

The Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center

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SHELTER GUEST RULES & RESPONSIBILITIES

*Violations to these rules are considered serious.
Guests who are not in compliance, despite counseling and assistance,
will be asked to leave the Center.*

Safety & Security

1. Alcoholic beverages and illegal substances may not be brought into the Center or onto the grounds.
2. Prescription medications may not be shared, sold, bought, or taken in any way other than as prescribed in the Center or on the grounds. Prescription and over the counter medications must be kept in the locked storage units provided to guests by the Center, although insulin may be stored by the wellness team if appropriate. Guests are responsible for taking medication as prescribed. All needles must be disposed of in appropriate disposal containers provided by the Center.
3. Guests in the Center or on the grounds in an impaired condition will be assessed and referred for appropriate care.
4. Food and open containers of any kind may not be brought into the Center without special permission. Food may not be brought into shelter areas under any circumstances.
5. Weapons of any kind may not be brought into the Center or onto facility grounds.
6. Guests must participate in the Biometrics finger-scan program for all Center activities. It is especially important to scan in each night before retiring. *Guests who do not scan in may risk being asked to leave the Center shelters.*
7. All areas in the Center are “smoke-free”. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building. This includes sleeping areas, hallways, stairways, offices, bathrooms, community areas, and the loading dock. The only appropriate smoking area is located next to the building and has benches and receptacles. Please extinguish all cigarettes in the receptacles provided. Guests will not be permitted to leave the building to smoke after curfew until 5:30am.
8. Guests must comply with all fire and safety regulations. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors may not be disconnected, or batteries removed, at any time. Guests agree to participate in all fire drills, evacuating the building until staff determines that it is safe to return.
9. Cooking and heat-producing items such as irons, hot-plates, electric griddles or grills, toasters, coffeemakers, etc. are not permitted in guest areas. Also included are curling irons, flat irons or any other comparable grooming items that are plugged in and heat up. Flammable products like gasoline, turpentine and paint thinner, are prohibited in the facility. Candles and incense are also prohibited. No unauthorized plug-in devices such as air fresheners and heaters are allowed.

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10. Security and/or Center team staff may search items brought into the Center or onto the grounds at any time. Guests must allow Security and Center team staff access to all areas of the building and grounds and comply with all official requests and instructions in regard to hygiene, cleanliness, and safety.

Restrictions / Terminations

Guests may be asked to leave the Center sheltering programs for destruction of property, violence or inappropriate activity that causes disturbance to the Center in general, the sharing or selling of illegal or prescription drugs with others and the use of illegal drugs on the premises. Reasons for immediate dismissal include:

- Stealing
- Fighting
- Tampering with smoke detectors, building systems, security cameras and/or carbon monoxide detectors
- Smoking in the facility
- Fraternizing with anyone employed or staying at the Center
- Possessing a weapon
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs or medications not prescribed to you
- Smoking in the building
- Threatening guests or staff
- Violence toward guests or staff
- Driving under the influence on the property

In these situations, police will be called and charges may be filed.

Guests will be issued notice of failure to abide by house rules in their rooms. They may be issued citations by Security for more serious offenses, including intoxication and the attempt to bring alcohol or drugs onto the premises. Any physical and/or verbal occurrence will be documented in an incident report. Copies of incident reports are kept in guests' files and may be reviewed at any time. Guests involved in three or more incidents may be asked to leave the Center. Guests who consistently receive citations and break rules will be given warnings which may lead up to being asked to leave the sheltering programs.

Health & Wellness

1. New shelter guests must complete a Wellness assessment within 24 hours of their arrival. Make an appointment with the Wellness team at the Next Step desk (in the Dining Room) or at the front desk during hours Next Step is not open. Bring the Wellness assessment form included in this packet to your appointment.
2. Shelter guests must have a TB test. The Wellness team will perform the test for you. If you have recently had a TB test that meets Wellness requirements, you may provide documentation to the Wellness team.
3. Medical exceptions to any shelter guideline must be documented by the nursing staff.

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4. Bed assignments will be adjusted for health or safety reasons. Guests who are frail or disabled will be given preference for lower bunks and other guests may be asked to switch beds to facilitate these accommodations.
5. Guests are required to shower and change and launder their clothes regularly. If needed, program staff can provide soap and shampoo. Guests must clean up the bathroom after each use and place dirty towels into the linen bins.
6. If the Center team determines that emergency help is required, guests must cooperate with police, EMTs, and/or ambulance workers when they arrive.

Working toward Housing

1. New shelter guests must complete a Clinical assessment within 24 hours of their arrival. Make an appointment with the Clinical team by leaving the Clinical Assessment form included in this packet at the front desk.
2. Center team members will work with each guest to set goals for your shelter stay and to create a care and housing plan. It is important that you participate fully in this process.
3. A formal progress review will be scheduled regularly to evaluate guests' eligibility to remain in the Center shelters based on participation and progress towards meeting housing plans.
4. All guests eligible for entitlements such as Food Stamps, General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, or Veterans' Assistance must apply. Center team staff will assist with the application process as needed.
5. Each guest is encouraged to save 75% of his or her income while staying at the shelter to use for housing when leaving. Center team members will assist guests to open Bank or Credit Union accounts for this purpose.
6. Guests must truthfully disclose information requested by Center team staff, including parole and probation status, criminal background, Megan's Law status, medical history, medication, and income.
7. Guests are expected to actively work on housing and vocational goals during the day, including working, job and housing search, health and entitlement appointments, education, and support services. Guests remaining in the building during the day must be actively engaged in achieving their personal goals.

Community Living

1. Guests are expected to return to Center shelters by curfew each night. Late returns or nights out must be approved in advance by management.
2. Attendance at scheduled community meetings is mandatory. Dates and times will be posted throughout the building – make sure you are there!
3. Consideration for everyone is very important. Keep the volume down on your television, computer, personal stereo, and your voice. And turn them all off at lights out!

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4. Cleanliness and hygiene is as important for your possessions as for your person. Sheets and towels must be exchanged for clean ones regularly. Assigned laundry facilities must be used regularly and as directed.
5. Furnishings that are the property of the Center cannot be removed from the premises, destroyed, or used in unintended ways.
6. Gender-specific areas of the Center must be respected. Personal contact between guests or between guests and staff is not acceptable.
7. Guests must dress appropriately for group living. This means no short-shorts, see-through clothing, or other revealing attire. Footwear and clothing are required at all times. Pajamas or other sleeping attire is required for sleeping. Sleeping attire is not appropriate at meals, including breakfast.

General

1. Individuals must be 18 or older to stay in Center shelters. Everyone must provide ID upon arrival. Guests without complete ID must work with the Next Step team to obtain ID.
2. Individuals arriving after hours and requesting shelter may be allowed to stay for one night if space is available, and must meet with the Next Step team the following day.
3. The Center is not responsible for guests' belongings during their stay, or for any items left behind when guests exit the shelter programs. Belongings remaining one week (7 days) after a guest departs will be disposed of.
4. Guests must use the Biometrics finger-scan system for all programs and services, including night entry.
5. Guests may receive visitors in Next Step, at lunch or dinner, or outside the facility. Visitors may not enter guest rooms without prior management approval.
6. Telephone service is available for emergency and service-plan related purposes only. No personal calls can be made or accepted.
7. Guests' belongings and items cannot be stored in the lobby. Items left unattended in the lobby will be disposed of.
8. Guests will be able to receive mail which is put in a mail bin located in Next Step. Please check to see if you have mail on a regular basis as this is a primary way for Management to convey important appointments.

Policies

Several Center policies may be attached for your reference.

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Programs

All shelter programs

- All guests must scan in each and every night.
- Guests arriving after curfew will not be accepted into the building unless prior written arrangements have been made with management approval. Phone calls may rarely be accepted for lateness in verifiable emergency situations.
- Guests leaving the facility after curfew may not re-enter until 5:30 am.
- Guests are eligible to receive three meals a day at the Center
- No food or beverages are permitted in the building outside of meal service.
- Condiments, tea bags and drink mixes of any kind are not allowed. Hazardous substances of any kind, including bleach and lighter fluid are not permitted. Guests are permitted one empty bottle (no larger than 12 ounces) into the shelter to use for water.
- Guests must be able to store their own medications and be responsible to take their medications as directed. Guests are responsible for reporting medical and psychiatric conditions to the Wellness and Clinical staff so that they can help manage and improve guests' health.
- Guests do not have access to bed areas, lockers, or bins during the day. Items needed during the day must be kept on each guest's person when each shelter program closes for the day.
- Laundry facilities are available to shelter guests.
 - Laundry schedules must be followed
 - Guests must clean up after themselves
 - Damaging equipment will result in a loss of laundry privileges
- Personal electronic devices may not be used after lights-out, including telephones, computers, DVD players and music players.
- All guests are eligible to receive a lock. Please ask for one and use it to secure your personal belongings. Remember that you are responsible for them, not the Center.
- Parking policies for all shelter guests:
 - Shelter guests' vehicles must be registered with the Center
 - Vehicles may not be operated in a reckless and/or unlawful manner on Center property
 - Guests may not hang out, smoke, or store belongings in vehicles
 - Guests may not allow unregistered operation of their vehicles on the premises
 - Vehicles left behind by guests leaving the shelter programs may be impounded.

Seasonal "sit-up" shelter program (December –March)

- Each guest is issued one bin to store belongings. Bins may not be overstuffed. Anything that does not fit in bins will be disposed of. Broken bins will not be replaced by the Center.

Overnight shelter program (downstairs):

- Each guest is issued two bins to store belongings and bedding. Bins may not be overstuffed. Anything that does not fit in bins will be disposed of. Broken bins will not be replaced by the Center.

Single shelter program (upstairs):

- All guests must scan in each and every night.
- Rooms must be kept neat and clean at all times. You must make your bed every day. Rooms are inspected daily.
- General clean-up is the first weekend of every month, and rooms will be inspected the following Monday. Items out of compliance will be confiscated.
- No tape, pins, or nails may be used to hang items on the walls.

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- Belongings must be stored in the drawers and shelves assigned to you. Only shoes may be stored under your bed. Medications and valuables should be locked in the cabinet under your bed. Only alarm clocks may be left on the window sill.
- Having more Center blankets, pillows, sheets, or towels than assigned to you will be considered theft of Center property. Center property may not be taken with you when you leave the Center sheltering program.
- Food including condiments of any kind are not allowed. Hazardous substances of any kind, including bleach and lighter fluid are not permitted. Guests are permitted one empty bottle (no larger than 12 ounces) into the shelter to use for water.

Next Step:

- Next Step services are available every day according to the Center schedule. From time to time hours may be adjusted to allow for Center events, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner.
- Next Step accepts mail for all current Center shelter guests. After you leave the Center shelter, you may arrange for your mail to continue to come to Next Step for a brief period of time while you transfer it to your new address.
- Shower and laundry access may be arranged through Next Step for times when the Shelter programs are closed.
- Bus passes may be requested through Next Step to accomplish tasks related to health and housing. They are available only to Shelter guests without income.