

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

TOPIC:	Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter Policy
POLICY NUMBER:	39
DATE APPROVED:	April 17, 2012 (#2012-34)
DATE REVISED:	May 11, 2021 (#2021-062) November 9, 2021 (#2021-122) January 9, 2024 (#2024-003)

1.0 TITLE:

1.1 This policy may be cited as the “Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter Policy” of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

2.0 PURPOSE:

- 2.1 This policy outlines an overview of procedures and responsibilities regarding the activation of Comfort Centres & Emergency Shelters.
- 2.2 This policy aims to ensure residents have adequate access to temporary sheltering following an emergency by developing a partnership with community organizations to open facilities.
- 2.3 If an emergency happens in the AREMO Region it may take time to reach residents. All residents of the AREMO Region should be prepared to take care of themselves and their families for a minimum of 72 hours.

3.0 SCOPE:

3.1 This policy is applicable to identified Comfort Centres & Emergency Shelters within the Municipality of the County of Antigonish as officially designated by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization.

4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 *Comfort Centre* – a facility operated by a community organization that is opened to provide a location where community members can gather for a period of time during the day to access limited services. Depending on the time of year and the nature of the emergency, a Comfort Centre can serve several purposes including providing relief from extreme temperatures, provision of light nourishment, information gathering, and charging personal devices. **A Comfort Centre is not opened with the intention of turning into an overnight shelter operation.**
- 4.2 *Emergency Shelter* – in large-scale and severe emergencies, these types of operations are opened and operated by the **Canadian Red Cross**, under the Department of Community Services to provide safe, temporary lodging to those affected by an emergency. Services can include overnight accommodations, feeding, personal services, psycho-social support, and other emergency social services depending on the nature of the emergency.

5.0 ACTIVATION GUIDELINES

5.1 To open as a Comfort Centre, the following criteria is recommended:

- The emergency is greater than 72 hours in duration.
 - **Note: Comfort Centre may be open within the first 72 hours to provide relief from extreme temperatures or other related safety concerns**
- The impacted community may benefit from a temporary place of shelter with relief from extreme temperatures, provision of light nourishment, or to gather information.
- Roads are safe to travel, and the facility is accessible.
- Municipality in consultation with the community groups/ organizations determines there is a need.
- Municipality in consultation with EMO Nova Scotia's Provincial Coordination Centre ("PCC") determines there is a need.

5.2 To open as an Emergency Shelter, it is recommended to have met the criteria to open as a Comfort Centre in addition to the following criteria:

- Temporary overnight shelter is needed as a result of a substantial emergency
- A community evacuation may be a possibility or have already occurred
- There is an identified need for personal care or psycho-social services
- The activation is expected to be long-term (over 72 hours)

6.0 PROCEDURE FOR OPENING A COMFORT CENTRE:

6.1 **The decision to open a Comfort Centre is made by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the community organization.**

6.2 In situations of widespread emergency or utility disruptions in a community, the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization may contact the Comfort Centre contact person to discuss the activation of a centre.

6.3 Upon activation of any Comfort Centre, the Municipality will notify media sources to help publicize the service. The information will include hours of operation, civic address, and the services provided. This information will also be provided to EMO Nova Scotia so it may be linked to public access points such as 211, Nova Scotia Power Resolve Line, etc.

6.5 Comfort Centres are to be staffed with volunteers as prearranged by the community organization responsible for the facility.

6.5 Comfort Centres are not intended for overnight shelter. If Comfort Centre volunteers identify a need for overnight shelter, a request to transition into an Emergency Shelter will be made to the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization.

6.6 If extended operations of a Comfort Centre are required or anticipated, the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization may provide resources to the centre as requested.

6.7 The decision to deactivate a Comfort Centre will be made by the community organization responsible for the Comfort Centre in consultation with the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization.

7.0 PROCEDURE FOR OPENING AN EMERGENCY SHELTER:

- 7.1 During an emergency event, the Municipality may require the activation of an Emergency Shelter. The decision to open an Emergency Shelter is made by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross and other emergency services partners and first responders.
- 7.2 Once a decision has been made to activate a Reception Centre/Shelter, the Emergency Management Coordinator shall notify EMO Nova Scotia, the Department of Community Services (“DCS”), and Red Cross to initiate their response protocols. **The set-up and management of the facility shall be the responsibility of the Red Cross.**
- 7.3 The facility location for the Emergency Shelter will be determined by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross and other emergency services partners and first responders.
- 7.4 The primary Emergency Shelter for A.R.E.M.O. is the Heatherton Development & Cultural Wellness Centre, located at 42 Summerside Road Heatherton. A.R.E.M.O. has a signed 10-year MoU with the Centre from August 8, 2023, to August 8, 2033.
- 7.5 The decision to deactivate an Emergency Shelter will be made by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross and other emergency services partners and first responders.

8.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

- 8.1 Ensuring public notification for the opening and deactivation of Comfort Centres & Emergency Shelters will be the responsibility of the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization with support from the involved community organization.
- 8.2 Where possible, public notification for the opening and deactivation of Comfort Centres & Emergency Shelters will be made through press releases, local news media outlets, television, radio, local municipal websites, and social media as appropriate.
- 8.3 Sample script for a Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter activation:

*A Comfort Centre or (Choose one) Emergency Shelter has been opened at **[location/facility name]** located at **[civic address]**. The facility will be open from **[hours of operation]**. **[List of available services provided]** will be available.*

*Further questions regarding this Comfort Centre/Emergency Shelter can be directed to **[phone number of contact at the Comfort Centre/Emergency Shelter]**.*

9.0 REIMBURSEMENT FOR COMFORT CENTRES:

- 9.1 **If the facility is opened as a Comfort Centre, at the request or with approval from the Municipality, the Municipality of the County of Antigonish shall reimburse the community organization for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the activation.**

9.2 Eligible items for Comfort Centre reimbursement includes:

- Light snacks, beverages, and related supplies
- Generator fuel (for hours of Comfort Centre operation)
- Building heating, cooling, and electricity
- Telecommunication services (Charging equipment)

9.3 Determining eligibility of items and the total reimbursed amount are at the final discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or their designate at the Municipality of the County of Antigonish

9.4 The community organization shall have signed the Memorandum of Understanding regarding 'Use of Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter Facilities' to be eligible for expense reimbursement.

10.0 POLICY DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE:

9.1 A copy of this policy will be distributed to all Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter contacts along with information on how to contact the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization upon activation and deactivation.

9.2 A copy of this policy will be distributed to all Councillors along with the contact information for Comfort Centre & Emergency Shelter contacts in their district.

9.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization.

9.4 The contact information for designated Comfort Centres & Emergency Shelters shall be reviewed annually by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization.

11.0 Appendixes

11.1 Expense Claim Form

11.2 Canadian Red Cross – Emergency Shelter

11.3 Comfort Centre Requirements

11.4 Recommended Supplies for Comfort Centre

11.5 AREMO approved Comfort Centre

11.1 Expense Claim Form

Comfort Center/ Emergency Shelter Expense Claim Form				
Reason for Comfort Centre Activation:				
Date of Comfort Centre Activation <i>(DD/MM/YYYY – DD/MM/YY)</i>				
Item #	Details of Expense	Receipt (Yes/No)	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Amount
Total				
Comments:				
Comfort Centre/ Emergency Shelter:				
Name and Position:		Signature:		
C.A.O. Approval Signature:				

11.2 Canadian Red Cross – Emergency Shelter Activation Process

Step 1 - Opening Emergency Shelter

The decision to open an Emergency Shelter is made by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross (“CRC”) and other emergency services partners and first responders.

To open as an Emergency Shelter, the following criteria should be met:

- Temporary overnight shelter is needed because of a substantial emergency
- A community evacuation may be a possibility or have already occurred
- The activation is expected to be long-term (over 72 hours)

Once a decision has been made to activate an Emergency Shelter, the Emergency Management Coordinator shall notify the Canadian Red Cross (See table below) to initiate their response protocols. **The set-up and management of the facility shall be the responsibility of the Red Cross.**

Name (Listed by first to contact first)	Role	Phone Number
Canadian Red Cross Disaster Assistance Line	24 Hour Emergency Line	1-800-222-9597
Atlantic Duty Officer (After Hours)	Duty Officer	1-709-631-9549
Samantha Fraser	Coordinator – Emergency Management	1-902-565-1074
Malcolm MacKinnon - Heatherton Development & Cultural Wellness Centre Emergency Shelter	Facility Management	1-902-386-2678

The facility location will be determined by the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross and other emergency services partners and first responders.

Step 2 – Call Information Requirements

When connecting with CRC the following information is required.

Notification only:

- A brief overview of the incident
- Expected number of residents

- CRC services requested e.g., reception centre for registration
- Time to remain on standby – place CRC on standby pending incident severity

Activation:

- Time event occurred, location to report to and time to report (CRC response time to site ~12 hrs)
- Duration of CRC support required (estimate).
- Site facility custodian/maintenance contact name and phone number
- Applicable administrative and transportation details.

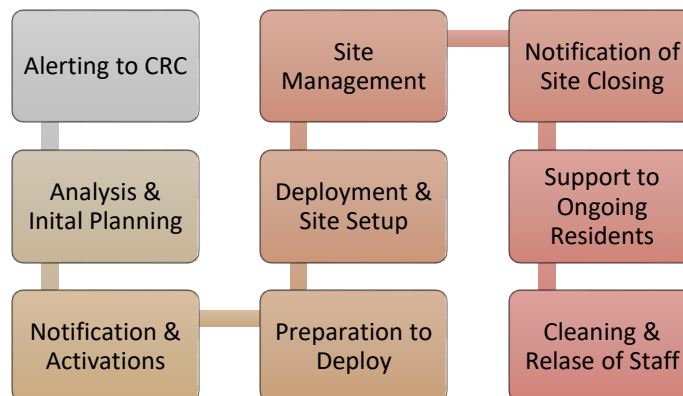
Other considerations:

- Exact services required as part of site operations.
- Number of Shelters opened/being opened.
- What time the sites are to open
- Number of people requiring Emergency Lodging at sites
- Personnel gaps (sources from Municipality vs. CRC)
- Material requirements and gaps (e.g., cots, blankets, tables, chairs)

Step 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

CRC - For context, there are many roles that the CRC can fulfil in supporting Emergency Lodging.

Brief Overview of Key Actions



11.3 Comfort Centre Requirements

Comfort Centre Facility Should meet the following.

- a) Ideally located in a central location and away from potential hazards
 - b) Barrier free inside and out
 - c) Have drinking water from a regulated (municipal) supply. Alternatively, well water must be tested according to Provincial Regulations and Guidelines
 - d) Have a generator and/or approved connections for a portable generator
 - e) Heated so visitors can warm up during power outages.
 - f) Cooling capacity during warm months (air conditioning, heat pumps, etc.)
 - g) Have adequate power outlets available to allow charging of devices.
 - h) Have an approved First Aid Kit and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
 - i) Have enough staff/volunteers to operate the Centre safely.
 - j) Adequate occupancy capacity for the need (staff, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
 - k) Be equipped to provide light refreshments such as coffee, tea, water, and light snacks (NSEMO does not recommend serving meals at comfort centres. If a Municipality wishes to serve food that isn't pre-packaged, please ensure all food safety guidelines are followed)
- <https://novascotia.ca/nse/food-protection/factsheets-publications.asp>**
- l) Ensure enough supplies to meet the potential needs of the Centre

11.4 Suggested Supplies for Comfort Centre

Stationary	Safety	Beverages/ Snacks	Miscellaneous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-in sheet • Pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners • Coloured markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved first-aid kit • Cold packs • AED • Antibacterial hand wipes • Disposable gloves • Hand soap • Hand sanitizer • Disposable face masks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled water (if not on approved water system) • Soft drinks (Sodas/ Juice) • Coffee • Tea • Milk • Cream • Snacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilet paper • Paper towel • Tissues • Cleaning products (soap, bleach, etc.) • Broom, mop, bucket • All-purpose cleaner • Garbage bags • iPhone charger stations • Coloring books and crayons • Extension cords • Serving supplies • Paper Plates • Paper cups • Pet cage (Dogs/ cats)

11.5 AREMO Comfort Centres

Comfort Centre Association	Civic Address	Contact Name	Contact Detail
Antigonish Affordable Housing Society	12-S Hope Lane, Antigonish, NS, B2G-0G4	Colleen Cameron	Phone: 902-318-9934 Email: accamero@stfx.ca
Antigonish Affordable Housing Society	25 Apple Seed Drive, Antigonish, NS, B2G-#B7	Colleen Cameron	Phone: 902-318-9934 Email: accamero@stfx.ca
Antigonish County V.F.D.	5 D-38 Road, Beech Hill, NS, B2G 2P9	Brendan MacInnis	Phone: 902-863-3305 Email: Chief@ACVFD.ca / bhmi@eastlink.ca
Antigonish Lions Club	13 Highland Drive, Antigonish, NS, B2G-3B1	Robert Cochrane	Phone: 902-338-1731 Email: robmcochrane@yahoo.ca
* Arisaig Parish Community Centre	5548 Hwy 245, Arisaig, NS, B2G 2L1	Theresa Thompson	Phone: 902-867-7071 (c)/ 902-863-1207 (h) Email: theresamacdthompson@gmail.com
Aulds Cove V.F.D.	13124 Highway 104, Aulds Cove, B0H 1P0	Daniel MacEachern	Phone: 902-631-4687 (c) Email: auldscovefire3053@gmail.com
Four Valleys V.F.D.	3331 Highway 245, Maryvale, NS, B2G 2L1	George DeRabbie	Phone: 902-735-2544 Email: capt.derabbie1@gmail.com
*Havre Boucher Community Centre	12401 Highway 4, Havre Boucher, NS, B0H 1P0	Hugh O'Neil	Phone: 902-234-3498 Email:
Heatherton Development & Cultural Wellness Centre	42 Summerside Road, Heatherton, NS, B0H 1R0	Malcolm MacKinnon	Phone: 902-386-2678 Email: malliemac131@gmail.com
Lochaber Community Development Association (Lochaber Centre)	1555 Highway 7, North Lochaber, NS, B2G 2L3	Glenn Terris	Phone: 902-783-2209 (h) Email: cgforestry@gmail.com
*Mini Trail Community Centre Association	4382 Highway 337, Lakevale, NS, B2G 2L2	Carroll MacPherson	Phone: 902-870-3276 (c)/ 902-863-2816 (h) Email: carrollmacpherson@hotmail.com
*North Shore V.F.D.	432 Marsh Road, Ballantynes Cove, NS, B2G 2L2	Kristen MacEachern	Phone: 902-870-8222 Email: northshorevfd@gmail.com
Paq'tnkek First Nation	136 Afton Loop, Paqtnkek-Niutuek 23, NS, B0H 1A0	Darlene Paul	Phone: 902-870-0656 (c)/ 902-386-2781 ext. 2228 (w) Email: darlene.paul@paqtnkek.ca
Pomquet V.F.D.	1180 Monk's Head Road, Antigonish, NS, B2G 2L4	Pierre Venedam	Phone: 902-386-2743 (h)/ 902-867-0903 (c) Email: pielizfire@eastlink.ca
*St. Andrews District Community Centre	81 Pomquet River Road, St. Andrews, NS, B0H 1X0	Jackie MacDonald	Phone: 902-968-1082 Email: JMacDonald@scottandstewart.com

St. Joseph's Lakeside Community Centre	2752 Ohio East Road, Antigonish, NS, B2G 2K8	Amy Rhynold	Phone: 902-714-5733 Email: TheRhynolds@outlook.com
Strait Area Ground Search and Rescue Hall	10474 Highway 4, Monastery, NS, B0H 1W0	Cecil Cashin/ Ken McChesney	Phone: 902-870-5412/ 902-867-0470 Email: ccashin.cashin372@gmail.com
Tracadie & District V.F.D.	995 Highway 16, Monastery, NS, B0H 1W0	Johnny Duykers	Phone: 902-870-2381 Email: jduykers@ns.sympatico.ca

* No MoU