



CODE BLUE FAQ

WHAT IS THE CODE BLUE OF SALEM COUNTY ORGANIZATION?

Code Blue of Salem County is a non-profit 501(C)3 organization in partnership with the Salem County Sheriff's Office, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) involving volunteers, and several area churches. The purpose is to provide temporary designated "Warming Centers" for homeless individuals when temperatures drop dangerously low or frozen precipitation is expected during the overnight hours. Code Blue of Salem County is NOT government funded or operated.

IS CODE BLUE A RELIGIOUS INITIATIVE?

While designated Warming Centers may be located in Church or other public facilities under the supervision of their respective clergy, the Code Blue program is open to all individuals desiring temporary shelter regardless of religious practice or activity.

In addition, no person will be required to participate in any religious activity or practice in order to receive services in a designated Code Blue Warming Center and no person shall be denied services or discriminated against based on religious belief, refusal to hold a religious belief, or refusal to actively participate in a religious practice or activity.

If an individual voluntarily asks about religious matters or beliefs of the church hosting the Code Blue Warming Center or freely chooses to participate in a religious activity or practice taking place at a church hosting a Code Blue Warming Center; these individuals will not be discouraged from such inquiry or participation, but nothing shall be required of them.

Any specific religious activity or service made available to clients will be voluntary as well as separate in time and location from Code Blue funded activities and services.

WHERE ARE THE CODE BLUE WARMING CENTERS?

The location of the designated Code Blue Warming Centers will be at First Assembly of God, 380 Georgetown Road, Carney's Point, NJ 08069. Anyone desiring to know where the Code Blue Warming Centers are for that week are encouraged to visit Code Blue of Salem County on Facebook where they can find Code Blue information. In addition to Facebook, Code Blue

updates are communicated through e-mail and in the local newspaper in an effort to keep the community informed.

WHAT TIME OF DAY IS CODE BLUE ACTIVE?

Code Blue, when activated by OEM starts at 6:00 pm in the evening and the Warming Centers remain open until 6:00 am the next day.

WHAT TRIGGERS A CODE BLUE?

A Code Blue is in effect when temperatures are 25 degrees or below or below 32 degrees with precipitation, according to Weather.com for our local zip code. The Office of Emergency Management calls the Code Blue in consultation with the Code Blue of Salem County President and communicates with warming center locations, volunteers, police, EMS, County Health Department and Human Services and the Board of Social Services.

WHO WORKS IN THE CODE BLUE PROGRAM?

Code Blue Warming Centers will be in a host church or public building in Salem County. Because of that, Warming Centers are supervised and staffed by members of the church, or facility along with other community volunteers who donate their time to Code Blue.

HOW CAN SOMEONE VOLUNTEER FOR CODE BLUE?

Anyone who wishes to volunteer their time staffing a Code Blue Warming Center can sign up on the following website: www.cohmbc76.com. All volunteers must sign a waiver of liability/background check form, as well as attend a volunteer orientation. Applicants with the following backgrounds are unable to participate as volunteers: sex offenders, anyone with an outstanding warrant, anyone who has a drug conviction within the last 18 months, anyone with a robbery-burglary conviction within the last 7 years.

IS WORKING AT A CODE BLUE WARMING CENTER HARD?

No. Volunteers work in shifts staffing the Warming Centers. The first shift is from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, the second shift is from 9:00 pm to 12:00 am, the third shift is from 12:00 am to 3:00 am, and the last shift is 3:00 am to 7:00 am on the nights a Code Blue is in effect. Volunteers help to organize cots, distribute meals if available, perform general housekeeping in the area, and be available in case any small tasks need to be done. Volunteers are encouraged to bring a book or a magazine to read to help pass the time while the people sleep.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL EVENING LIKE AT A CODE BLUE CENTER?

- o If Code Blue is called; the volunteers will be notified by email, Facebook and/or phone. o Volunteers arrive at the Code Blue site at the scheduled time for their position. o Each site will have a Site Coordinator.
- o Volunteer staff at Code Blue site set up cots and prepare for guests.

- o Site Coordinator or delegates will indicate location of bathroom facilities and areas open to the guests.
- o Overnight staff is on site and will assist with making the guests feel safe and comfortable. o Meal staff may prepare and serve a light evening meal. Volunteers may eat and socialize with the guests and other volunteers if they wish. Meals are served from 6 pm until 8 pm.
- o Lights out/curfew at 10:30 pm
- o Guests will be awoken up at 5:30 am, to pack up the bedding, clean up the area used, retrieve their belongings and may have a light breakfast prior to exiting the facility at 6 am.
- o While rules and procedures are in place for Code Blue, certain exceptions may be made at the discretion of the host-warming center.

IS WORKING AT A CODE BLUE WARMING CENTER DANGEROUS?

No. The homeless individuals seeking a Code Blue Warming Center are grateful to have food and a warm place to sleep. Generally, these individuals come and eat, socialize for a few minutes and then go to sleep.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE SHOULD GET OUT OF HAND OR THERE'S A PROBLEM?

The Local Police always know which church/public building is hosting a Code Blue Warming Center. Police patrols should regularly stop in to check on the warming center and each volunteer has a cell phone in case police need to be summoned to handle a problem. Code Blue in Salem County have a Zero-Tolerance policy for violent and disorderly behavior.

DOES CODE BLUE PROVIDE OTHER SERVICES?

The Code Blue of Salem County organization is centered on providing Warming Centers as a place for the homeless to sleep overnight (temporarily) when temperatures drop below a certain point and that remains the primary mission. However, through the generosity of donors, Code Blue may be able to distribute food to those coming to the Warming Centers, but this is based on availability of resources and is not guaranteed service. For guests needing additional services, Code Blue will make referrals to other appropriate programs and organizations in the county.

HOW CAN SOMEONE DONATE TO CODE BLUE?

Code Blue of Salem County non-profit 501(C)3 organization has setup a special fund to be utilized for the Code Blue Homeless Initiative. Funds are received and distributed by Code Blue of Salem County organization to purchase the necessary materials, as well as, help offset costs to the host churches/facilities. Donations can be sent to Cathedral of Holiness Missionary Baptist Church, 76 Dolbow Avenue, Pennsville, NJ 08070. Tax deductible donations can be made to Code Blue of Salem County.

CAN I DONATE SOMETHING OTHER THAN MONEY?

Yes and No. While we appreciate donations of food, clothing and material goods; it is important to check first to see exactly what is needed. Sometimes, people will donate things with good intentions, but it might not be something we need or it might be something we have too much of already. If you think you might have something you would like to donate to Code Blue, it is best to check first by calling Bishop Dawn R. Brown at 856-678-6144.

DO I HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF A CHURCH TO GO TO A WARMING CENTER?

No. As mentioned before, anyone can seek shelter in a Code Blue Warming Center whether they go to church or not. In fact, you don't have to have any religious beliefs at all to sleep at a Code Blue Warming Center. No one will mention religion or discuss anything about religion with you unless you ask about it. The whole point of Code Blue is not to convert people to a specific view, but simply to provide a warm place for the homeless on cold nights.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

We only ask that those taking shelter in a Code Blue Warming Center demonstrate appropriate conduct while at the warming center. That means no smoking, no alcohol, no drugs, no profanity, no lewd or disorderly conduct, no animals, no disruptive behavior, and no activity that is harmful or disrespectful to others seeking shelter or volunteering at the warming centers.

WHAT IS THE CODE BLUE OVERNIGHT PROCESS?

1. Everyone must sign-in and out of the Center (overnight guests and volunteers)
2. Lights out/curfew at 10:30pm- The call for "lights out" comes 5 minutes early to prepare the guests.
3. Stay awake during your shift and randomly check the parking lot, building, sleeping area and bathrooms.
4. Do not hesitate to call 911 if it is necessary to remove a guest for an inappropriate behavior.
5. Volunteers changing shifts should be sure sign in procedures are completed for the second shift volunteers.
6. Show the shift workers where the coffee supplies are kept.
7. 5:30 am - bring out breakfast food and wake up guests.
8. Linens should be bagged and delivered at 7am.
9. Cots may be up or stacked out of the way in the storage area.

WHAT IS THE CODE BLUE CLEAN UP PROCESS IN THE MORNING?

1. Spray cots with Lysol; please do this after the guests leave.
2. Put breakfast items away and clean kitchen. Empty and clean coffee pot.
3. Wipe down tables and chairs with soap and water.
4. Vacuum or sweep floors - empty trash if needed.

5. Check and clean bathrooms.