



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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Questions to Ask a Shelter Prior to Patient Discharge

For certain individuals, discharge to an emergency shelter may be unavoidable. For example, certain individuals may choose to return to an emergency shelter. In these situations, working with the individual, the hospital discharge staff should contact the shelter at least 24 hours ahead of time and ask the following questions:

- Can you provide a copy of the shelter policies for my patient to review?
- What time does the patient need to be at the shelter to confirm a bed for the night?
- Are there requirements to permit entry into the shelter (e.g., photo ID, sobriety)?
- What meals are provided by the shelter and when are these meals provided?
- Will the patient be assigned a specific bed when s/he arrives?
- Will the bed be a bunk bed or cot?
- Are shelter residents assigned a locker?
- Are shelter residents allowed to stay at the shelter during daytime hours or are they asked to leave?
 - If asked to leave, what time are they asked to leave each morning?
 - Does the shelter offer any activities or programming during the day?
- If shelter residents are required to leave during daytime hours, are they required to take their belongings or are they allowed to store their belonging at the shelter?
- Do shelter residents have to sign up each day for a nightly bed or are they allowed to reserve a bed for multiple nights at a time?
- If shelter residents have to sign up each day for a nightly bed, what is the sign up process?
- Does your shelter have a maximum length of stay policy?

Part of: Discharge Planning to Support Members Experiencing or at Risk of Homelessness Toolkit, June 2021