

COVID-19 Response:

Isolation hotels to support those without a home



Helping people experiencing homelessness during COVID-19

Not everyone has a home. People experiencing homelessness face the reality every day that they don't have a safe space to call their own. Many people experiencing homelessness are living communally where the virus could spread more quickly. They also have higher rates of health concerns and may be at greater risk if exposed to the virus.

BC Housing is working with regional health authorities, municipal partners and experienced non-profit emergency shelter and housing providers to find locations, such as hotels and motels, where vulnerable individuals, including people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, can self-isolate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Securing space at hotels, motels and recreation centres to help people to self-isolate is a vital part of the efforts to combat COVID-19, helping to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Who will be using the hotel spaces?

Designated hotels and motels are being made available to a range of vulnerable people who do not have space for self-isolation, including:

- People experiencing homelessness, to free up space in shelters to allow for physical distancing;
- People experiencing homelessness who have COVID-19 and need a place to self-isolate; and,
- Patients without a fixed address being discharged from hospitals who do not need emergency care, but require ongoing health care - freeing up space in hospitals.

Innovative partnerships with local hotels

BC Housing is partnering with local hotels and motels as part of a collaborative initiative to provide isolation rooms for people who are experiencing homelessness. By working together, we are able to provide a temporary safe space for those in need during the outbreak while providing employment opportunities for hotel staff who haven't been able to work due to the pandemic.

The primary intent of using hotels for self-isolation is to help individuals who need a safe space.

While this is an unprecedented use of hotels and community centres, this initiative will form part of our collective efforts to try to prevent the spread of the virus and mitigate the demand on our healthcare system.

We are not mentioning names of hotels in order to protect the privacy of people accessing and working in these facilities. Hotels must be able to operate privately and focus on helping people who need a safe place to self-isolate.



Protection protocols

We are following Public Health guidance to mitigate potential exposure to the virus and ensure protocols are in place to protect residents, non-profit and hotel staff, and the local neighbours, including:

- Every operator follows BC Centre for Disease Control and health authority direction in terms of self-isolation and visitor policies at their buildings.
- Every individual must follow isolation protocols and service providers work to ensure all individuals who require self-isolation are doing so. Staff monitor who goes in and out of these locations.
- Staff are provided with personal protective equipment and follow health guidelines around regular handwashing and social distancing.

These hotels are being rented on a temporary basis. As part of the contract, BC Housing has committed to professional and rigorous cleaning of all buildings prior to handing them back over to the owner.

Working together

The following organizations are part of the collaborative response to developing community-based response plans to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- BC Housing coordinates and funds the sheltering options to support people experiencing homeless.
- Regional health authorities lead on the provision of clinical in-reach and supportive services to help safely support people to self-isolate and recover from COVID-19 and provide ongoing Public Health guidance.
- Local municipalities are making public space available and supporting the activation of the new emergency response centres and designated hotels.
- Local non-profit operators oversee the operations and support residents.
- Designate hotels are making space available to support people in need.

Community safety

We are collaborating with local municipalities, regional health authorities, hotel management and non-profit operators to ensure a safe environment for the people staying and working in the designated hotels as well as the surrounding community.

Referrals:

Access to designated hotel spaces is by referral only either through the local health authority or BC Housing. Health authorities will identify people who require self-isolation and BC Housing will work with the health authorities and the operators to make these spaces available to them.

Experience:

Non-profit societies who have significant experience working with vulnerable populations oversee the day-to-day management of the hotels and motels.

Staffing:

Staff will be on-site to support, manage day-to-day operations, and be available to respond in a timely manner to any related concerns that arise.

On-site Supports:

Staff provide daily meals, cleaning services and medical care for those who require support while in isolation.



Questions?



Email communityrelations@bchousing.org



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