



TVOAD
Interfaith Disaster
Committee

Warming Center
Operating Plan

“Model”

Warming Center Operating Plan “Model”

Table of Contents

Disclaimer and Authorization

- **Disclaimer:**
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- **Authorization:**
Trident VOAD members may use this Model Plan “as is” or modify the Model Plan to meet their specific requirements.

Warming Center Rules, Policies, and Procedures

- A typical night at a Warming Center
- General Rules and Procedures
- Safety and Police Issues
- Police Activity
- Volunteer Guidelines
- Volunteer Positions
- Volunteer Position Job Descriptions

Clothing/Toiletries Services Not Provided

Services We Can Provide

Supply Checklist

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Diversity Policy

Infection Control Policy

Warming Center Agreements

- Guest Rules of Agreement
- Hold Harmless Agreement

(YOUR NAME)

WARMING CENTER RULES, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

While we are a faith-based organization, we will neither endorse nor encourage any specific religious views. It is the goal of this Warming Center to provide a safe, warm and dry place for homeless adults to find shelter for the night during the winter months. Each guest is provided with an opportunity to have a warm meal in the evening, given one blanket and a pillow and offered a cold breakfast in the morning.

Our Warming Center welcomes all guests, ages 18 and above, with the only rule being that they do not present a danger or nuisance to themselves, other guests or volunteers. **It is not the intention of our Warming Center to provide job counseling, medical services, shower facilities, substantial clothing, supplies, or related services.**

A TYPICAL NIGHT AT A WARMING CENTER LOCATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 8-10 p.m.: Intake & check-in of homeless guests
- 8-10 p.m.: Hot dinner available to guests after check-in (meal optional)
- 10 p.m.: Lights out
- 6 a.m.: Lights on, everyone up. Breakfast available (meal optional)
- 7 a.m.: All guests must leave the church/facility.

GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES:

- All guests must wear a nametag at all times. Nicknames will not be used on nametags, unless they are common derivatives, i.e. "Bob" or "Rob" for Robert.
- Apply all shelter rules uniformly. Do not play favorites.
- Discrimination against any guest based on race, gender, ethnicity or other factor is prohibited.
- Guests are required to show picture ID.
- Guest must understand and sign the "**Guest Rules & Hold Harmless Agreements**" If a guest cannot read or understand, it should be explained that these rules will be read during dinner.
- Guests will turn in all bags, including ladies handbags, to be kept in a safe place. All bags will be returned to guests in the morning when they leave the church.
- Guests MUST remove any medication or other items that they will need during the night as once their bags are checked in, they cannot be accessed until the guest is leaving the next morning. (Not following this rule for ALL guests has caused problems in the past, as this is a way for weapons or drugs to be brought into the sleeping/dining area. All churches/volunteers must follow this rule.) Once bags are checked, we do not bring them back out, nor do we allow the guest to enter the "bag room," no matter how "nice" a guest may seem.
- Guests shall not be allowed in the "bag room", nor may a volunteer bring a bag out of the room for a guest.
- Volunteers should wear latex gloves when handling clients or their belongings. This is not a demeaning gesture, but provides protection for both the volunteer and the client.
- (Your Name) Rules & Procedures should be posted in the dining area.
- All guests must be checked-in prior to 10 p.m. The only exceptions are:
 - Those who are working and have made prior arrangements to be late.
 - Police agencies are welcome to bring or send a guest to the shelter, regardless of time.
- Guests may not bring outside food or drink into the shelter.
- Each guest gets 1 blanket and a pillow.
- No special parties (birthday observances, anniversaries, etc.) are allowed in the shelter.
- All guests must take all of their bags with them in the morning, no exceptions.

- Males & Females will have separate sleeping areas, no exceptions for married or other couples.
- Chairs are allowed in the sleeping area for disabled guests who are unable to stand up without a chair for support.
- In the morning, guests will be instructed to place all of their bedding in the clear plastic bag it was issued in.
- No swearing, cursing or other foul language is allowed in the shelter.
- No sexual activity is allowed in the shelter.
- Guests are not allowed to congregate at the church prior to 7 p.m.
- NO pets allowed.

SAFETY & POLICE ISSUES

- If you feel threatened, see a fight or feel unsafe, do not hesitate to call 9-1-1.
- Police agencies are provided with a schedule of Warming Center locations for the season.
- Volunteers should work in teams at all times.
- Volunteers should wear latex gloves (or their equivalent) whenever working with any client or his/her belongings.
- If a guest is being unruly or presents a danger to him /herself, other guests or any volunteers, the guest should be told to leave and provided with a bus ticket and a list of other area shelters.
- If a guest refuses to leave, contact local police to remove the individual.
- Do not attempt to break up a fight – call 9-1-1
- Remember, you and your church are providing warmth, shelter and a meal to the guests, on your terms. If a guest cannot follow the rules, he/she should be told to leave.
- If a serious health/safety issue arises with a guest, notify the executive director or designee. (This can be done the next morning)
- If a guest is sick or intoxicated/drugged to the point where you are concerned for his/her safety or the safety of others, call 9-1-1 and allow EMS to assess the individual.
- See the Infection Control Policy in this manual for additional health safety information.

POLICE ACTIVITY:

- It is a good idea for churches to contact their local police agency in advance of the shelter week and advise police the dates and times of the center.
- Invite police to stop by the shelter during the intake/dinner period if available. A police presence can have a calming influence on the guests.
- If there was police involvement with the shelter, a thank you letter or other contact is a good idea.
- Police can only enforce the law. They cannot make a person follow your rules, other than requiring the person to leave the center.
- If a client becomes violent, call the police. We will not ordinarily know if a guest is in possession of an illegal drug, as we store their bags without first searching them.
- Once the police, or other emergency personnel such as EMS, are on the scene, do not interfere. Allow them to do their job

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- Volunteers must treat all guests equally. No special treatment is allowed.
- All churches & volunteers must agree to and follow all the rules of this manual.
- Volunteers will wear name tags at all times.
- Volunteers will call all guests by their first names, or Ms., Mrs. or Mr. if the guest prefers. No nicknames!
- No volunteer will give or loan money to any guest.

- No volunteer will give a ride in a car to any guest.
- No volunteer will have sexual or romantic contact with any guest.
- All volunteers, including “veterans” must attend a volunteer orientation/training session prior to volunteering.
- One volunteer will be appointed as the supervisor at all times when guests are in the shelter. (This job may be split among various people, i.e. a supervisor during intake, another for overnight and another for breakfast.) One overall coordinator/supervisor must be named at each church. This person must be a member in good standing at the host church.
- All volunteers must be age 18 or older. No children are allowed in the center.
- Volunteers must not bring anything of value into the center area. It is helpful if all of the volunteers’ coats, purses, etc. can be stored in the church office or other secure area while they are at the shelter.
- Volunteers will record any issues, concerns or incidents in the (Your Name) log book and bring these items to the attention of the coordinator.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS (Only Suggestions) Position # of people needed each night

- Church coordinator..... 1
- Intake 4
- Bag room, evening 1-2
- Security/intake..... 1-2
- Kitchen staff 3-4
- Overnight security.. 3
- Breakfast..... 1-2
- Bag room, morning..... 1
- Morning security 2
- Morning clean up (after guests leave)..... 1-2
- Special duties
- Bedding set-up (Sunday afternoon)..... 6-10
(This is a great opportunity for the youth of the church to assist, as no guests are in the building during this time.)
- Laundry assistants 2-3
(This is only needed Sunday morning.)
- Final clean up 3-4
(This is only needed Sunday morning.)

VOLUNTEER POSITION JOB DESCRIPTIONS

- **CHURCH COORDINATOR**
 - Serves as primary contact person for the church. Should be accessible by phone.
 - Serves as on-site supervisor when at church & appoints other supervisors in their absence.
 - Coordinates recruiting of volunteers at the church.
 - Coordinates with kitchen volunteer supervisor to plan dinner menu for the week.
 - Informs church staff about potential volunteer shortages as far in advance as possible to arrange for volunteers from other churches to assist.
 - Checks daily log for any problems or supplies
 - Leads nightly meeting prior to beginning in-take to provide information to the volunteers. This meeting, which should include a prayer, should take place about 7:30 p.m.
 - Intake hosts/screener (Work shift: 7:30-10 p.m.)
 - Intake processing takes place from 8-10 p.m. Do not start earlier.

- **INTAKE PROCEDURES**

- Intake (Arrival) Processing is 8:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. (Exception: The local Police having jurisdiction may bring guests after 10:00 P.M.)
- Greet guests in a friendly, but businesslike manner.
- One volunteer should be requesting ID and last residence information and checking all guests into the register binder.
- One volunteer should be making name tags – 1 for the person, one for each bag to be checked in and one for the bedding (only needed the first night at a particular location).
- An intake volunteer needs to ask each guest if they need to have an early wake-up call.
- (Normal wake up is 6 a.m.) If a guest desires an early wake up, create a wake-up log and note the name and the time. Give the guest an orange cone (bucket) with their name, number and the time of the wake up. This cone should be placed by the guest's sleeping area.
- Two or three screeners will require all guests to empty their pockets, take off jackets and check for contraband items. Have guests place all items in plastic trays provided. Any item that would not be allowed onto an airplane is not allowed into the sleeping/dining area and must be placed in the checked bag room. Use small plastic baggies to keep loose/small items together. Ensure that all bags have a nametag attached.
- Ensure that any items the guest needs for the night are kept with the guest. There will be **NO** access to checked bags.
- One screener needs to check all guests with metal detecting wand after all of the objects are out of their pockets.
- Give any items to be checked to the bag room volunteer (or a volunteer runner). Guests should not handle their bags, after they have been checked in.
- One person should be coordinating traffic flow during the intake process, calling guests, by number, to the intake table.

- **INTAKE SECURITY (WORK SHIFT: 7 – 10 P.M.)**

- Hand out numbers to guests as they arrive. Do not allow guests to congregate prior to 7 PM.
- Provide assistance in the intake and dinner areas as needed.
- May work as the screener or intake traffic coordinator in items # 6 or 8 above.

- **BAG ROOM MONITOR (WORK SHIFT: 7:30 – 10 P.M.)**

- Ensure all bags have guest nametag.
- Place bags in approximate number order, to ease return of bags in morning.
- Once bags are checked in, guests **WILL NOT** have access to them until the guest leaves.

- **KITCHEN STAFF (WORK SHIFT: TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE FOOD TO 10 PM.)**

- In the evenings, coffee, milk and water/juice should be available 8-10 p.m.
- Dinner should be ready to serve at 8 p.m. (Check for any special diets or allergies)
- All guests must check in before they can eat.
- Dinner should be served until 10 p.m.
- If food is available, second or additional helpings are allowed.
- If available, prepare 1-2 plates for potential (legitimate) late arrivals.
- Provide small coffee pot or other beverages for overnight volunteers.
- Disposable plates, utensil and cups should be used.
- Clean up kitchen; prepare coffee pot for morning use.
- Guests should be informed to clean up their own items after eating.
- Ensure that all eating/serving areas are wiped down with a cleaning solution after dinner.

- **OVERNIGHT SECURITY (SHIFT: 10 P.M. TO 7 A.M. OPTIONAL, COULD HAVE A MORNING SHIFT THAT WORKS 5 A.M. – 7 A.M.)**
 - Ideally, there should be at least 2 men and 1 woman on this shift.
 - A cell phone number of one of the overnight volunteers should be left for the person who carries the organization's main phone so the volunteers can be notified if, for example, a hospital will be dropping off a guest, usually by taxi, in the middle of the night
 - Have flashlights available as needed.
 - Lights out at 10 p.m.
 - Intake area need to be monitored throughout the evening, in case of late arrival; including the sign-in binder.
 - At the discretion of lead night security, a new guest who is unfamiliar with the rules MAY be allowed to enter late, one time only, if he/she is not presenting a problem. Late arrivals brought in by the police or sent by a hospital are always welcome. Late arrivals must be checked-in via the regular screening process.
 - Arrange with kitchen staff to ensure that coffee will be ready by 6 a.m.
 - Lights on at 6 a.m.
 - Wake any guests who need to leave early.
- **BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS (5:30 A.M. – 7:30 A.M.)**
 - Ensure that coffee is ready for 6 a.m.
 - Begin serving breakfast at 6 a.m.
 - If you have early departing guests and you can provide them a “to-go” breakfast, do so.
 - Breakfast can consist of coffee, milk, juice/water and cold cereal. Hot oatmeal is a good option if available. Pastry, donuts, fruit, etc. may also be served, if available.
 - Discontinue coffee and breakfast service at 6:45 a.m.
 - Disposable plates, utensils, etc., should be served.
 - Guests should be informed to clean up their own items after breakfast.
 - Wipe down all eating/serving areas with a bleach solution after breakfast concludes.
- **BAG ROOM MONITOR, MORNING (5 A.M. – 7:15 A.M.)**
 - Pass up bags to guests as they are leaving.
 - No guests may enter the bag room
 - Guests may not have access to their bags until they are leaving.
 - All guests must take all their bags each day.
 - Inform guests that bags left behind will NOT be transported.
- **MORNING SECURITY (5 A.M. – 7:15 A.M.)**
 - Wake up any guests who have request early wake-ups.
 - Once a guest leaves the building, he/she may not return until the next evening. No morning smoke breaks.
 - Lights on at 6 a.m.
 - At 6:15 and again at 6:30, rouse all guests who are still sleeping.
 - At 6:40 a.m., announce “last call” on coffee, etc.
 - All guests must leave the building at 7 a.m.
 - Late “sleep-ins” will miss breakfast.
- **MORNING CLEAN-UP CREW (7 A.M. UNTIL FINISHED)**
 - Sweep/mop/vacuum sleeping & dining areas.
 - Re-stock paper supplies in rest rooms.
 - Wipe down all areas with bleach solution.
 - Empty all garbage cans

- **SUNDAY MORNING CLEAN-UP VOLUNTEERS (7 A.M. UNTIL FINISHED)**

- A team of 4-5 people should be able to have your church returned to typical condition in about an hour or 90 minutes.
- Have one or more (adult) volunteers walk the perimeter of the church, checking the bushes, etc., for any garbage/debris left behind. Be aware that alcohol bottles and remnants from illegal drug use, possibly including needles, may be found Sunday morning clean-up volunteers (7 a.m. until finished)

- **MEALS**

- One person should be appointed kitchen supervisor to coordinate menu planning and volunteer schedules. Some churches have two groups of volunteers in the evening, one to prepare the meal and another to serve and clean up; others use one group for the entire process.
- Dinner should consist of a hot soup or other meal. If possible, having two entrees to choose from is helpful. Bread or rolls should be available

CLOTHING/TOILETRIES SERVICES WE CAN NOT PROVIDE:

- The Church is NOT an emergency clothing provider. Many local agencies exist to provide clothing supplies to the homeless. This is an important and worthwhile mission, but is not the mission of the Warming Center.

SERVICES WE CAN PROVIDE

- If available, churches can provide new socks and/or new/lightly used gloves, mittens or winter caps. These should only be provided upon request.
- If available, church can provide basic toiletry items, upon request.
- Churches should always have a supply of feminine hygiene products on hand

SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Item.....	Number
Black markers.....	___
Pens	___
Pad of paper.....	___
Paper/plastic plates	___
Paper cups -- cold	___
Paper cups – hot	___
Styrofoam bowls.....	___
Napkins.....	___
Paper towels	___
Plastic dinner utensils.....	___
Coffee stir sticks.....	___
Latex gloves for volunteers	___
Toilet paper.....	___
Paper hand towels.....	___
Flashlights	___
Garbage bags, heavy duty	___
Garbage bags – clear (to be used for beddings)	___

(Your Name) Warming Center

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

- It is the policy of this Warming Center to maintain an environment, which is free from the use, possession or distribution of drugs and alcohol by its clients or staff.
- We will maintain this policy within a reasonable expectation in consideration of the population we serve.
- We will check-in and secure all baggage carried by our clients.
- These bags will be kept in a secure area of the facility and returned to the client only upon his/her departure.
- Clothing worn by clients will also be searched for drugs and alcohol and any such items discovered will be disposed of or client refused admittance.
- Both paid and volunteer staff will present for work in a sober state.
- Neither paid nor volunteer staff will bring alcohol or drugs into the facility.
- It is the expectation Trustees that board members, management and both paid and volunteer staff reports to the facility free from any signs of obvious alcohol or drug use, and that they present a positive example to clients and other staff.

DIVERSITY POLICY

- Warming Center seeks to promote diversity in the selection of board members, staff and volunteers, as well as extending an invitation to potential board members, staff, volunteers and guests of all races, religions and ethnicity.
- We will not exclude, but will welcome all homeless individuals regardless of their race, religious belief, gender, national background or ethnicity, home city, county or state of former residence.

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the shelters and other centers where the homeless guests gather.
- **Guest search:** Latex or latex-type gloves will be worn for all search procedures as a safeguard for both guests and volunteers.
- **General:**
 - Good Hygiene will be strictly adhered to. Any person unable to control bodily functions will be transported by the local EMS to a hospital.
 - Any bodily fluids or other possibly contaminated matter will be immediately cleaned by a volunteer wearing latex/type gloves and using a commercial disinfectant.
 - Volunteers and guests must wash hands before coming to the food table. A hand sanitizer dispenser is also recommended to be available at the front of the table.
 - Guests and volunteers must cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing.
 - Adequate tissues should be provided for this purpose
- **Food table:** Both volunteers and guests while at the food table or in the kitchen must wear food handler gloves. As an alternative, volunteers and guests may clean their hands with hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be provided by the Warming Center upon request.
- **General:**
 - Hygiene matters will be strictly adhered to. Any person unable to control bodily functions will be transported by the local EMS to a hospital.
 - A volunteer wearing latex/type gloves and using a commercial disinfectant-cleaning product will immediately clean any bodily fluids or other possibly contaminated matter.
 - Guests and volunteers must cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing.
 - Adequate tissues should be provided for this purpose

(Your Name)
Warming Center

GUEST RULES OF AGREEMENT

- NO possession or use of Alcohol, Drugs or Weapons allowed in or around the perimeter of the Warming Center.
- NO Foul Language allowed in the facility and/or around the perimeter of the Warming Center.
- Guest's bags will be stored for the night. Be sure you get your meds and anything else you may need for the night, as you will not be able to get back into your bag until you leave the building in the morning.
- Smoking is NOT ALLOWED in any of the buildings. Smoking is only permitted at the specified time, in the designated outside area.
- NO Physical Contact allowed with the volunteers and/or guests.
- NO Sexual Harassment, Lewd Conduct or Public Displays of Affection with ANYONE!
- NO destruction of Warming Center property.
- NO PHYSICAL CONTACT such as fighting or threatening of volunteers or guests.
- NO Open Containers or Food allowed from outside the Warming Center.
- NO Arguing, Nagging or otherwise HARASSING VOLUNTEERS. This rule is especially important to the health and welfare of volunteers; and **breaking of this rule will be cause for immediate dismissal from the shelter.**
- NO pets allowed.
- Personal property must be removed from the Warming Center/church by 7:00 a.m.

Print Name

Signature of Guest

Date Signed

HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

In consideration of participating in The (Your Church Name) Warming Center Shelter Program I and any accompanying family members shall hold all of the participating Churches/Organizations, free and harmless from any claim or liability that may arise through my/our participation in the Program. I/we shall also hold harmless from any claim or liability, (Your Church Name) Warming Center agents, volunteers, employees and officers and directors.

The ***Hold Harmless Agreement*** was fully explained to me/us today and will remain in effect unless withdrawn in writing.

Print Name

Signature of Guest

Date Signed