

Ministry of the Solicitor General

Ministère du Solliciteur général

Office of the Chief Coroner
Ontario Forensic Pathology Service

Bureau du coroner en chef
Service de médecine légale de l'Ontario

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Office of the Chief Coroner and Ontario Forensic Pathology Service Response to Recommendations

OCC File No. XXXXX
Committee/Inquest File No. 2022-10(2020-18590)

A. Recipient Information	
Responding Organization	City of Hamilton
Name of individual(s) completing this form	Robyn Perry
Contact information for who to direct any additional inquiries/questions to	Rob Mastroianni 350 King St E Unit 110, Hamilton ON 905-546-2424 ext 8035
Date of Response	TBD

B.1 Recommendation Response	
<i>Please complete this section per recommendation.</i>	
Daily room checks should be conducted in a way to ensure the well being of the client. A room check consent should be obtained between the shelter and client with clear client expectations in how the daily room checks should be conducted to ensure safety.	
Response (Please Select One)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implemented <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Not Implemented <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Justification / Detailed Response (MANDATORY):

Please provide additional context to your response including how you are implementing the recommendation, any progress you are making or planning to make regarding its implementation, or a detailed justification for why you will not be implementing the recommendation. If this recommendation is not applicable to your organization, please let us know why, and who might be best suited to receive it instead. Thank you.

Please Note: The City of Hamilton has a funding relationship with Emergency Shelters and does not own or operate any directly, but is the Service Manager for Provincial funding, and the Community Entity for Federal funding. The City is also not the sole funder of Emergency Shelters programs and therefore the City has limited authority to mandate shelters in operational policies and procedures, especially work that may fall into the category of healthcare or other service provision beyond what we fund, which is housing-focused sheltering.

Since 2020, but before received this report from the Coroner’s Office, Hamilton has updated their Emergency Shelter Standards that articulate minimum expectations for operating, service deliver, and facility standards in relation to funding agreements.

Mandatory hourly, nightly and daily room checks are conducted at emergency shelters with congregate settings. Emergency shelters where guests have their own self-contained apartment have less frequent check ins. If people identify a safety concern, including a safety plan for harm reduction, staff will arrange to check in more often. Non congregate settings have one time per day check ins. The family shelter apartment-style setting has weekly apartment checks. Hotel shelter beds have an “eyes on the client” check-in once per day.

B.2 Recommendation Response

Please complete this section **per recommendation**.

A buddy peer system, supported by and overseen by the shelter, could be considered for use in shelters.

Response (Please Select One)	<input type="checkbox"/> Implemented
	<input type="checkbox"/> In Progress
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Implemented
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Justification / Detailed Response (MANDATORY):

Last year, the City renewed Hamilton's Emergency Shelter Standards with a section concerning Harm Reduction that indicates each shelter must have a harm reduction policy and share it with clients upon intake or shortly afterwards. The specific recommendation of a "buddy system" was rejected as too risky and opening people up to risk and trauma. People are encouraged to utilize harm reduction technologies, safer use sites, and to not use alone. When discussing this with the emergency shelter operators indicated that they feel it is irresponsible to have a formal process to promote the buddy system between clients as it puts an undue burden on shelter clients to monitor and respond to drug use and potential toxicity events.

B.3 Recommendation Response

Please complete this section **per recommendation**.

Harm reduction measures should be expanded with any available technologies to ensure residents are responsive.

Response (Please Select One)	<input type="checkbox"/> Implemented
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Implemented
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Justification / Detailed Response (MANDATORY):

Please provide additional context to your response including how you are implementing the recommendation, any progress you are making or planning to make regarding its implementation, or a detailed justification for why you will not be implementing the recommendation. If this recommendation is not applicable to your organization, please let us know why, and who might be best suited to receive it instead. Thank you.

Again, in 2023 the City renewed Hamilton's Emergency Shelter Standards with a section concerning Harm Reduction. At least one emergency shelter utilizes Brave sensors in the common washroom. Brave sensors are fixed location devices that alert someone when there is no movement for a set period of time. Hamilton's Public Health is funding 12 sensor devices for the common bathrooms in emergency shelters but the annual and start-up costs of installing sensors in each individual unit bathroom is prohibitive. System level conversations are unfolding regarding the adaptation and use of various technologies from phone apps to wearable technology, to overdose detection alert systems installed in bathrooms. The City is limited in what it can mandate the emergency shelter operators to take on, especially in the realm of health care or other duties outside of housing-focused sheltering.

B.4 Recommendation Response

Please complete this section **per recommendation**.

Application of the Duty of Care Principle for all shelters – designed for and by shelter staff and the clients that use them.

Response (Please Select One)	<input type="checkbox"/> Implemented
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Implemented
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Justification / Detailed Response (MANDATORY):

Please provide additional context to your response including how you are implementing the recommendation, any progress you are making or planning to make regarding its implementation, or a detailed justification for why you will not be implementing the recommendation. If this recommendation is not applicable to your organization, please let us know why, and who might be best suited to receive it instead. Thank you.

Hamilton's Emergency Shelter Standards lays out service and care standards, including the area of harm reduction. It is a document that is reviewed and updated every 5 years. It was co-created with emergency shelter operators and informed through extensive consultation with emergency shelter clients and interested community groups. It lays out the minimum expectations for operating service-delivery and facility standards in relation to funding agreements. Please see attached.