

Procedure:	SEVERE WEATHER		
Owner of Procedure:	Emergency Management and Risk Specialist		
Approval by:	Emergency Management Committee	Date: 2022-06-02	
Original Effective Date:	2021-05-03	Reviewed Date(s):	2022-05-27
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PURPOSE

Adverse or severe weather conditions can affect Southwestern Ontario through all seasons. The information contained in this procedure is designed to provide preparedness tips and guidance to employees to protect the health and safety of themselves and others, as well, to ensure minimal disruption to hospital operations during severe weather.

PROCEDURE

Staff, patients, visitors and affiliates may receive notifications of severe weather events from one of many sources. These sources may include but not limited to cellular device alerts, radio communications or television broadcasts. St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) is committed to the health and safety of all individuals and will make efforts to add additional notifications within our hospital in the form of overhead announcements for Tornado Warnings issued by an official source and may use email communication and/or intranet home page communication for other severe weather events on a case by case basis.

- 1. When notified of a severe weather event while in the workplace, staff should:**
 - 1.1. Be prepared and monitor weather conditions
 - 1.2. Take appropriate precautions based on the type of severe weather event outlined in [Appendix A](#)
 - 1.3. Ensure that patients, visitors and other staff are aware of weather conditions
 - 1.4. Report any hazards in the workplace as a result of the severe weather event
 - 1.5. Report and request an emergency colour code in the event of an emergency situation during or as a result of the severe weather event by calling 55555

- 2. When notified of a Tornado Warning, the Security Control Centre (SCC) will:**
 - 2.1. Obtain information from caller
 - 2.1.1. Which St. Joseph's sites will be required to respond
 - 2.2. **The authorization to conduct a Tornado Warning announcement must come from only one of the following:**
 - 2.2.1. [Administrator on Call \(AOC\)](#)
 - 2.2.2. Director of Patient Relations and Chief Privacy and Risk Officer
 - 2.2.3. Corporate Security Leader
 - 2.2.4. Emergency Management and Risk Specialist
 - 2.2.5. Security Specialist
 - 2.3. When authorized to do so, conduct an overhead announcement at the appropriate locations
 - 2.3.1. State "Attention please, A tornado warning has been issued for this area. Please follow appropriate procedures. All patients and visitors please follow the direction of staff"
 - 2.3.2. Repeat 3 times
 - 2.4. Notify security guards of the severe weather event via radio
 - 2.5. Complete the "All Clear" announcement when authorized to do so
 - 2.5.1. State "Attention please, the tornado warning is now over, please resume regular duties."
 - 2.5.2. Repeat the announcement three times
 - 2.6. Keep a log of events

3. For severe weather events other than Tornado Warnings:

- 3.1. Communicator On-Call may be contacted by one of the following to initiate a severe weather communication:
 - 3.1.1. The [Administrator on Call \(AOC\)](#)
 - 3.1.2. Director of Patient Relations and Chief Privacy and Risk Officer
 - 3.1.3. Corporate Security Leader
 - 3.1.4. Director of Facilities Management
 - 3.1.5. Emergency Management and Risk Specialist
 - 3.1.6. Security Specialist
- 3.2. Communicator On-Call will organize the appropriate email communication for the affected sites and review the need for an intranet home page communication
- 3.3. Security Services may assist with posting notices at entrance/exits
- 3.4. Once the weather event has concluded the communication may be sent out accordingly

4. When notified of a severe weather event, security guards will:

- 4.1. Monitor the location
 - 4.1.1. Utilize surveillance camera systems
 - 4.1.2. If safe to do so, complete patrols of the grounds and public access areas to identify possible hazards
 - 4.1.3. Report potential hazards to Facilities Management
 - a. Example: Snow accumulation or icy conditions
- 4.2. Assist with notifying individuals outside of the facility of the severe weather warning if safe to do so
 - 4.2.1. Provide assistance and guidance for safe entry into the facility as required
- 4.3. Report and document any damage resulting from the severe weather event
- 4.4. If there is any critical infrastructure failure as a result of the severe weather event, notify the SCC immediately and request a Code Grey be activated

DEFINITIONS

Administrator on Call (AOC) – A member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for leadership and decision making after regular hospital hours, including weekends and statutory holidays, as well as during emergencies and other situations.

Emergency Notification System – The Emergency Notification System is an in house, proprietary automated system which is operated from the Security Control Centre (SCC). This system is utilized when a caller dials 55555 to report an emergency, or the SCC is notified of through the Community. The ENS system is also activated when an internal monitoring system (i.e., Fire Alarm System) indicates an emergency.

The ENS System is based upon two levels of notification. The first notification is for assigned first responders. The second level of notification is an escalated notification for leadership (on-call) to respond to provide additional support.

ENS1:

- Upon notification, the SCC notifies “first responders” by radio, pager and overhead announcement to respond and assess, mitigate or prevent the emergency from escalating and conduct response activities. Depending on the situation, the SCC will also notify key external responders (i.e. local fire, police, and ambulance) as required.
- Responders at the scene determine if the incident can be maintained safely. As well, responders determine if the emergency has reached thresholds of risk where additional leadership is required.

ENS2:

- ENS 2 means that an emergency has reached thresholds of risk where leadership must be notified to ensure a consistent and organized action planning.
- ENS 2 is immediately activated for Code Green, Code Black, Code Grey, Code Orange, Code Purple and Critical Incident.
- In an emergency which meets the criteria of an ENS 2 emergency, leaders are paged, and a telephone conference call occurs. A person from the emergency scene will be asked to provide a briefing to this telephone conference call.
- Dependent on the scope, intensity and duration of the emergency, the Administrator on Call (AOC) or another senior leader or official may activate the opening of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

ENS2 Conference Bridge – A teleconference extension which is activated by the Security Control Centre when an emergency is elevated to ENS2. This teleconference is used for predetermined On-Call staff to gather information related to an emergency and to discuss an action plan to resolve the emergency with minimal impact.

REFERENCES

Related Corporate Policies

Critical Injury

First Aid Response for Staff/Affiliates

Health and Safety

Reporting and Review of Safety Events (Harmful, No-Harm and Near Miss) Involving Patients and Visitors

Legislation

Government of Ontario (1990) Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990

Government of Ontario (1990) Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), Section 51: Notice of death or injury, 1990

Other Resources

St. Joseph's Code Grey – Critical Infrastructure Failure

St. Joseph's Code Green – Evacuation

St. Joseph's Code Orange – External Disaster

St. Joseph's Patient Safety Reporting System

St. Joseph's Workplace Occurrence Reporting System

[Alert London Notification System](#)

[Alert Ready Canada's Emergency Alerting System](#)

Appendices

Appendix A – [Severe Weather Information and Duties](#)

Appendix B – [Personal Emergency Preparedness](#)

Appendix A: Severe Weather Information Poster

Severe Weather Condition	Definition	Affect	Actions/Duties
<p>Tornado Warning</p> <p>Warning vs. Watch</p>	<p>A mobile, destructive vortex of violently rotating winds having the appearance of a funnel-shaped cloud and advancing beneath a large storm system.</p>	<p>Personal injury</p> <p>Property damage</p> <p>Damage/loss of critical infrastructure including structural damage</p>	<p>If a tornado warning is issued in your area while at work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff, patient, and visitors to only travel if necessary and to do so with caution • Encourage staff, patients, and visitors to remain indoors • Clear hallways of non-essential equipment • Discontinue elevator use except if required for an emergency situation • Close all patient doors to minimize debris and flying glass • Move patients away from windows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If patient cannot be moved move bed as far away from windows as possible ○ Cover patient with sheets and blankets to protect against debris ○ Close windows and blinds • If a tornado is spotted in the immediate area of your location, take cover under the most secure object available. Kneel facing a wall and cover the head with a pillow or other available objects • Call 55555 to report a Code Grey if there is an infrastructure failure as a result of the weather event • Be prepared in the event an evacuation (Code Green) is necessary after the tornado has passed
<p>Severe Thunderstorm</p>	<p>A thunderstorm that is accompanied by damaging winds, frequent lightening and/or hail.</p>	<p>Personal injury</p> <p>Property damage</p> <p>Damage/loss of critical infrastructure including structural damage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for overhead announcements or other methods of notification as severe thunderstorms may generate tornado warnings • Avoid going outdoors • Encourage patients to remain indoors • If outdoors seek shelter immediately either in an enclosed building or a hard-topped vehicle • Call 55555 to report a Code Grey if there is an infrastructure failure as a result of the weather event

Appendix A: Severe Weather Information Poster

<p>Winter Weather Warnings</p>	<p>Freezing Rain Snow Squall Warning Heavy Snowfall Warning</p>	<p>Travel may be hazardous</p> <p>Damage/loss of critical infrastructure including structural damage</p> <p>Slip and Fall hazards</p> <p>Service delays</p> <p>Decreased staff attendance</p> <p>Reduced visibility</p> <p>Public travel may be difficult or dangerous.</p> <p>Local access to parking lots and walkways may be reduced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff, patients and visitors to only travel if necessary and to do so with caution • Encourage patients to remain indoors • Ensure patients have appropriate attire if they do go outdoors • Report icy and snow-covered hospital sidewalks and driveways to Facilities Management or to Security Services so that grounds maintenance can be notified and appropriate actions can be taken • Call 55555 to report a Code Grey if there is an infrastructure failure as a result of the weather event
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The difference between tornado warning and tornado watch:

Tornado Watch – Weather conditions are favourable for the development of severe thunderstorms that could produce one or more tornadoes. Thunderstorms or severe thunderstorms may or may not be actually occurring for a tornado watch to be issued.

Tornado Warning – A tornado warning is issued when an actual tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar in an area.

Personal Emergency Preparedness

You should not only be concerned about emergency preparedness at work but in your personal life as well. Being prepared will give you the resources needed until emergency services arrive during an emergency or disaster. Emergencies can happen anytime and anywhere.

Are You Prepared?

There are three main components to concern for emergency preparedness:

- Make a plan
- Build a kit
- Stay informed

Make A Plan:

In an emergency, your family may not be together, or you may be asked to evacuate your home. Thinking about what you would do in different situations and preparing a plan with every member of your family is the first step to being prepared.

The Government of Canada has designed a family emergency plan template and has made it available on their webpage. It will take you about 20 minutes to complete your personalized plan online. You can then print it out.

Create your personalized family emergency plan at: www.getprepared.gc.ca

Built a Kit:

During an emergency you may have no electrical power or be asked to evacuate. An emergency kit contains essential items you and your family need to survive on your own for at least 72 hours. Keep a kit at home, work and in your car. Your kit should be easy to carry and portable such as a knapsack or suitcase. Check the contents twice a year to ensure the freshness of food and water, and refresh items if needed.

Essentials Supplies	Special Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food (non-perishable and easy to prepare items, enough for three days) and a manual can opener• Bottled water (four litres per person for each day)• Medication(s)• Flashlight• Radio (crank or battery-run)• Extra batteries• First-aid kit• Candles and matches/lighter• Hand sanitizer or moist towelettes• Important papers (identification, contact list, etc)• Extra car key• Whistle• Zip-lock bags and garbage bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Items for babies and small children (diapers, formula, baby food, comfort items)• Prescription medication• Medical supplies and equipment• Pet food and supplies• Extra clothing and shoes• Sleeping bags and blankets• Personal items (soap, toothpaste, shampoo, comb, other toiletries)• Playing cards, travel games and other activities for children• Cash or travelers' cheques• Any other items specific to your family's needs

Emergency Preparedness – Continued

Stay Informed:



The City of London has created an emergency notification system to send out public safety messages, information and instructions during a disaster. It is free to register for Alert London and you can select how you would like to receive emergency notifications. To learn more and to register for Alert London at: www.london.ca/alertlondon



Alert Ready is Canada's emergency alerting system which delivers critical and potentially life-saving alerts to Canadian residents through television, radio and compatible wireless devices. To learn more about Alert Ready at www.alertready.ca