

# Code Blue-Volunteer Training

## What is Code Blue?

Code Blue of Salem County is a non-profit 501(C)3 which provides a safe, warm and compassionate environment for the homeless population. Warming centers are opened when Code Blue is activated by Office of Emergency Management.

Core operations:

- 1: provide a warm environment with places for guests to sleep out of dangerously cold climates
- 2: provide guests with meals, snacks, or beverages

Hours: 6 pm – 6 am

Parameters for an active Code Blue:

- 1: Code Blue is active between December and March
- 2: Code Blue is active if it is 32 degrees with precipitation
- 3: Code Blue is active if it is 25 degrees or colder without precipitation.

# Code Blue Expectations

The Warming Center, like any communal living space, has expectations in place to ensure the safety of all of our guests. This also allows us to best meet the needs they present upon arrival at the Warming Center.

## **General Expectations:**

- 1: No drugs or alcohol in the building at any time.
- 2: There is a zero tolerance policy for fighting in the center.
- 3: Guests and volunteers should demonstrate mutual respect for one another. Combative, threatening, intimidating, or provocative interactions will not be tolerated.
- 4: There is no tolerance for theft in the warming center.
- 5: Guests should arrive at the warming center by 9:00pm to claim their bed space for the evening.

6: Guests should return and be indoors by 11:00pm, at which time doors are locked to ensure safety of all involved.

# Maintaining Expectations

Maintaining expectations is just as important as having them. Consistency among all volunteers is imperative!

## **Tips for Maintaining Expectations:**

1: If you determine a guest has any un-prohibited substances, the substance is to be removed. If this guest refuses to comply, they can be asked to leave the Warming Center.

2: If a fight occurs at the Warming Center, do not attempt to break it up on your own. Notify others on your shift and contact the police department (911) for immediate assistance. If the shift coordinator is not currently at the center, contact via text/email to make them aware of the situation.

3: In a scenario where a guest is acting inappropriately towards another guest or volunteer, first attempt to address the person. Explain what the concerns are with this person's actions. If the

behavior persists or escalates, they can be asked to leave the warming center. If you are uncomfortable addressing the behavior, bring it to the attention of someone else who can address it. Report all concerns to the shift coordinator. Contact the police (911) if the situation escalates.

## Maintaining Expectations

4: If a guest arrives after 9pm, ensure that you are aware of all claimed bed space before allowing this person to claim a bed. This is a first come first serve basis, and those who were there by 9pm have the first claims to the space they have reserved for themselves. However, there will be times when Code Blue is activated for consecutive days. If so, guests will label their bed and keep the same one until Code Blue is deactivated.

5: Guests should be informed of Warming Center curfews to ensure they return to the warming center on time. Doors lock at 11pm. If a guest elects to go outside between 11pm and 5am, the doors remain locked and that guest will not be able to come back inside.

# Repercussions

1<sup>st</sup> offense – a guest is asked to leave the Warming Center for one day.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – a guest is asked to leave the Warming Center for three days.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – The guest is removed from the Warming Center for the remaining portion of the season.

# What To Do When You Don't Know...

Handling expectations can be difficult, or maybe addressing issues head on is not your style. If that is the case inform the lead volunteer on your shift or contact your shift coordinator right away.

It is important to recognize and communicate the limitations that each person has, and to make your comfort level clear.

If you need to make a decision, and are unable to reach a shift coordinator, consider the following questions:

- 1: Will the action I chose to take affect the safety of the Warming Center?*
- 2: Does this situation have the potential to escalate, causing a disruptive or unsafe environment for volunteers or guests?*
- 3: Would electing not to act on this situation cause damages to the Warming Center?*

If you answered yes to these questions, contact law enforcement immediately. The immediate issue of safety should always come first. Be sure that if a shift coordinator is not notified at the time, that the circumstances are communicated as soon as possible.

# Code Blue Volunteers

Volunteers are the core of what makes a Code Blue Season successful and hold a variety of roles while they are at the Warming Center.

Volunteers are needed for 4 shifts per night

**1: 6:00pm-9:00pm**

*This is the shift that will handle preparing and serving dinner. Ensure all guests check in. Ensure new guests complete intake form.*

**2: 9:00pm-12:00am**

*This is the fellowship shift, where volunteers maintain safety of guests, ensure all guests have a cot / sleeping space, provide additional needs as they may be needed, and ensure that nighttime expectations are complied with. Ensure all guests check in. Ensure new guests complete intake form.*

**3: 12:00am-3:00am**

*This shift is responsible for keeping the warming center secure throughout the night, addressing emergency needs as they arise, assist with any cleaning, or morning preparation as needed.*

**4: 3:00am-7:00am**

*This shift is responsible for breakfast preparation and clean up, making sure all guests are awake and have left the building by closing time for that day.*

## Shift Responsibilities: Dinner (6p-9p)

- 1: Meet at warming center and open up the facility for the evening
- 2: Prepare dinner for that evening (place snacks out for guests as well)



3: Make coffee, tea, or other beverages and make them accessible to

guests 4: *Ensure all guests check in. Ensure new guests complete intake form.*

5: *Review rules/expectations with guests*

6: Begin clean up process from dinner (sanitizing dishes, counters, cooking tools etc)

7: Ensure the warming center is maintaining a drug, alcohol and violence free environment.

## Shift Responsibilities: Fellowship (9p-12a)

1: Ensure that all guests who have come to the center have beds; assisting those who are there before 9pm first.

2: *Ensure all guests check in. Ensure new guests complete intake form.*

3: Maintain snacks and non caffeinated beverages as needed.

4: Ensure that lights and TV are off at 10:30pm

5: Assist in maintaining warming center cleanliness (helping with dishes, wiping tables, removing coffee at 11pm)

6: Ensure all guests are aware when it is almost 11pm, allowing for final opportunities to step outside. Locking the doors at 11pm.

7: Interact with guests in the center

8: Assist in putting away donations as needed.

## Shift Responsibilities: Overnight (12a-3a)

1: Contact police department dispatcher @856-768-1955 with information about who will be the primary point of contact on this shift, so that security walk-through can be completed.

- 2: Maintain a drug, alcohol and violence free environment
- 3: Ensure security of the Warming Center
- 4: Assisting with any additional cleaning, donation sorting etc as needed.
- 5: Assist with any needed morning preparations (this will be told to you at the start of the shift if this is needed)

## Shift Responsibilities: Breakfast (3a-7a)

- 1: Breakfast preparation – make coffee at beginning of shift.
- 2: Ensuring guests are awake for the day @5:15 am and out of the building on time by 6 am.

3: Ensure guests put the linen in the bin daily. Linen should be changed daily. On the last day of a consecutive Code Blue, please wipe down cots and spray mats with wipes and spray provided by the hospital. In addition, put cots and mats away.

4: Prepare lunch for guests to take with them

5: Breakfast clean up, and ensuring that the guest area is left in respectful condition as well. 6: Remove any garbage, etc. that has accumulated from the night.

## All shifts are responsible for...

1: Maintaining a violence, drug and alcohol free environment

2: Ensuring the Warming Center is left in respectable condition (as far as organization and cleanliness) 3: Speaking with guests and doing the best to address any concerns possible.

4: Speaking with shift coordinators and the volunteer coordinators regarding any questions, concerns or note worthy situations that occur during the night.

5: All volunteers should meet with the previous shift briefly and discuss what has occurred throughout the night and ensure any significant concerns with any particular guest or situation are discussed (including how the situation has been addressed). 6: All volunteers should sign in

7: Name Lanyards to be worn at all times while volunteering and notebook logs to be completed.

---