designated sleeping areas.
- (e) Shelter providers will maintain a lateral separation of at least 0.75 m. (2.5 ft.) between beds (or alternative sleeping arrangements) and a vertical separation of at least 1.1 m. (3.5 ft.) between the top of a bed frame to the lowest hanging section of an overhead object (e.g., upper bunk frame, light fixture, bulkhead, air duct, plumbing, etc.) (see Appendix A: Sleeping Area / Personal Space Examples).

- (i) Family shelter providers are exempt from meeting the lateral separation requirements of 9.3.1 Sleeping Areas and Beds in rooms where only one family unit/household has been assigned.
- (f) Shelter providers will seek SSHA approval prior to arranging beds (or alternative sleeping arrangements) in a manner other than described under section 9.3.1 Sleeping Areas and Beds.
- (g) As much as possible, cribs, cradles, bassinets and beds will be arranged in a manner that
 - (i) Reduces the spread of communicable diseases
 - (ii) Facilitates clear walking paths and sightlines for emergency evacuations
 - (iii) Does not block air vents, windows, doors, plumbing or access panels
 - (iv) Does not expose a client to existing or potential dangers (e.g., under a shelf stocked with heavy items, etc.).
- (h) Each bed for use by clients older than two (2) years of age will have a mattress that corresponds with the size of the bed frame (e.g., a twin mattress on a twin-sized frame). The minimum mattress size is 0.76 m. x 1.82 m. x 0.89 m. (30 in. x 72 in. x 3.5 in.)
- (i) Exceptions to the minimum mattress size are permitted under exceptional circumstances including Extreme Weather Alerts, with prior approval from SSHA.
- (j) Cribs, cradles or bassinets, and corresponding mattresses for clients younger than two (2) years of age, will conform to the specifications prescribed under Cribs, Cradles and Bassinets Regulations (SOR/2010-261) (made under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act, 2010).
- (k) Shelter providers will ensure that all mattresses are pest resistant and fire/moisture retardant or covered by a material designed to achieve the same qualities.
- (l) Shelter providers will have a mattress replacement plan which will, at a minimum, include an inspection schedule for bed bugs and common defects (e.g., stains, rips and tears).
- (m) Shelter providers will consult with SSHA prior to purchasing new or replacing existing bed frames.

9.3.2 Washrooms

- (a) To assist clients with their hygiene needs, shelter providers will provide
 - (i) A minimum of one (1) washroom that is barrier-free, fully accessible and designated gender neutral in each shelter
 - (ii) A minimum of one (1) toilet for every fifteen (15) clients up to the first one-hundred (100) clients, and one (1) toilet for every thirty (30) clients thereafter. Urinals may replace up to half the number of required toilets in men's washrooms
 - (iii) A minimum of one (1) washbasin for every fifteen (15) clients
 - (iv) A minimum of one (1) soap dispenser within 0.6 m. (2 ft.) of each washbasin
 - (v) A minimum of one (1) shower for every twenty (20) clients.
- (b) Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to ensure that clients have privacy while showering.
 - (i) Shelter providers will ensure that communal showers have shower curtains or equivalent privacy feature(s).
- (c) Shelter providers must stock each washroom with an adequate supply of toilet paper, liquid soap for dispensers, paper towels and/or a hands-free hand dryer unless clients are responsible for purchasing their own supplies (e.g., family shelters).