



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee
From: Phyllis Carlyle
General Manager,
Law and Community Safety

Date: December 1, 2009
File: 09-5350-00/Vol 01

Re: Assistance to Shelter Act

Staff Recommendation

That the "Assistance to Shelter Act" report (dated December 1, 2009, from the Manager, RCMP Administration, Law and Community Safety) be received for information.

Phyllis Carlyle
General Manager,
Law & Community Safety
(604)276-4104

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES	NO
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Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding Bill 18 – 2009, “Assistance to Shelter Act” and the potential impact for the Richmond RCMP Detachment.

Background

Bill 18 – 2009, “Assistance to Shelter Act” received its Royal Assent on November 26, 2009 and comes immediately into force. The Bill establishes a scheme for issuing and cancelling extreme weather alerts and enables police officers to transport persons at risk to emergency shelters when extreme weather alerts are in effect.

Analysis

The Bill proposes that:

1. The community representative (The Richmond Extreme Weather Response Planning Committee - REWSPC) designated for the geographical area will issue an extreme weather alert;
2. The community representative (REWSPC) will then notify the jurisdictional police and the minister of the issuance;
3. The community representative (REWSPC) will determine when the extreme weather conditions no longer exist and cancel the issuance when this occurs;
4. The community representative (REWSPC) will notify the police and minister when the cancellation occurs;
5. The minister or his/her delegate can also issue or cancel an extreme weather alert under certain conditions;
6. If an extreme weather alert has been issued, a police officer may assess a person as being at risk;
 - a. the person is in the geographical area of the alert
 - b. the person, is or appears to be, over 19 years of age
 - c. the person is, in the opinion of the police officer, suffering physical harm or is at risk of suffering physical harm because of the extreme weather conditions;
7. Once the police officer has made the assessment, they can request that the person accompany them to an emergency shelter or go unaccompanied to the emergency shelter or any other accommodation that would protect the person at risk from the extreme weather conditions.

Practically, there will be little change in how the Richmond RCMP Detachment does business in these cases. Historically, the transportation of a person to a shelter has not been common-place in the City and on the occasion, each situation was evaluated on an individual basis and when deemed appropriate by the attending police officer, the homeless person had been transported to a local shelter.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with the report.

Conclusion

Bill 18 -- 2009, "Assistance to Shelter Act" received its Royal Assent on November 26, 2009 and comes immediately into force. The Bill establishes a scheme for issuing and cancelling extreme weather alerts and enables police officers to transport persons at risk to emergency shelters when extreme weather alerts are in effect.

Under the Act, a representative (REWSPC) will be responsible to activate, monitor and deactivate the alert when necessary. The local police will assess persons at risk and when necessary make the appropriate arrangements for the person to be transported to a local shelter. Currently, there are two emergency shelters located in the City of Richmond. The first is the Salvation Army Richmond, and the second is the St. Albans Anglican Church.



Lainie Goddard
Manger, RCMP Administration
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