

# Town of Greater Napanee Warming / Cooling Center Activation Policy



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Department:	Executive Services	Contact:	CEMC
Approval Authority:	Council	Policy No:	ES-2026-01

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## 1. Introduction

The following policy guidelines will be used to determine when municipal facilities will be opened to the public as warming or cooling centres. All temperature thresholds are specified in degrees Celsius.

## 2. Purpose

To establish clear, consistent criteria for opening municipal facilities as warming or cooling centres in response to extreme temperatures and/or power outages, and to delegate authority for activation. These centres provide temporary relief to residents during periods of extreme cold or heat.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all municipally owned facilities designated for temporary public relief during extreme temperature events.

## 4. Responsibilities

### 4.1. Council

Council is responsible for:

- a) Approval of this policy and any amendments

### 4.2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Responsibility and authority is delegated to the CAO to:

- a) activate a warming or cooling centre under this policy, in consultation with the Head of Council (Mayor) and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC);
- b) de-activate a warming or cooling centre, in consultation with the Head of Council (Mayor) and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC); and
- c) authorize the operation of a warming or cooling centre outside of regular facility hours.

### **4.3. Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC)**

Responsibility and authority is delegated to the CEMC

- a) Maintain an up to date list of municipal facilities available for activation;
- b) Make recommendations regarding the activation and de-activation of a warming or cooling centre.

## **5. Policy**

### **5.1. Authority**

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or alternate is authorized to activate a warming or cooling centre under this policy, in consultation with the Head of Council (Mayor) and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC). Activation decisions consider:

- a) Weather forecasts and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) alerts
- b) Anticipated power restoration timelines
- c) Population vulnerability and community risk
- d) Facility availability, accessibility, and capacity
- e) Resource availability and potential cascading impact

### **5.2. Warming Center Activation Criteria**

A warming centre may be opened when any one of the following pathways is met.

#### **Pathway A: General Extreme Cold Conditions**

A warming centre may be activated when three or more of the following conditions are present:

- The forecasted temperature or wind chill is at or below minus -20 °C.
- An Extreme Cold Warning has been issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- The forecast indicates twenty-four hours or more of conditions at or below -20 °C within the next forty-eight hours.
- There are elevated community risks (such as exposure risk for vulnerable residents, school closures, or unsafe housing conditions).
- Operational considerations indicate increased risk (limited access to warming options, dangerous travel conditions, or other contributing threats).

#### **Pathway B: Power Outage Conditions**

A warming centre may be activated based on outage duration and forecasted cold:

### **Overnight or Outside Regular Business Hours**

- Activation may be considered when a power outage occurs or is expected during overnight hours or outside municipal business hours, and the forecasted temperature or wind chill is at or below -20 °C.

### **Two Consecutive Nights**

- Activation may be considered on the second day when a power outage continues for two consecutive nights and the forecasted temperature is at or below -15 °C.

### **Three or More Consecutive Days**

- Activation may be considered on the third day when a power outage continues for three or more days and the forecasted temperature is at or below -10 °C.

## **5.3. Cooling Center Activation Criteria**

A cooling centre may be opened when any one of the following pathways is met.

### **Pathway A: General Extreme Heat Conditions**

A cooling centre may be activated when three or more of the following conditions are present:

- The forecasted temperature or humidex is at or above 30 °C.
- A Heat Warning has been issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- The forecast indicates twenty-four hours or more of conditions at or above 30 °C within the next forty-eight hours.
- Elevated community risks exist, such as high overnight temperatures, poor indoor air quality, or concerns for vulnerable residents.
- Operational or environmental factors increase risk (limited access to air-conditioned spaces, high humidity, or compounding events).

### **Pathway B: Power Outage Conditions**

A cooling centre may be activated based on outage duration and forecasted heat:

- Immediate risk: A power outage is occurring and the temperature or humidex is at or above 35 °C.
- Two days: A power outage continues for two days and the temperature or humidex is at or above 33 °C.
- Three or more days: A power outage continues for three or more days and the temperature or humidex is at or above 30 °C.

## **5.4. Facility Operations**

### **Designated Locations:**

The CEMC will maintain an up-to-date list of municipal facilities available for activation, including:

- Capacity
- Accessibility features
- Backup power capability
- Washroom availability

### **Hours of Operation**

- Centres will typically operate during the facility's regular hours.
- Hours may be extended, including into evening or overnight hours, based on need and risk.

### **Services Provided**

Minimum services include:

- Safe, climate-controlled indoor space
- Seating
- Drinking water (and warm beverages where feasible)
- Washroom access
- Basic device charging if available

### **Public Notification**

When a centre is activated, Communications will notify the public using:

- Municipal website
- Social media
- Local media outlets
- Community partners
- Signage at the facility

## **5.5. De-activation of Warming and Cooling Centers**

A warming or cooling centre may be de-activated when conditions no longer meet the activation criteria established in this policy or when community risk has sufficiently decreased.

De-activation may occur when one or more of the following apply:

- Extreme temperature conditions have moderated and no longer pose a heightened risk to public health or safety.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada warnings or advisories have ended or are forecast to end.
- Electrical power has been restored and sustained indoor temperature risks are reduced.

- Community vulnerability and exposure risks have diminished.
- Continued operation is no longer operationally necessary, feasible, or sustainable.

The decision to de-activate a warming or cooling centre will be made by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate, in consultation with the Head of Council (Mayor) and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC).

Where feasible, the public will be notified of de-activation through the same communication channels used for activation.

## 5.6. Purpose and Limitations

### Intended Purpose of Warming and Cooling Centres

Warming and cooling centres are intended to provide temporary, short-term relief from extreme cold or heat events and related emergencies, in alignment with municipal emergency management responsibilities.

These centres are not intended to function as:

- Emergency shelters or overnight accommodation facilities
- Residential housing
- Medical clinics or treatment facilities
- Social service intake centres or crisis response locations

Individuals are responsible for arranging alternate overnight accommodation and ongoing care as required.

### Service Limitations and Duty of Care

Services provided at warming and cooling centres are limited to those outlined in this policy and are focused on **environmental relief**, not individualized care.

Municipal staff and volunteers are **not responsible for**:

- Providing medical care, diagnosis, or treatment
- Delivering personal care or supervision
- Providing mental health, addictions, or social services
- Ensuring continuous or overnight supervision unless specifically authorized

Individuals requiring medical attention, sheltering services, or specialized supports may be referred to appropriate community agencies or emergency services where available.

The operation of a warming or cooling centre does not create an assumption of custody, supervision, or ongoing duty of care beyond reasonable facility operation and public safety obligations.

**6. Review Cycle**

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Emergency Management Program.

**7. Related Documents**

Town of Greater Napanee Emergency Response Plan

**Revision History**

Date	Number	Description
May 26, 2026	ES-2026-01	NEW