



AIR QUALITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR UNSHELTERED PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

PURPOSE

The San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) strives to be responsive in the cases of emergency for all its clients and residents. Unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness are extremely vulnerable when the air quality is in unhealthy ranges. There are times when weather, area fires and related winds or other environmental hazards result in changes in the Air Quality Index (AQI). The HSH Air Quality Policy and Procedure will be activated when the AQI is listed as Unhealthy, Very Unhealthy or Hazardous (see page 3 of this policy for definitions of these designations). This will be based on notices from the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management (DEM) or other sources and may be activated for multiple days. AQI can vary throughout the day/night and the highest anticipated range for the day will be considered for this policy.

POLICY

HSH Activation Procedure:

1. The HSH DEM Liaison/DPC will contact the HSH Director or Acting Director with the information about how the forecast meets the activation threshold.
2. The HSH DPC will request approval to activate the Initial Response and Notification procedures.
3. With approval of the HSH Director or Acting Director, or if the HSH DPC does not hear back from the HSH Director or Acting Director within one hour and the forecasts still meet or exceed the activation thresholds, the HSH DPC will proceed with the Initial Response and Notification procedures.

Initial Notification and Response:

1. When HSH is notified by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) Liaison, Manager on Duty, or other official sources that the AQI is, or is anticipated to reach, Unhealthy, Very Unhealthy or Hazardous levels, the following programs and groups will be notified:
 - SF Homeless Outreach Team (SFHOT)
 - Shelters, Homeless Resource and Drop-in Centers, and Access Points
 - Navigation Centers
 - Supportive Housing Programs
 - HSH's established email list of local programs, providers, advocates, and City officials
 - 311
 - Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC)

2. Unhealthy AQI Responses:



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- a. **SF HOT** will focus on wellness checks for unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness offering available shelter placements and, as available, water and masks. Wellness checks will also be used to identify individuals that need emergency response or other medical assistance.
 - b. **Navigation Centers, Shelters, Homeless Resource and Drop-In Centers, and Access Points** will stay open as many hours as possible, contact 911 regarding any clients in distress, and make all shelter placements that are available. Staff will inform clients of the conditions and encourage them to remain inside as much as possible and will perform wellness checks with vulnerable on-site clients.
 - c. **Supportive Housing Providers** will inform clients of the conditions and encourage them to remain inside as much as possible and will perform wellness checks with vulnerable on-site clients.
 - d. **HSH email contacts** will be informed of the conditions and asked to encourage people, particularly those from sensitive groups, to remain indoors as much as possible.
 - e. **HSH** and all partners will be asked to track efforts, responses and client placements for after action assessment.
 - f. **HSH** will participate in calls and / or meetings called by DEM and / or DPH.
3. **Very Unhealthy AQI Responses: In addition to the Unhealthy AQI Responses above the following responses will be added when AQI reaches Very Unhealthy levels:**
- a. **HSH** will offer available masks to all HSH staff working outdoors.
 - b. **HSH** will work with Shelters, Homeless Resource and Drop-In Centers, and Access Points to extend program hours allowing unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness to stay indoors.
 - c. **SF HOT** will partner and coordinate with **SFPD, SFFD** and **EMS6** to expand the wellness check efforts for unsheltered persons. Ask other agencies to notify **311, 911, SF HOT Dispatch** and/or **HSOC** as appropriate if there is a person of concern who is not accepting available and offered resources for additional follow up.
 - d. **HSH** will work with **DEM, DPH, HSOC** and/or City officials to determine the need and participate in establishing and opening Indoor Locations where additional unsheltered individuals can be referred. These indoor locations may be open during the day time or may be temporary/pop-up shelters as the need and/or locations make possible. If and when this occurs, **SFPD, SFFD** and **EMS6**, along with **SF HOT** will refer clients and assist with transport to these locations as much as possible.
 - e. **HSH email contacts** will be informed of the conditions and any expanded or pop-up services, asked to encourage people to remain indoors as much as possible and refer unsheltered individuals to any established Indoor Locations. HSH will provide information bulletins that can be posted at program sites.



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4. **Hazardous AQI Responses:** In addition to the Unhealthy & Very Unhealthy AQI Responses above, the following will be added when AQI reaches Hazardous levels:
 - a. **HSH** (DEM Liaison and/or Manager on Duty) will contact **DEM** and/or the **Department of Public Health** regarding protocols, concerns and procedures for staff working outdoors.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) uses the following designations:

- **Good:** Air Quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- **Moderate:** Air Quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
- **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups:** Although general public is not likely to be affected by this Air Quality, people with lung disease, older adults and children are at greater risk from exposure to ozone and/or from the presence of particles in the air.
- **Unhealthy:** The Air Quality Index is at a level that everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
- **Very Unhealthy:** The Air Quality Index is at a level that results in a health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
- **Hazardous:** The Air Quality Index results in health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.