

Situation Report

Situation Report: 12.30.2021		
Incident Name: December 2021 Winter Weather		
OERS Number: OERS #2021-3265		
EOC: Fully Activated	Unified Commanders: Jonna Papaefthimiou, Portland Bureau of Emergency Management Mohammad Bader, Department of County Human Services Marc Jolin, Joint Office of Homeless Services Chris Voss, Multnomah County Emergency Management	
Date: 12/30/2021	Time:	Please note that this situation report is available to the public.

To submit updates / actions to this report, email the Multnomah County EOC Situation Unit at eoc.situationunit@multco.us with the subject line: Update for December 2021 Winter Weather Situation Report. **Updated items are in *bold italics*.**

Multnomah County and City of Portland December 2021 Winter Weather Emergency Response

Executive Summary

Severe weather shelters closed today, Thursday, Dec. 30, at 2 p.m., as severe weather thresholds were not forecast for this evening. Departing guests were provided transportation assistance and cold-weather supplies. For updates and future severe weather shelter sites, please check back at multco.us/cold or call 2-1-1. Anyone seeking alternative shelter options and other social and health services should dial 2-1-1.

While severe weather thresholds are not anticipated to be met, cold temperatures are expected to continue. The Joint Office of Homeless Services together with Multnomah County and the City of Portland, will [continue to monitor conditions](#) and be prepared to reopen shelters as soon as severe weather thresholds are met again.

Thresholds for emergency severe winter weather shelters are:

- ***Temperatures are forecast at 25 degrees or below***

- **Forecasters predict an inch or more of snow**
- **Overnight temperatures drop below 32 degrees, with an inch of driving rain.**
- **Other conditions occur as needed, including severe wind chills or extreme temperature fluctuations.**

Seasonal winter shelters have been open since November 19, through reservation. These shelters - funded through the Joint Office of Homeless Services and operated through partnerships with community organizations - continue to be open with 256 bed capacity.

Donations, especially of winter clothes and personal hygiene items, are welcomed. [Please see this page](#) for contacts for donating to outreach organizations and their items of greatest need.

To prepare for the winter weather incident forecasted by the National Weather Service for the 2021 holiday season, Multnomah County and the City of Portland initiated a collaborative response. Implementing lessons from the Severe Winter Weather in February 2021 and Heat Waves in Summer 2021, we are leveraging the strengths of our partners and community. Together, warming interventions and communications strategies were put in place to minimize the impacts of cold weather and prevent deaths. The County and its partners are strategically prioritizing communities with the greatest needs, using race/ethnicity disparity research, community voice and wisdom, and public health best practice.

On December 23, 2021, Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler declared a State of Emergency as the region braced for a prolonged stretch of freezing temperatures and snow. The first severe weather shelters opened at 3:00 pm, Saturday, December 25, 2021 and shelters are planned to operate 24-hours a day throughout the cold weather incident.

- [Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury's Emergency Declaration](#) (December 24th until January 3rd)
- [City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's Emergency Declaration](#) (**December 24th until Midnight on January 2nd**)
- [Oregon Governor Kate Brown's Emergency Declaration](#) (December 24th until January 3rd)

As we continue to experience prolonged periods of extremely cold temperatures, we ask everyone to exercise great caution. [The Multnomah County Medical Examiner's Office investigated and confirmed one death](#) from hypothermia, or extreme cold on December 25. The person who passed away on Christmas Day was housed, but was found outdoors.

“This is a somber reminder that Cold weather is dangerous for anyone outside who does not have the right gear to stay dry and warm,” said Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Vines. “If you see a person outside and have any concern they might be at risk in this cold weather, please check on them or call for help.”

If you are concerned about someone you know during cold weather please call Multnomah County's non-emergency response line at 503-823-3333 and request a welfare check.

Due to the national labor shortage, COVID-19 and the holiday season, staffing constraints are impacting every response section of the December 2021 Winter Weather incident. Most sections are operating with minimum staffing levels including shelters, transportation, outreach and logistics. Efforts to recruit drivers, severe weather shelter staff and outreach workers continue through social media, and county and city websites. Multiple messages have also gone out to City and County staff, as well as to Portland NETs (Neighborhood Emergency Teams) and the public.

National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast

December 30, 2021 Situational Update

- **At 1:53pm weather observations from the Portland International Airport (KPDX) recorded light rain with the winds at 9 mph from the southwest. The air temperature was 42°F with a relative humidity of 82% and wind chill of 37°F.**
- **[Weather Forecast Portland Airport](#) (as of 4:20pm, December 30)**
 - **Forecast overnight low temperature tonight - 34 degrees**
 - **Forecast high temperature, December 31 - 40 degrees**
 - **Overnight low temperature, December 31-January 1 - 22 degrees**
- **[Weather Forecast Troutdale Airport](#) (as of 4:23pm, December 30)**
 - **Forecast overnight low temperature tonight - 31 degrees**
 - **Forecast high temperature, December 31 - 41 degrees**
 - **Overnight low temperature, December 31-January 1 - 26 degrees**

Longer-Term Forecast

- A milder and wetter storm system appears likely late Sunday or Monday. While most model scenarios do not produce enough rain to result in river flooding concerns, there are still a small, but not insignificant, percentage of model scenarios that could result in higher rainfall totals and more snowmelt that could result in a few rivers reaching minor flood stage between Monday and Wednesday of next week (most likely towards Wednesday). In addition, there are also a small, but not insignificant number of scenarios that result in snow levels lowering back to near the valley floor towards Wednesday with a probability of 25% of 1" of snow accumulation by late Wednesday.

Closures of Services and Operations

On December 30, Multnomah County and The City of Portland opened with regular hours.

Portland Parks & Recreation classes, centers, day camps, and programs operated as scheduled on Thursday, December 30, 2021. Continue to check the Portland Parks & Recreation [Inclement Weather Policies and Closures](#) page for current information.

Charles Jordan Community Center opened with reduced hours on Thursday, December 30, 2021.

East Portland and Mt. Scott Community Centers are closed to the public through December 31. They are currently being used as severe weather shelters. All other community centers operated normally.

[Portland Bureau of Transportation \(PBOT\) and Road Impacts](#)

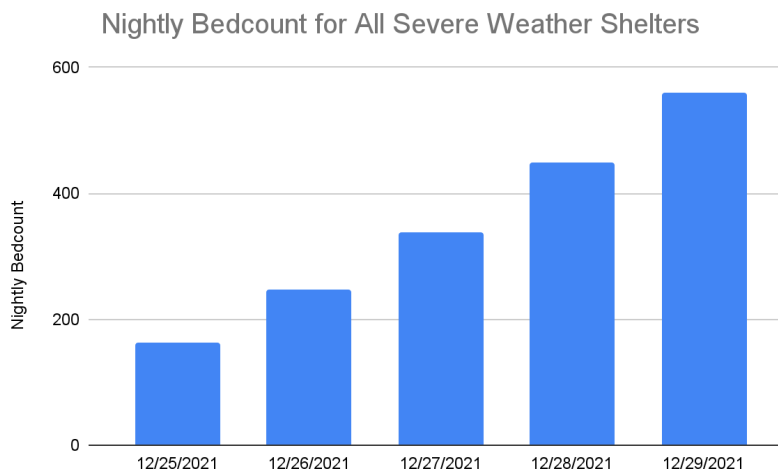
PBOT will have a full shift on the night of December 30th, working on demobilization. The predicted precipitation over the weekend is not enough to require snow and ice operations. Crews will be on call over the weekend to handle any freezing and trouble spots. Snow and ice operations will be fully demobilized by Monday, January 3

[Operations Section](#)

The Operations Section is coordinating and ensuring the support of warming interventions. Warming interventions are designed to provide options for those seeking respite from the severe weather, and include severe winter weather shelters and the distribution of warming resources to those remaining outdoors.

Shelter Plan

Severe weather shelters saw a significant increase again in overnight guests, to 559 (an increase of more than 100 from the previous day), on December 29-30. In order to meet this increasing demand, the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) was opened as a 24-hour severe weather shelter on December 28 increasing total shelter capacity to 628. 145 guests were sheltered at the OCC on the night of December 29-30.



Seven (7) 24-hour severe winter weather shelters were open on the morning of December 30th and the overnight (December 29-30) bed counts were as follows:

- **[The Portland Building, Downtown, \(1120 SW 5th Ave\)](#)**
 - ***70 guests (70 capacity)***
- **[East Portland Community Center, Mill Park, \(740 SE 106th Ave\)](#)**



- 44 guests (44 capacity)
- **Salvation Army Moore Street Gymnasium, (5325 N Williams Ave)**
 - 50 guests (60 capacity)
- **Mt. Scott Community Center, Mt. Scott, (5530 SE 72nd Ave)**
 - 87 guests (87 capacity)
- **Market Street (120 SE Market St) in partnership with with Transition Projects (TPI)**
 - 113 guests (124 capacity)
- **Reynolds High School (1698 SW Cherry Park Rd, Troutdale) Staffed by and in partnership with Cultivate Initiatives**
 - 50 guests (115 capacity)
- **Oregon Convention Center (960 NE 1st Ave)**
 - 145 guests (160 capacity)

Multnomah County and the City of Portland's Mass Care and Shelter team provide compassionate care for community guests seeking relief from the cold. They operate and support severe winter weather shelters which are a type of [Disaster Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) with heat, warming resources, water, food, and support services. If you or someone you know wants to help, please click on the link with the name of the shelter locations to reach the volunteer signup web page.

County shelters have a "no turn away" policy because of life-threatening cold temperatures and will create additional capacity during this event as needed. Severe weather shelters do not require identification or any other documentation for entry. All shelters are ADA accessible and pets are welcome at all locations. Survival kits with life-saving gear — tents, sleeping bags, warm clothing — will also be distributed as needed at each severe weather shelter site.

In partnership with 211, the City and County are offering free transportation for guests to shelters, using City and County resources. Trimet is also waiving fares for people traveling to a shelter, and offering ticket vouchers for guests leaving shelters. Volunteers from Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Teams are partnering with 211 to provide additional remote dispatching assistance and are available to respond to requests to clear snow from driveways and sidewalks for persons with mobility issues (requested through PBOT dispatch).

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

To ensure the safety of guests exiting the shelters, they were provided with COVID-19 safety guidance. Also, respiratory protection was made available for them to use after the shelters closed.

The new COVID variant Omicron is confirmed in Multnomah County and is expected to spread quickly in the coming days and weeks. Fully vaccinated people may get sick with Omicron but are still unlikely to get seriously ill. Those who are boosted have a lower risk of being infected at all. Any unvaccinated person is at very high risk of getting and spreading COVID. Call [211](#) to find out where you can go to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Vaccination clinics have been made available for guests at severe weather shelters. This service is supported by Multnomah County Public Health and American Medical Response (AMR) and was planned for all shelter locations at scheduled times.

- Vaccines administered by day at Severe Weather Shelters:
 - Dec. 26 (15); Dec. 27 (25); Dec. 28 (21); **Dec. 29 (17)**

Multnomah County Libraries

The libraries continue to provide additional warming spaces for residents in the day and evening. All branches were open for regular hours on Thursday, December 30. All libraries close at 6PM on Dec. 31 and will be closed on January 1. Check the library website, linked above, for any alerts or updated hours.

211

Please note that 211info contains the most accurate day/night warming shelter information, including community-led sites and the 211 dispatchers have the most up to date information on general resources and year round shelter capacity and availability for community members. Before referring or transporting guests to shelter, people should call 211 for the most up to date information about shelter availability.

Families in Portland seeking shelter are also encouraged to call 211 to find facilities that can accommodate families. Families can also come to any severe weather shelter to be referred to an appropriate family shelter option. 211info will coordinate transport for community members who would like shelter, but do not have a way to get there.

211info/NET Dispatch (Dec. 29-30)

- **Total transportation numbers for the evening of December 28:**
 - **95 transports requests were filled.**
 - **4 individuals and 2 families were referred to motels.**
- **An online training for 54 additional NET volunteers to serve as Ground Support Dispatchers in the future was held on Thursday Dec. 30.**
- **60 people were referred to seasonal/year-round shelters operated by community partners (i.e. Nazarene/UGM; CityTeam; Arbor Lodge; Walnut Park; Greyhound Station).**
- Sign up to receive 211info text alerts when Severe Weather shelters are open in Multnomah County, text the keyword "pdxshelter" to 898211 (TXT211).
- For the latest information on warming centers in Multnomah County visit 211info's page on warming centers, [click here](#).

Visit Multnomah County's Warming Shelters and Homelessness site for more information, including volunteer and donation opportunities, [click here](#).

[211info](#) connects people with health and social service organizations. At the core of this work is the Community Information Center, supported by 211's Resource Database team. 211 provides enhanced information and

referral and assistance programs that support specific populations and service needs. Preplanning for the December 2021 cold weather incident included adding severe weather shelter information to prominently feature on the 211info homepage including county-specific information about severe weather shelters in 29 Oregon counties.

Portland Water Bureau

The Water Bureau will transition to normal operations over the next few days, although there is still the expectation that there will be increased main breaks as thawing occurs.

The Water Bureau is prepared to respond to cold weather, which can cause pipes to break, especially when freezing temperatures are prolonged.

Anyone observing water running from streets or sidewalks is encouraged to report the leak to the Water Bureau by calling their 24-hour Emergency Line at 503-823-4874, for water system emergencies, including suspected main breaks.

If customers experience ongoing water quality problems or lost water service with no notification, call the Water Quality Line at 503-823-7525, Monday through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. After hours, contact the 24-hour Emergency Line at 503-823-4874.

Portland Water Bureau also provided tips and precautions through social media and local news on how to prepare your home for the winter weather and avoid frozen pipes.

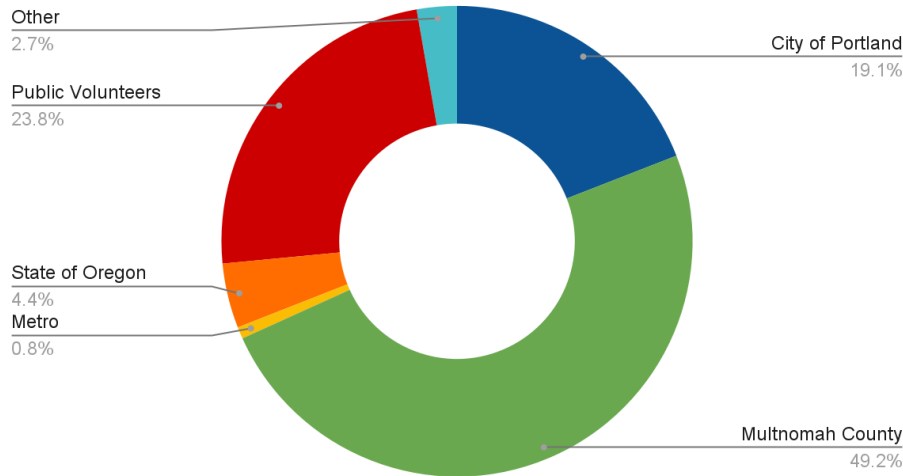
Administration

The closing of severe weather shelters adjusted staffing needs over the New Year holiday. Already scheduled shifts are being maintained on Friday night, December 31, in case severe weather thresholds are met and emergency shelters are reopened. Scheduled staff on the afternoon of December 29 had shifts maintained to clean facilities and assist with logistics and resupply. Saturday and Sunday shifts are being maintained for potential operation or full demobilization.

Below are the cumulative number of shifts worked by source through 2:30 PM on December 30:

- ***608 Multnomah County employees***
- ***236 City of Portland employees***
- ***294 Public volunteers (including Portland Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) members)***
- ***10 Metro employees***
- ***55 Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) Staff Note: The State of Oregon was asked to concentrate on filling OCC shifts and had filled more shifts Sunday and Monday which were canceled due to operational necessities***
- ***34 temporary staffing agency workers***

Shelter Staff Shift Share



Volunteers are asked to call the PIC phone in their job descriptions for last minute cancellations and to email eoc.adminsection@multco.us if canceling more than 4 hours before their shift. In addition, three local staffing agencies are working with this section to assist with shifts.

The Administration Section strives to ensure recruitment and training that creates an inclusive, positive, productive, and healthy work environment across all response operations. Team members remain nimble and address the changing conditions throughout the emergency response. They provide equity and inclusion support, as well as human resources and labor relations consultation. Staffing for the entire response is coordinated through this section.

Staff and Volunteers

Multnomah County Human Resources and the City of Portland recruited staff to volunteer for paid temporary reassignment to work at the severe winter weather shelters. A [series of training videos](#) was designed to help prepare community members to work in these settings. In addition to county and city staff, members of the public are also being recruited to volunteer at severe winter weather shelters with a public message for recruitment sent out on December 25 and thereafter. There is still a need for volunteers and donated gear; please click this [link](#) to sign up or donate.

Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs)

Portland [NETs](#) are providing critical assistance to this response in several aspects of the response including the following:

- Assisting with 211 and providing shelter transportation dispatch.
- Driving and logistics section support roles.
- Supporting supply preparations at Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) and County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) warehouses.
- Clearing storm drains.
- Providing accessibility assistance at TriMet stops.



- Responding to requests via Portland Bureau of Transportation dispatch for snow clearing on sidewalks and driveways for those with mobility or access needs.

Outreach / Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS)

Outreach teams from Transition Projects, JOIN, Janus Youth, Cascadia Behavioral Health and more will continue to contact vulnerable populations and meet people who may arrive at shelters after closing to provide winter gear and other support services.

Outreach Teams including [Transition Projects](#), [Cascadia](#), [JOIN](#), [Janus Youth Program](#), [MCSO HOPE](#), and [Portland Street Response](#) continued their outreach efforts to encourage our houseless neighbors to seek shelter as the temperatures drop while providing cold weather gear.

How to help

If you see someone outside who is unsheltered and whose life appears to be in danger, call 9-1-1. If you see someone about whom you are concerned during cold weather (for instance, they are not dressed for the weather conditions), call Multnomah County's non-emergency response line at 503-823-3333 to request a welfare check.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) was established in 2016 to oversee the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. The office represents a shared commitment between Multnomah County and the City of Portland in making services easier to access for those in need. This work is only possible because of the partnership and collaboration of many community based organizations and volunteers who provide essential contributions to outreach, staffing, and distribution efforts.

JOHS Resource Distribution

The Joint Office Supply Center will remain open tomorrow, December 31, and volunteers with appointments to obtain winter gear for distribution should keep those appointments. To request gear, schedule an appointment via email to JOHSupplies@multco.us. The JOHS Supply Center has been staffed by volunteers and is currently well supplied.

JOHS is currently operating with multiple outreach partners who have been operating in every part of the County distributing gear. Contracted provider outreach teams have distributed even more gear that was staged at their work locations to provide easy access.

During the period from 12/20/2021 to 12/29/2021, these teams distributed a total of:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| • 1,887 sleeping bags | 3,900 tarps |
| • 2,274 tents | 4,829 blankets |
| • 8,740 socks | 3,190 ponchos |
| • 2,720 Mylar thermal sleeping bags | 6,359 hot hands |
| • 1,608 hoodies | 1,608 sweatpants |
| • 4,696 gloves | 4,612 hats |

During a severe winter weather event, the Joint Office of Homeless Services distributes cold-weather sleeping bags, socks and tents to providers, community-based organizations, and individuals who wish to redistribute in their neighborhoods.

[Public Information Office \(PIO\) and Joint Information System \(JIS\)](#)

The Public Information Office (PIO) sent out a [press release](#) on December 30 regarding the closure of emergency severe weather shelters and continuing efforts to distribute winter gear and provide outreach to unhoused communities.

The Public Information Section uses an equity lens to create and disseminate vital information to the public, assuring accessibility and relevance to communities. Public Information Officers (PIOs) current priorities include communicating out [resources](#) to mitigate the impact of this extreme cold weather incident on County residents.

A Joint Information System (JIS) was established with Washington, Clackamas, Clark and Multnomah County, the cities of Portland and Gresham on December 23. The JIS will meet daily during the December 2021 Winter Weather response and post regular updates to [Care for When It's Cold](#). The JIS is responding to a growing number of media requests, has a shared media protocol, and a social media plan where they are monitoring and posting messages in multiple languages. A number of resource materials have been created to publicize the opening of [additional severe weather shelters](#) and to encourage community members to [volunteer for shifts at severe weather shelters](#).

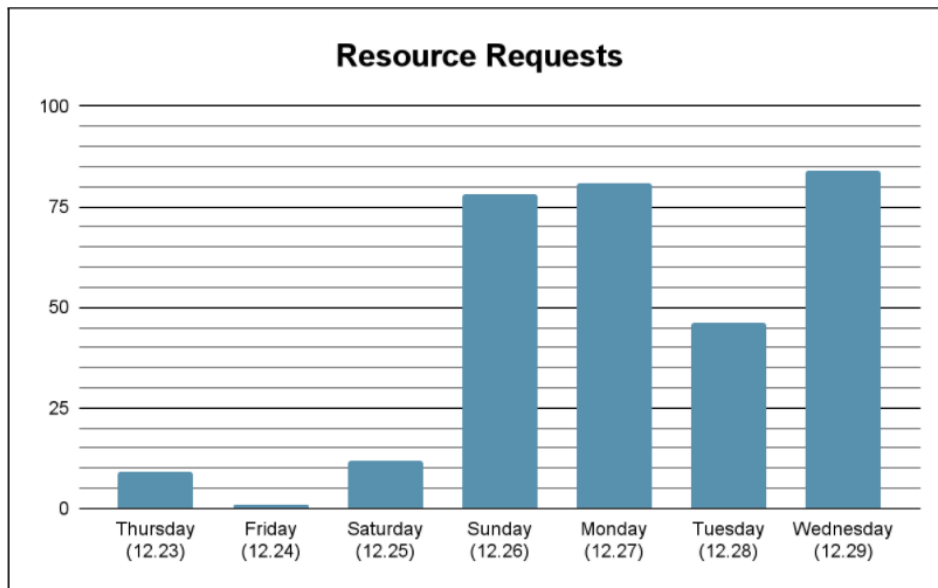
- [Winter Travel Guide](#) for transportation resources, winter driving tips and snow-plow priority route information
- [Cold Weather Tips to Print and Post](#): Includes the
 - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Older Adults](#)
 - [Help for when it's cold -Winter Safety at Home](#)
 - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Cold Weather Safety](#)
 - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Pet Owners](#)
- The City and County have multiple social media accounts that are updated regularly in different languages with emergency messaging. Please visit and share:
 - [Multnomah County Emergency Management Facebook](#)
 - [Multnomah County Facebook](#)
 - [Multnomah County Instagram](#)
 - [Multnomah County Twitter](#)
 - [City of Portland Facebook](#)
 - [City of Portland Twitter](#)

Logistics

The Logistics Section supported the closure of shelter sites on Thursday, December 30th. The Supply and Ground Support Units combined to stage and distribute warm weather supplies for those exiting each of the shelters prior to their closure at 2:00pm.

The Logistics Section is coordinating with the Operations Section to prepare for the demobilization of all seven (7) sites. With most of these sites being active community locations, it is critical demobilization operations are completed in a timely manner in coordination with the site owner.

The Logistics Section has received over 280 resource requests to support inclement weather operations. Below is a breakdown of supply and transportation resource requests per day (updated as of mid-day December 29):



The Logistics Section supports the actions of all other emergency response sections. Logistics focuses on procedures for activating, dispatching, distributing, allocating, tracking, and deactivating resources, supplies, and materials needed for emergency and disaster operations.

For the current winter weather response, the Logistics Section's priorities include purchasing, coordinating, and delivering the supplies needed to set-up shelters sites, delivering requested needs to community partners, and supporting DRC sites to acquire supplies throughout the duration of this incident.

Supply Unit

The Supply Unit Team is staging, re-ordering, and procuring materials and equipment needed to open additional shelters. This includes gathering up floor protection materials, shopping for clothing and food, and adding beds bedding to supplies routed to New Shelter

The Team continues to procure various resources to support existing winter weather operations. With the assistance of Ground Support and the Resource Request Lead, the Section has staged pallets of supplemental materials to deliver in support of the shelters, staged dozens of additional pallets of supplies for potential expansion of shelter capacity and is working to deliver any additional supplies needed for operations.

Food Unit

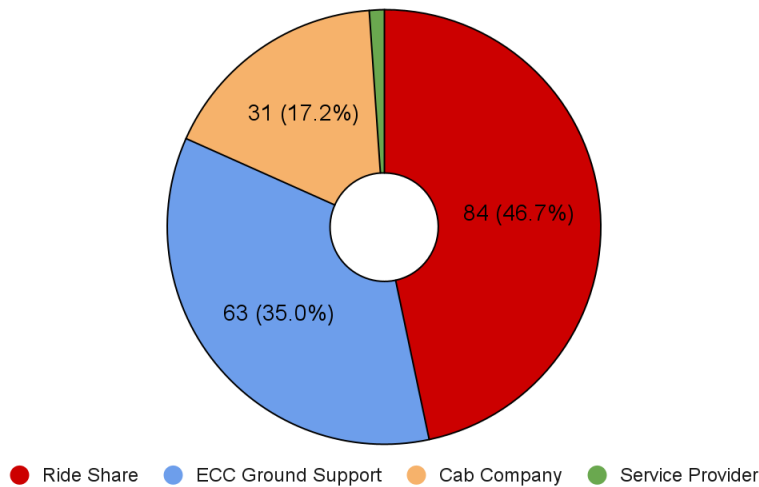
As of mid-day December 30, the Logistics Food Unit had provided 5,592 meals in coordination with community partners.

The Food Unit is supporting meal services to each of the five open shelters sites. The response is providing meals in coordination with US Foods, Feed the Mass, Blanchet House, and Stone Soup PDX.

Multnomah County and City of Portland Ground Support Unit

Ground support has been providing direct support to the shelter sites with a continuous transport of newcomers at full shelters to shelters with available beds as part of the ‘No guest turned away’ policy. The graph below provides a breakdown of 211 arranged transports by provider:

211 Arranged Transports by Provider



Note*: The graph above only depicts transports arranged by 211.

Multnomah County Ground Support Unit has assisted with the distribution of resources to shelter sites during the build-up to operations. The team has transported supply trailers, pallets of supplemental supplies, and completed general transports supporting this incident. The Ground Support Unit will continue to support incoming resource requests for shelters and other critical inclement weather operations throughout the duration of this incident.

Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) Ground Transportation is assisting 211 with ground transportation support for those looking for transportation assistance to severe weather shelters. PBEM is

seeking relief for Ground Transport coordinators and will be working with partners to help with passenger transportation needs. Portland Water Bureau provided vehicles for transport to shelters and snow removal.

Portland Fire and Rescue volunteers are assisting the unit in order to meet staffing needs, Portland Fire and Rescue employees are also active as drivers and provided guest transport vans. The Portland Water Bureau also provided the Ground Transportation Unit with a 9 passenger van.

Public Health and Emergency Services

Emergency department and urgent care visits have been elevated through December 30th. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is seeing cold related calls but not for hypothermia, most calls were related to falls and slips because of ice. Response times have increased and EMS staffing is stressed because of COVID-19.

Behavioral Health staff are working with emergency response teams for this incident and are working with a health outreach program. The urgent walk-in clinic is open.

[Portland Fire and Rescue \(PF&R\)](#)

Staffing levels have improved; only Rescue 19 that serves Mt. Tabor is shut down due to staffing shortages. Logistics will have a small crew over the holiday weekend.

PF&R assisted PBEM Ground Support with shelter drivers and van dispatchers/coordinators - ***especially during the final overnight shifts.***

[Planning](#)

The planning section provides administrative and documentation support that helps organize the response; and creates situational awareness and the development of a common operating picture. This work helps to inform the priorities and objectives of the response. The Planning Section ensures the accurate documentation of actions taken and continues to provide updates to the tools that connect all partners across the response. This organizational framework aims to reduce duplication and increase efficiency and effectiveness of the cooperative effort of this response.

Stay Informed, Get Help, Get Involved

Activated Call Centers

Call Center	Phone Number	Email	Hours
211 Call Center	211 or 866-698-6155	help@211info.org	Seven days a week, 24 hours a day.



Behavioral Health Call Center	503-988-4888 Toll-free: 800-716-9769 TTY: 711		Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
Aging & Disabilities Resource Connection	503-988-3646	adrc@multco.us	Information and assistance to older people, people with disabilities, and caregivers, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
Multnomah County COVID-19 Call Center	503-988-8939		Information and assistance available on Severe Heat resources, cooling centers, and COVID-19 vaccine and testing sites and business guidance

More questions?

- Consult [Multnomah County Care for When It's Cold](#).
- Contact [211](#):
 - Call 2-1-1 (open 24/7)
 - Visit [211info](#)
 - Text your zip code to 899211 (standard message and data rates may apply)

Media

For media inquiries related to the December 2021 Winter Weather incident please **contact Kate Yeiser (503-410-4524) or Mike Pullen (503-209-4111)**, Multnomah County Public Information Media Coordinators

Document Development Information	
Prepared By (Name & Position)	Justin Gibbs, Situation Unit Leader
Approved By (Name & Position)	Chris Voss and Mohammad Bader, Unified Command
Date; Time Approved	12/30/2021; 1839 hours
This is the situation report for 12/30/2021.	