

Bulletin Type: **General Update**

Subject: **Homeless Support Service Request During the Cold Weather Season**

Bulletin: *The following Bulletin is being circulated to Central Intake, Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre, city-funded/operated shelter providers, winter respite services and drop-in service providers.*

Please review this bulletin with staff and post in a conspicuous area for staff reference.

In June 2017, Council approved a staff recommendation to increase the low-barrier services available during the winter to improve planning and coordination, in recognition of the dangers that sustained exposure to cold weather can pose to people who are experiencing homelessness.

It is the expectation of the City of Toronto that anyone who requests city-funded/operated homeless support and respite services receives it. Service requests for homeless support services or respite services are not to be refused during cold weather season. Similarly anyone who is service restricted should be supported to find an alternative service or shelter and provided transportation.

Service providers who are unable to provide the requested service will follow existing procedures and protocols to provide a referral to another service or program location in order to ensure that people seeking services are not turned away.

Shelters, Central Intake & SHARC:

Shelter providers, Central Intake and Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre (SHARC) will comply with referral requirements of the Toronto Shelter Standards, as well as [Bulletin 2017-10](#) and [Bulletin 2017-11](#), regardless of whether the service request is made in person or by phone.

Drop-ins:

Drop-in providers that are unable to provide requested service for respite will continue to provide a referral to another service or program location.

24-hour Women's Drop-in:

24-hour women's drop-ins will monitor occupancy and notify SHARC when they have reached their capacity and are unable to provide requested service for respite. In such instances, drop-ins will provide a referral to an alternative service or shelter, and offer transportation assistance.

Winter Respite Services:

All winter respite services are reminded to follow the referral protocol established at the beginning of the season, including contacting SHARC/Central Intake when nearing program capacity to ensure that clients are not referred to your site. Winter respite sites that are unable to provide requested service will provide a referral to another winter respite service site or shelter, and offer transportation assistance.

Resources:

- [Toronto Shelter Bulletin 2017-10](#)
- [Toronto Shelter Bulletin 2017-11](#)
- [Toronto Shelter Standards](#)
- [Map-based information about all winter services](#)
- [Map-based information about meal services](#)
- [Map-based information about drop-in services](#)

**Contact
Information:**

Please contact your Agency Review Officer for more information about this Bulletin.