



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcountyca.gov

## **SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY SHELTER TO OPEN**

To protect the unhoused from a severe weather system and possible flooding, temporary protective severe weather shelters will open beginning Sunday, March 3. Start time will vary depending on shelter site. The shelter system is the result of a collaboration between the County of Santa Cruz, City of Santa Cruz, and City of Watsonville.

Severe weather shelters at Depot Park in Santa Cruz and Watsonville Veterans Hall will operate as 24-hour shelters beginning at 8 p.m. on Sunday, March 3, and be open until 8 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5, when shelter operations will be reassessed. Shelter at the Santa Cruz Veterans Hall will operate as an overnight shelter from 8 p.m.–8 a.m. on March 3, and from 10 p.m. – 8 a.m. on March 4.

Lineup for shelter services begins one hour prior to shelters openings. The sites will be operated by The Free Guide. *Capacity is limited.*

The following sites will provide shelter:

<b>Depot Park</b>	<b>Santa Cruz Veterans Hall</b>	<b>Watsonville Veterans Hall</b>
119 Center Street Santa Cruz	846 Front Street Santa Cruz	215 East Beach Street Watsonville

Beds will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, with preference for people with disabilities and those experiencing significant health/safety risk sleeping outdoors. Guests will be provided with cots, blankets, and ready-to-eat meals.

Additional precautions are being taken to help mitigate the risk of the spread of bacteria that has led to the recent Shigella outbreak primarily impacting individuals experiencing homelessness. Additional precautions include symptom screening and providing additional toilets and handwashing stations.

Pets are allowed if they are leashed and can be kept under voice control. No aggressive animals will be allowed at shelter sites. Food will be available once intakes and bed assignments are completed. Belongings must fit in small storage areas near bed assignments.