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## **REGISTERED COMFORT CENTER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **Use of Facilities as a Comfort Center during an Emergency**

#### **Between**

#### **[Name of Facility]**

*Herein referred to as the "Facility Owner"*

#### **And**

#### **Municipality of the District of St. Mary's Emergency Management Organization**

*Herein referred to as "St. Mary's EMO"*

The Facility Owner desires to enter into an agreement with St. Mary's EMO to provide its facility as a Comfort Center during a loss of infrastructure caused by severe weather, an emergency event, or a declared State of Local Emergency.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) does not limit the facility from activating its facility as a Comfort Center on its own initiative under the liability of the organization. If such an activation takes place, the Facility Owner agrees to inform St. Mary's EMO of the Comfort Center activation.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Comfort Center** is a facility that is used for residents who are Sheltering-In-Place and remain in their homes during an emergency but do not have full services such as electricity, heat, and water. Comfort Centers are intended to provide: a place to go to get warm/cool; light refreshments; charge electronic devices; provide updates; community gathering points; and washroom facilities. To operate as a Comfort Center, the facility must have a generator.

Comfort Centers do not provide overnight accommodations and will not accept evacuees. If, during the daytime operations, the Comfort Center volunteers identify a requirement for overnight shelter, such requests shall be forwarded to the St. Mary's Emergency Management Organization, at which time a decision will be made to provide overnight shelter (see Emergency Shelters definition).

**Emergency Shelter** is a facility opened at the request of the St. Mary's Emergency Management Organization in a large-scale emergency and is operated by the Canadian Red Cross, under the direction of the Department of Community Services. An Emergency Shelter includes providing personal services, and accommodation and can include psycho-social services. To operate as an emergency shelter, the facility must have a generator; running water available during power outages; a kitchen facility; showers; and a large space for cots to be set up. Shelters are usually managed by the NS Department of Community Services in conjunction with the Red Cross.

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## **AGREEMENT:**

1. The parties agree that when this facility is opened as a Comfort Center, the facility's volunteers are responsible for the care and upkeep of the facility. The attached guidelines, Appendix B- Comfort Center Facility Guidelines, provide guidance to the offerings of a Comfort Center.
  2. Following the international standard for emergency preparedness, it is recommended residents prepare personal preparedness kits for their family and pets to Shelter in Place for up to 72 hours. It is further recommended Comfort Centers open after 72 hours have passed. In extenuating circumstances, consideration may be made to open a Comfort Center prior to 72 hours.
  3. The parties further agree this facility will not be used as an overnight Emergency Shelter unless there is a need for an overnight Emergency Shelter and the request is first made to the St. Mary's EMO for consultation with NS EMO, Department of Community Services, and the Canadian Red Cross.
  4. St. Mary's EMO shall advertise the location of Comfort Centers for use by any resident or persons in need without regard to their place of residence. Advertising can only be completed once opening time and closing time are provided to St. Mary's EMO. Where possible, the ideal open hours for a comfort center are 10 am – 2 pm or 4 pm – 8 pm.
  5. Any facility utilizing a well shall meet safe drinking water guidelines at the time of opening to the public. To ensure safe water quality, the Facility Owner shall submit test samples of its water supply annually to a health authority for clearance as a safe source of potable water.
  6. Any facility offering food shall be made in a commercial kitchen using safe food handling practices, or only offer pre-packaged food.
  7. Any facility dependent on a septic system shall ensure the system is fully operational and able to meet the capacity needs of the facility for extended periods.
  8. Comfort Centers will be eligible for an annual grant as per the Municipal Comfort Center Policy and may make requests to Council for additional Comfort Center Funding considerations. If a Comfort Center receives funding for equipment or infrastructure, it is the duty of the Comfort Center to maintain the equipment or infrastructure and keep it in good repair.
  9. If a Community Center opens a Comfort Center on its own accord, against advice from the EMC, the Comfort Center shall assume all liability.
  10. A Comfort Center shall remain a Municipally Registered Comfort Center unless they have provided 90 days notice to de-register.
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**WITNESS WHEREOF:** This Memorandum of Understanding executed by the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's EMO and the Facility Owner, made this: \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

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Witness

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St. Mary's EMO Representative

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Witness

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Facility Owner / Representative

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