



Memorandum

TO: JACK LOUWS
FROM: Ann Beck
DATE: October 31, 2019
RE: Update from the Health Department on Severe Weather Shelters

During the November 19, 2019 County Council Special Committee of the Whole, an update will be provided on the Severe Weather Shelter efforts in Whatcom County. The Health Department convened a brief series of subcommittee meetings chartered by the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee to focus on creating a plan for the coming winter. In the event that extreme cold and potentially life-threatening weather conditions are forecasted and capacity is limited at winter shelters, severe weather shelters will be opened beginning November 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020. Current actions have been accomplished to date to address the public health concern of human exposure to severe cold weather.

- Four severe weather shelter sites have signed LOA's to operate under the severe weather guiding assumptions.
- Whatcom Volunteer Center has begun coordinating volunteers to staff severe weather shelters.
- Severe weather shelter volunteers have been trained and screened to provide staffing.
- Joint communication plan has been developed and implemented by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Health Department staff
- Women's Civic Field *Winter* Shelter will open in late November/early December, and will remain open throughout the winter months.

Health Department staff has been working closely with partners throughout the community to implement necessary actions guided by the Severe Weather Shelter Subcommittee Action Plan. Severe weather shelter information is now online. The collaboration among the community partners and the Health Department has addressed the concern of human exposure to severe cold weather this upcoming season.

