

Title: Opening of Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers

Accountable: Manager of Facilities

Last Review: June 19, 2023

Last Revision: Dec. 12, 2024

Next Review: June 19, 2024

Purpose: This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aims to establish guidelines for the operation of Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers within the City of Welland during extreme weather events. The Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers provide a safe and comfortable environment for residents who may be affected by extreme cold, heat or air quality conditions.

Scope: This procedure applies to the operation of city-owned facilities as Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers, defined as:

- A short-term shelter that operates when temperatures, air quality or a combination of precipitation, wind chill, wind and temperature become dangerously inclement.
- **Warming Centers** are made available to the public on days the temperatures are forecasted to reach -15°C (5°F) or colder, or when wind chills are forecasted to drop to or below -20°C (-4°F).
- **Cooling Centers** are made available to the public on days the daily temperature is expected to reach 31°C or higher and overnight temperatures are at least 20°C or higher, for two consecutive days or a humidex is 40°C or higher for two consecutive days.
- **Air Quality Relief Centers** are made available on days when Environment Canada observes conditions rated at 9 or

higher.

Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers are to remain open during regular facility hours of operation, and the locations of the city-owned facilities are to be used as Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers are:

- Welland Community Centre (Atrium) – 145 Lincoln St.
- Welland Main Arena (Community Room) – 501 King St.
- Welland Main Library (Common Area) – 60 East Main St.

The use of the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers as a homeless shelter is not included in the scope of operations. For matters dealing with the unhoused, call 211 for services.

Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers are not to be used for the purposes of a shelter as relates to emergency response, including but not limited to:

- Widespread power outages
- Natural disasters
- Etc.

The staff of the facilities will ensure the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers are appropriately staffed, and that individuals are provided with climate-controlled environments, access to drinking water, washrooms, and seating.

The staff of the facilities will operate the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers during regular business hours and be adequately trained in emergency procedures, first aid, customer service and the use of relevant equipment.

Individuals using the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers should be greeted respectfully and provided with the necessary information about the facility's rules and services.

Objectives:

The objectives of this procedure are to:

1. Minimize risk to the general public, city staff and Council.
2. Clarify the responsibilities of city staff related to extreme cold and heat weather conditions.



3. Maximize the city's ability to respond effectively and in a timely way to extreme cold and heat weather events.

Opening and closing of Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers:

1. Weather forecast is monitored by Community Services, and the opening of the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers is prompted by Environment Canada issuing a Cold, Heat or Air Quality advisory based on the following:

Warming Centers

- Temperatures are forecasted to reach -15°C (5°F) or colder, or when wind chills are forecasted to drop to or below -20°C (-4°F).

Cooling Centers

- Temperatures are forecasted to reach 31°C or higher and overnight temperatures are at least 20°C or higher, for two consecutive days or a humidex is 40°C or higher for two consecutive days.

Air Quality Relief Centers

- Environment Canada observes air quality conditions rated at 9 or higher.
2. Authorization to open or close the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers will come from the Director of Community Services or designate.
 3. Notification is issued by the Manager of Communications through social media, a public media release, the City website, and local news outlets, see appendix.
 4. Facilities operating as Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers are to be notified of the activation and prepared for operations.
 5. In the event of prolonged cold, heat or air quality advisories, Enhanced Measures for the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers could be initiated, based on the direction of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG).
 6. Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers remain open each day until the end of business operations, City staff to monitor the weather conditions and close the facility as appropriate.
 7. Ongoing communication to the public to be issued through the Manager of



Communications.

8. Conduct regular reviews and evaluations of the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers' operations to identify areas of improvement and address areas of concern.

Enhanced Measures:

If extreme cold or hot temperatures persist for 72 hours the MCEG will decide if enhanced measures are warranted. Enhanced Measures include:

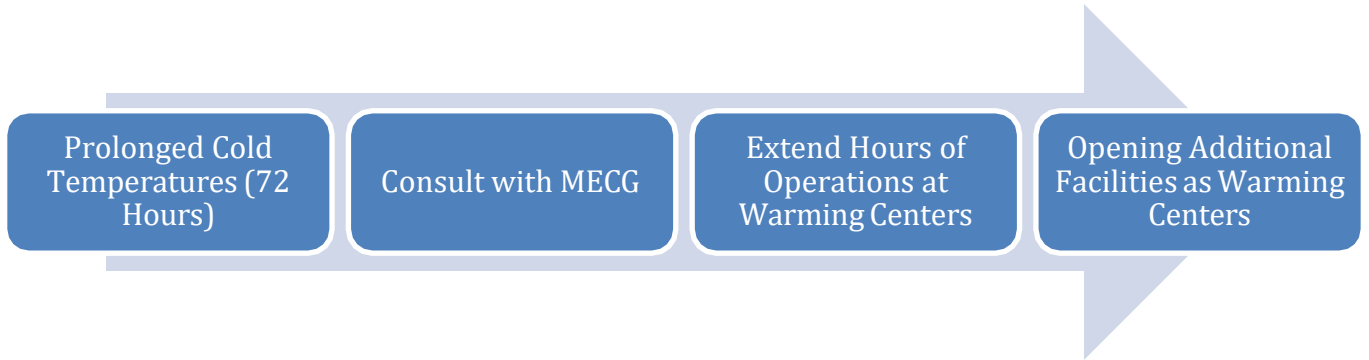
- Extending the hours of operation of the Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers.
- Opening additional facilities for Warming/Cooling or Air Quality Relief Centers.
- Extending the hours of pools and splash pads during hot weather events.

Considerations to be addressed regarding Enhanced Measures:

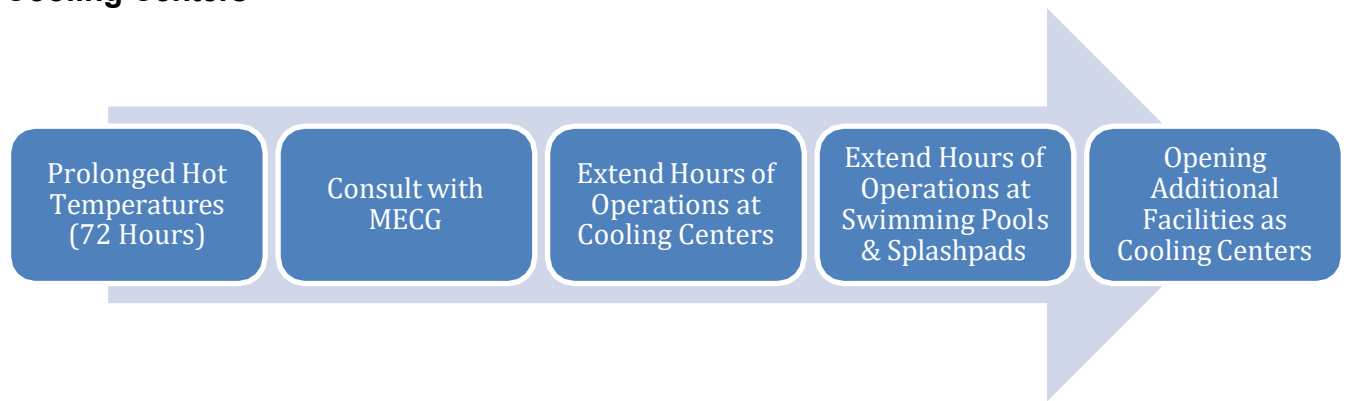
- Short-term weather forecast.
- Available daylight for pools and splash pads
- Staff availability and resources.
- Operational resources.



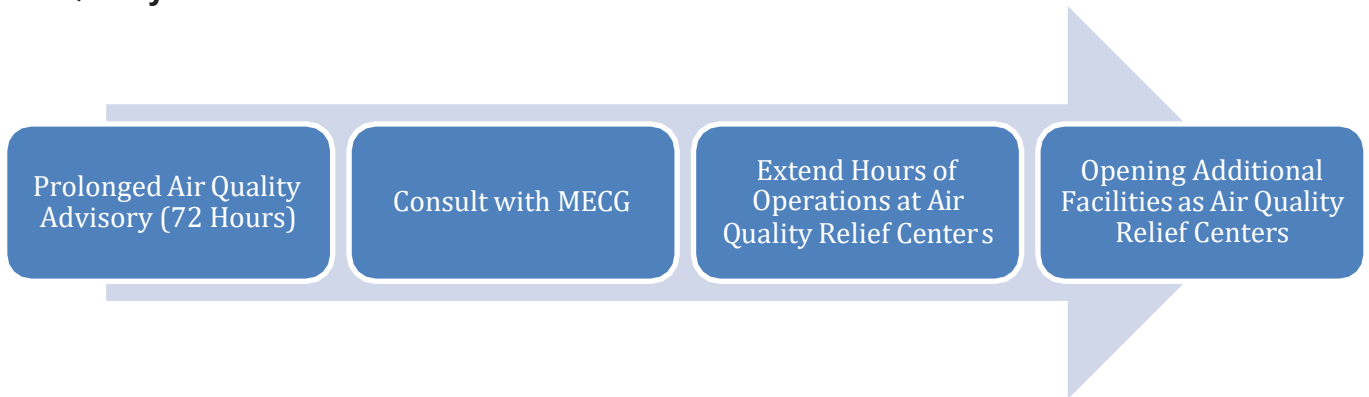
Warming Centers



Cooling Centers



Air Quality Relief Centers



THIS LOCATION IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AS A WARMING/COOLING/AIR QUALITY RELIEF CENTER

Warming/Cooling/Air Quality Relief Centers will provide access to a climate-controlled environment, seating, access to washrooms and drinking water.

Warming/Cooling/Air Quality Relief Centers will be opened based on the following criteria:

Warming Centers are made available to the public on days the temperatures are forecasted to reach -15°C (5°F) or colder, or when wind chills are forecasted to drop to or below -20°C (-4°F).

Cooling Centers are made available to the public on days the daily temperature is expected to reach 31°C or higher and overnight temperatures are at least 20°C or higher, for two consecutive days or a humidex is 40°C or higher for two consecutive days.

Air Quality Relief Centers are made available on days when Environment Canada observes conditions rated at 9 or higher.

Opening of Facilities for Cooling Centers

With summer upon us and the hot weather on the horizon, the City of Welland is preparing operations for its cooling centres.

In an effort to provide relief for those needing it, the City is committed to preparing spaces that can be used as temporary cooling centres.

It is important to note that a cooling centre is designed to be a short-term accommodation available to the public when daily temperatures are expected to reach 31 degrees Celsius or higher and overnight temperatures are at least 20 degrees Celsius or higher for two consecutive days or a humidex of 40 degrees Celsius or higher for two consecutive days.

The following locations will be open during regular facility hours of operation:

- Welland Community Centre (Atrium) – 145 Lincoln St. (Monday-Friday 8 am – 9 pm, Saturday & Sunday 9 am – 3 pm)
- Welland Main Arena (Second Floor Community Room) – 501 King St.
- Welland Main Library (Common Area) – 60 East Main St. (Monday-Thursday 9 am – 8 pm, Friday 9 am – 6 pm & Saturday 9 am – 5 pm)

When cooling centres are activated, the City of Welland will post updates to its website (<https://www.welland.ca/Media/news.asp>) and social media channels (<https://www.welland.ca/Media/Socialmedia.asp>).

Sample social media post:

Hey, #WellandON, it's going to be a hot one! If you need temporary relief from the elements, you can pop into any of our designated cooling centres during facility operating hours. Find out where and when by following the link [link to be here].

