



Inclement Weather Response

City of Tacoma | Neighborhood and Community Services

Community Vitality and Safety Committee
August 28, 2025



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OVERVIEW



- Overview of inclement weather response
- Inclement Weather Taskforce
- Hot Weather Response
- Cold Weather Response
- Air Quality Weather Response
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OVERVIEW



The City of Tacoma uses a collaborative, regional approach with tiered activation thresholds and response protocols for inclement weather events, including extreme cold, heat, and poor air quality.

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2025 Inclement Weather Taskforce



- Focusing on coordinated access to additional temporary shelter beds, days centers, transportation and inclement weather supplies including food and water, for people who are living unsheltered.
- Committing to unifying tiered activation thresholds and response protocols for severe and inclement weather events.
- Coordinating access by establishing service recommendations for specific tiered response thresholds in Pierce County, ensuring that all areas are supported appropriately.

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Inclement Weather Response Protocols

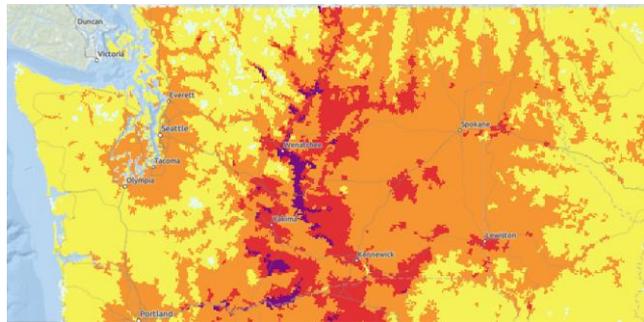


- Pierce County Human Services published a document that outlines criteria for escalating interventions and coordinated actions with partner agencies.
- During inclement weather events, daily conference calls will be coordinated by Pierce County Human Services and will include homeless services staff, volunteers, and other local jurisdictions and partnering agencies.
- Lastly, the City has reviewed the regional response and will align as much as possible with how it supports its services.

HeatRisk Index



Category	Risk of Heat-Related Impacts
Green 0	Little to no risk from expected heat.
Yellow 1	Minor - Primarily affects those who are extremely sensitive to heat and without cooling/hydration.
Orange 2	Moderate - Affects those who are sensitive to heat, especially those without cooling/hydration, and some health systems and industries.
Red 3	Major - Affects anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems and industries.
Magenta 4	Extreme - Rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with no overnight relief affecting anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems, industries, and infrastructure.



Map of HeatRISK for Tuesday, August 26th, 2025

“National Weather Service HeatRisk” is supplementary to official NWS heat watches, warnings, and advisories. It provides guidance for decision makers and those who are sensitive to heat.

Hot Weather Response



Readiness Response and Tier 1 response

- Activation threshold is met when the NWS HeatRisk level reaches Minor level (Yellow).
- Outreach efforts will focus on individuals at highest risk, including unhoused neighbors, especially those who are unsheltered including people residing in cars and RVs, while distributing emergency supplies such as water, and begin identifying individuals most in need of access to cooling centers.
- The response system will continue monitoring conditions and prepare for potential escalation to a Tier 2 heat response.

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Hot Weather Response



	Tier 2 Response	Tier 3 Response
Weather Thresholds	Moderate Risk (Orange)	Major Risk (Red) & Extreme Risk (Magenta)
Coordination	Daily briefings; update and share communication materials.	Daily briefings; update and share communication materials. Coordinate with EOC to waive public transportation fees to emergency shelter/center sites.
Shelter activations	More than 24 hours, the response system will activate daytime cooling centers	More than 24 hours, the response system will activate daytime and overnight cooling centers.
Supplies	Water, sunscreen, cooling towels, ice packs, hydration powder, and other supplies as needed.	Continue Tier 2 cooling supplies

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Cold Weather Response



Readiness Response and Tier 1 response

- Activation threshold is met when the daily low temperature is predicted to reach 40°F or below for three or more consecutive days, or when high wind events are anticipated.
- Three days before anticipated severe weather, will begin coordinated outreach efforts.
- Funded providers, coalitions, and community partners will be notified and asked to share information and distribute emergency supplies to unhoused individuals.
- Outreach and resource efforts will intensify as PCHS monitors conditions and prepares for potential escalation to Tier 2 response.

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Cold Weather Response



	Tier 2 Response	Tier 3 Response
Weather Thresholds	35°F or below for 3 or more consecutive days; or snow/rain accumulation greater than 1 inch in a 24- hour period	32°F or below for 3 or more consecutive days; or snow/rain accumulation greater than 2 inch in a 24- hour period
Coordination	Daily briefings; update and share communication materials.	Daily briefings; update and share communication materials. Coordinate with EOC to waive public transportation fees to emergency shelter/center sites.
Shelter activations	Open short-term overnight emergency shelters in the City of Tacoma	Open emergency daytime and overnight warming centers and other public facilities
Supplies	Continue to pass out water, handwarmers, blankets, gloves, hats, and other supplies as needed.	Continue tier 2 supplies and distribution and coordination of Narcan, food, emergency/medical supplies, and pet supplies.

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Air Quality Weather Response

Readiness Response and Tier 1 response

- Unlike heat related events, poor air quality doesn't follow predictable daily patterns. Access to resources 24/7 is essential for unsheltered individuals.
- When the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 101-150, the response system will coordinate with partners for outreach and supplies.
- When the AQI reaches 151 or higher, the response system will work with contracted providers to activate smoke shelters.

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Inclement Weather Funding

Jurisdiction	Source/Funds	2025 Amount
Federal	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	\$360,000
Federal	Emergency Solution Grant (ESG)	\$126,000
State: Washington Military Department	Extreme Weather Grant Preparedness Funds Grant	\$30,000
City of Tacoma	Adopted 2025-2026 Biennium Budgeted	\$145,000
	Total	\$661,000

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Next Steps



- Evaluate the Response System for Hot Weather & Air Quality Responses
- Prepare for Winter Weather Response

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