

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2022-11

Date Issued: December 12th, 2022

Bulletin Type:	General Update
Subject:	Harm Reduction Overdose Preparedness Assessment Communication
Bulletin:	<p>Hello Shelter Providers,</p> <p>Starting in January 2023, SSHA will be facilitating harm reduction overdose preparedness assessments (H-ROP) at shelter locations. The H-ROP is an effective tool for supporting the implementation of the SSHA Harm Reduction Directive and assists shelter operators to enhance harm reduction and overdose prevention services at their site.</p> <p>The H-ROP assessments will be managed by the SSHA-Harm Reduction Program Coordinator who will contact you to arrange an onsite H-ROP assessment if your shelter location has been prioritized. The assessments take 90-120 minutes to complete. If your shelter location has had an assessment completed in the last year, you will not be required to complete another H-ROP.</p> <p>To access a copy of the assessment tool, please click on this link:</p> <p>https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/8729-Shelter-Overdose-and-Harm-Reduction-Assessment-toolMay-2021.pdf .</p> <p>H-ROP frequently asked questions (FAQ) have been included below. Should you have any other questions or need harm reduction support, please contact Karen Tizzard as per the contact information below.</p>

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2022-11

Date Issued: December 12th, 2022

FAQ

Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessments

What is a Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessment?

The H-ROP Assessment tool was developed by Toronto Public Health in collaboration with a task force of harm reduction partner agencies in Toronto to assess overdose preparedness in City administered shelters given the ongoing and escalating drug poisoning crisis.

Why is SSHA doing H-ROP Assessments at City Administered shelters?

The H-ROP Assessment tool was piloted at temporary shelters that opened quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pilot demonstrated that the assessments were an effective tool for supporting shelter operators to enhance harm reduction and overdose prevention at their site and support their clients who use substances. Based on the success of the original pilot, SSHA has adopted the tool to help support and build capacity across the shelter system.

How are Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessments done?

SSHA's Harm Reduction Program Coordinator manages the H-ROP Assessment process for City Administered shelters. The Assessments are arranged with the shelter operator and completed on-site with a trained harm reduction specialist and, when possible, a person with lived or living experience of substance use. The assessments take 60 to 90 minutes to complete. During the assessment the assessors work with the shelter operator to identify and discuss opportunities and recommendations for enhancing onsite harm reduction and overdose preparedness.

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2022-11

Date Issued: December 12th, 2022

What happens after a Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessment is done?

Following the assessment, the details and recommendations are submitted to SSHA and reviewed by the Harm Reduction Program Coordinator. The recommendations and follow-up are then shared with the shelter operator and the Agency Review Officer. The Agency Review Officer works with the shelter operator to support follow-up and ensure implementation.

How can the harm reduction sector support shelter-based H-ROP Assessments?

Organizations that have a harm reduction supply distribution service agreement with The Works at Toronto Public Health can play a key role in building harm reduction capacity in Toronto shelters. In particular, harm reduction sector partner organizations can support their harm reduction staff to be an H-ROP Assessor and conduct a limited number of assessments. Assessors will receive training from The Works and SSHA on how to conduct an assessment and be placed on a roster to complete H-ROP Assessments.

What is the time commitment for an H-ROP Assessor?

The Works and SSHA are aiming to train 20-30 assessors in 2022 to create a roster. Additional trainings may also be scheduled as needed to ensure an on-going roster is available. Assessors will not be expected to do more than 1 assessment per month, and with a full roster it could be as few as 1-2 assessment per quarter. Assessors will be polled for their availability to complete an assessment and provided with the dates and locations. They can decline if they are not available and will only be scheduled if they are available and agree. It is anticipated that each assessment will take a maximum of 2-3 hours. The on-site assessment takes 60-90 minutes to complete, plus travel time and follow-up time to submit the assessment results and recommendations to SSHA.

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2022-11

Date Issued: December 12th, 2022

How do harm reduction sector partners benefit from supporting the H-ROP Assessments?

Harm Reduction partner organizations in Toronto benefit by building connections with shelters in their community and supporting the mandate of providing harm reduction services and supports to people who use drugs and are impacted by the drug poisoning crisis. Individuals who become H-ROP Assessors will develop skills in applying the principles of harm reduction, assessment, networking and partnership development, and gain an understanding of homelessness services in the City.

Please ensure that this Bulletin is cascaded to all relevant staff as soon as possible, and a hard copy of this document posted in a conspicuous place for ongoing reference.

Resources: [Funding Submissions, Directives & Bulletins – City of Toronto](#)

Contact Information: For more information about this Bulletin, please contact

Karen Tizzard
Harm Reduction Coordinator
Shelter, Support, & Housing Administration
647-454-2614
Karen.Tizzard@toronto.ca