



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

HYPOTHERMIA

WHAT IS THE DISTRICT'S SHELTER HOTLINE?

The District's Shelter Hotline, during the Hypothermia Season from November 1 to March 31, facilitates 24-hour access to information on available programs and services, including conducting outreach, offering safety and wellness checks, warming items (blankets, gloves, socks, hats) and bottled water. Scheduled and unscheduled transportation to shelter for individuals and families experiencing homelessness are also provided by the Shelter Hotline.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE SHELTER HOTLINE?

The Shelter Hotline's phone number is (202) 399-7093. You may also contact the Shelter Hotline by dialing 311.

WHAT ARE THE HOURS OF OPERATION FOR THE SHELTER HOTLINE?

The Shelter Hotline conducts outreach and provides transportation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

WHAT SHOULD DISTRICT RESIDENTS DO IF THE SHELTER HOTLINE IS BUSY (NO ANSWER)?

If you are unable to reach an operator at the Shelter Hotline, please call 311 and your request for a wellness check and/or shelter transportation will be sent to the Shelter Hotline for follow up and outreach with the resident experiencing homelessness.

WHEN SHOULD DISTRICT RESIDENTS CALL THE SHELTER HOTLINE OR 311 VERSUS CALLING 911?

District residents should call the Shelter Hotline or 311 when:

- An individual requests transportation to a shelter
- An individual is alert but express they are cold or you witness behaviors indicating that they may be cold
- You see an individual who appears to be vulnerable and you have a concern that the conditions may be detrimental to them
- When an individual asks for resources like shelter

District residents should call 911 when:

- You know something about the person that may increase their risk in the cold (age, medical or substance abuse history)
- You see someone already experiencing the effects of the cold (sluggish, confused, shivering)
- The conditions are severe (extreme cold, significant snow/ice accumulation)
- You see someone without the proper cold weather resources (no shoes, gloves, hat) or with wet items (clothing, blanket, bedding)



IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND FACTS ABOUT **HYPOTHERMIA**

IS THE SHELTER HOTLINE AN EMERGENCY RESPONDER?

No. Call 911 if someone appears to be suffering from hypothermia or another medical issue. Upon conducting a wellness check, the Shelter Hotline will contact the Fire and Emergency Medical Service (FEMS) Department if emergency medical care and transportation to a medical facility is deemed necessary.

CAN THE DISTRICT FORCE INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO COME INSIDE FROM THE COLD?

The District is committed to protecting all residents experiencing homelessness from hypothermia and other cold weather injuries. Throughout the year, outreach teams from DHS and the DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) invite individuals experiencing homelessness into shelter but, services may be refused.

Should this occur and the person's well-being appears to be at risk, the Shelter Hotline may contact 911 or the Homeless Outreach Program Team at DBH for assistance with an involuntary hospitalization (known as a FD-12).

WHAT INVESTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

Mayor Bowser has made significant investments in resources to support Homeward DC – the District's strategic plan to end homelessness – and the Winter Plan to ensure District residents experiencing homelessness have access to shelter and resources protecting them from cold weather injuries or death. The District has also made historic investments in affordable housing, homelessness prevention, reforming the shelter system, and strengthening partnerships with landlords.

HOW DOES THE DISTRICT SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND LIVING IN ENCAMPMENTS?

Throughout the year, DHS and DBH provide continuous outreach services and advise individuals and families living in encampments of services and housing stabilization resources available to them. The Office of the Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services (DMHHS) monitors and conducts encampment cleanups, which are not performed during inclement weather.

ARE WALK-INS ACCEPTED AT THE DISTRICT'S NEW SHORT-TERM FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAMS?

No. Families seeking emergency shelter may visit the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center at 920 Rhode Island Avenue, NE on Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM, and Friday, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM. Families may also call the Shelter Hotline at (202) 399-7093 or 311 at any time day or night.

WHAT SHOULD DISTRICT RESIDENTS DO TO HELP AN UNACCOMPANIED INDIVIDUAL UNDER THE AGE OF 18 DURING THE HYPOTHERMIA SEASON?

Throughout the year, not just during hypothermia season, an unaccompanied minor (12–18 years old) in need of assistance may contact the Safe Place Hotline at (202) 547-7777. This hotline is staffed 24 hours a day and operated by the Sasha Bruce Youthwork organization.