



Long Term Care and Services for Seniors

Code Orange (Disaster)



**Regional Municipality of Durham
Social Services Department
Long Term Care (LTC) and Services for Seniors**

Title: Code Orange – Disaster	
Section/Manual: Emergency Manual	
Reviewed:	
Revised: Oct/23, Oct/24, Oct/25	
Peer Group Approval: Emergency Code Committee	Date: October 29, 2025
Also reviewed by: (other peer group)	
Senior Leadership Approval: <i>Laura MacDermaid</i>	Date: March 6th, 2026

1. Policy

- 1.1 The Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors (LTC and SS) Division has an emergency plan which will be implemented in the event of a community/natural disaster, extreme weather events, and/or flood. The safety of Residents, Staff, Students, Volunteers, and Visitors is of primary concern during an emergency.
- 1.2 This emergency plan will be evaluated and updated:
 - A. At least annually and
 - B. Within 30 days of the emergency being declared over.
- 1.3 This emergency plan is exercised at least once annually.
- 1.4 All staff are trained annually on this emergency plan.
- 1.5 The authority for activation and termination of the Code Orange Plan is with the Emergency Coordinator (EC) in consultation with the Administrator/Director Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors. Decisions would be made in consultation with the Social Services Emergency Operations Centre (SSEOC), Emergency Social Services (ESS) or Durham Emergency Management (DEM).

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To facilitate an appropriate and organized response to a community/natural disaster, extreme weather event, and/or flood.

- 2.2 To provide for the safety of the Residents, Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors in the event of a disaster emergency.
- 2.3 To complement and be used in conjunction with other existing Emergency Plans such as: Division Emergency Plan, Regional Nuclear Disaster Plans, Social Services Emergency Plans, Health Departments Facilities Plans, Regional Municipality of Durham Peacetime Emergency Plan, and the Emergency Plan of the specific Municipality.

Note: Code Orange may lead to other codes being activated (i.e., Code Green)

3. Definitions

3.1 Command Centre

- A. The command centre is the reception area in each Home.
- B. A backup command centre is to be used if the original command centre is compromised. The backup location would be determined by the Emergency Coordinator (EC) and Emergency Assistant (EA).

3.2 Designated Code Response Staff

- A. Specific staff that have been pre-determined at the Home's emergency committee that will respond to the scene when a code has been called (i.e., designated personal support workers [PSWs] from each resident home area [RHA], members of leadership etc.) in addition to the Emergency Coordinator (EC) and Emergency Assistant (EA).

3.3 Natural Disaster

- A. Natural event such as a flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, severe thunderstorm, ice storm etc.

4. Communications

- A. Emergency plans will be posted on the Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors website and physical copies are made available upon request.
- B. There will be regular consultation with Resident and Family Councils as well as our internal and external stakeholders when reviewing and evaluating emergency plans.
- C. Homes will consult internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis regarding emergency plan components. There will be an internal and external stakeholder list which is in the first section of the emergency manual.
- D. RAVE Alert system of communication will be used if family/substitute decision maker (SDM)/staff need to be informed on any aspect of the emergency (see Appendix 1).

5. Procedures

5.1 Community/Natural Disaster, Extreme Weather Event, Flooding

- A. For more information on types of disasters, see Appendix 5.

- B. Upon notification by Divisional Emergency Management (DEM), Emergency Social Services (ESS), or Senior Management; or in the event of, or imminent threat from a natural/community disaster:

- (1) The Home will initiate an appropriate emergency response plan due to the circumstances of the community/natural disaster, extreme weather event, or internal flood.
- (2) Contact ESS if applicable at ess@durham.ca.
- (3) Contact the Emergency Coordinator (EC)

Hillsdale Estates	RN on Honey Harbour/Strawberry Fields
Hillsdale Terraces	RN on Vineyard View
Fairview Lodge	RN Cullen Garden/Ashburn Way
Lakeview Manor	RN Beaver River

5.2 Emergency Coordinator (EC) and Emergency Assistant (EA)

- A. Upon notification, page or designate someone to page “**Code Orange**” three times (x3) over the phone/paging system using the following extensions:

Fairview Lodge	Ext
Hillsdale Estates	Use overhead page at reception or at the Fire Panel on the main floor. If not possible, use the desk phone ext.(wait for the tone, will reach 50 desk phones).
Hillsdale Terraces	Ext wait for tone, push 00 and then make announcement
Lakeview Manor	#, then 00 wait for 2 beeps and make announcement

- B. The EC will assume the lead for the command centre.
- C. Emergency Assistant (EA) will bring the Emergency Box/bag to the command centre.
- D. EC will maintain awareness of the weather watching for updates, advisories, bulletins, or warnings (if applicable).
- E. EC will discuss with departments to ensure emergency generator, emergency food, and medical supplies are ready if needed.
Note: If there is imminent risk of tornado, EC will discuss with departments moving away from windows, if possible, and securing patio furniture and balcony doors.
- F. EC to discuss with management the necessity of cancelling programs and limiting entry/exit to and from the Home.
- G. EC contact manager or manager on call who will initiate fan-out list and contact ESS if required and call-in extra staff if needed.
- H. For flooding:
 - (1) Call fire department to assist and take direction from fire department.
 - (2) Follow **Code Green** to move affected Residents to an area free of water.
 - (3) Assign a scribe to document events.
 - (4) Direct staff to not touch anything electrical or unplug anything.

- (5) Have the manager or manager-on work with the mechanical maintenance staff or contact a plumber immediately, if applicable.
- (6) EC to page or designate someone to page “**Code Orange All Clear**” three times (x3), upon notification of end of the threat.
- (7) Complete the debrief and summary report with applicable parties (see Appendix 4).

5.3 Designated Response Staff

- A. Respond to the command centre when a Code is called.
- B. Follow direction from EC and EA.

5.4 Environmental Services Staff

- A. In the case of a flood:
 - (1) Turn off water to the area (if applicable).
 - (2) Open drains and squeegee the floors.
 - (3) Gather spill kits.
 - (4) Take direction from EC and fire department.

5.5 All Staff

- A. In the event of natural disaster threat, continue with normal duties but stay alert for further instruction and announcement from EC.
- B. Follow direction from EC/EA/Designate in the event of a flood.

5.6 In the Event that the Natural Disaster Results in Total Loss of Power

- A. See Loss of Essential Services Plan for more in depth information.
- B. Homes are on back up generators, will be able to supply/power essential equipment including IT equipment (phones).
- C. Phones are Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) - run off of the internet instead of landlines.
- D. There is a designated landline in case of internet disruption.
- E. When phones and computers go down, this sends a critical alarm to IT, and they will investigate immediately.

5.7 If Home is to be used as an Evacuation Centre for Others

- A. The Regional Homes can provide temporary shelter up to:

Home	#	Location
Hillsdale Terraces	20	Auditorium
Hillsdale Estates	40	Auditorium
Fairview Lodge	25	Great room
Lakeview Manor	15	Main Hall

Note: If there is imminent risk of tornado, consider selecting different rooms (i.e., rooms with no windows).

B. Upon notification by ESS/DEM department or Senior Management:

- (1) EC to follow duties outlined in section 5.2 Emergency Coordinator and Emergency Assistant.
- (2) EC to contact Administrator and advise of request.
- (3) Note: if no mutual agreement is in place, the Administrator will decide whether or not to accept evacuees.

C. If Not Accepting Evacuees:

- (1) EC to page/designate someone to page "**Code Orange All Clear**", three times (x3); and advise the site of our decision.

D. If Accepting Evacuees:

- (1) EC to call back the site and advise of our acceptance to their request and gather initial information concerning time of calls, who called, number of evacuees expected, number of staff from other site accompanying evacuees (see Appendix 2).
- (2) Evacuees must be accompanied by outside staff and/or volunteers.
- (3) EA to initiate emergency fan-out list and maintain communication with management team.
- (4) EC to ensure the following duties are assigned and carried out:
 - (a) **Receiving set up**
 - (i) Set up registration tables.
 - (ii) Ensure appropriate forms, pens, nametags, phones in place to receive evacuees.
 - (iii) Gather mattresses, linen, blankets, chairs, wheelchairs.
 - (b) **Designate Scribes**
 - (i) Compile list of incoming evacuees, numbering each one, using Code Orange - Evacuee Receiving Form (see Appendix 3).
 - (ii) Verify names of incoming evacuees by checking nametags and asking evacuees their name.
 - (iii) Attach our own nametag and/or id bracelet to evacuees.
 - (iv) Ensure medical records are with evacuees.
 - (v) Get names and name tags for staff accompanying evacuees.
 - (vi) Set up signage indicating washrooms, phones, registration site, evacuation centre etc.
 - (c) **Assign Triage Nurses**
 - (i) Assess incoming evacuees.
 - (ii) Check medical records that accompany evacuees and verify information.
 - (iii) Provide care where needed.
 - (iv) Have Social Worker present to provide counselling services.
 - (d) **Pharmacy for meds.**

(e) **Traffic Control**

- (i) Direct incoming emergency vehicles.
- (ii) Direct incoming evacuees and support staff to registration table.
- (iii) Redirect unauthorized vehicles.
- (iv) Restrict access and keep unauthorized persons from entering.

(f) **Food and Beverage**

- (i) Ensure hot and cold beverages are initially available and dietary information is obtained for future nutritional needs.

(g) **General Communication**

- (i) Keep all telephone lines clear, explaining to callers that we are experiencing an emergency and must keep the phone lines clear.
- (ii) Direct all public inquiries to Corporate Communications Department at Regional Headquarters.
- (iii) Corporate Communications can support during emergencies by contacting their after-hours support, please call the Communications Helpline.

E. EC to page/designate someone to page “**Code Orange All Clear**” three times (x3), upon departure of all evacuees.

F. Complete the debrief and summary report with applicable parties (see Appendix 4).

6. Debrief and Summary Evaluation (see Appendix 4)

6.1 All departments will be responsible for:

- A. Maintaining a record of supplies and equipment used, where it was sent, and ensuring its return when the emergency is over.
- B. Participating in the debriefing and summary report to evaluate the emergency and provide any recommendations within 30 days of the emergency being declared over.
- C. Assist in creating revisions and implementation of adjustments to the emergency plan.
- D. In-service any modifications with staff in their respective departments.

7. Training Requirements

7.1 General Orientation – New Staff

- A. Education and training on the Emergency Plans are provided through the Divisional Orientation and at Departmental Orientation.

7.2 Annual and Ongoing – All Staff

- A. Education is provided on all the emergency codes on an annual basis through e-learning platform.
- B. Annually, the home will test the emergency plan.
- C. Every three years, all homes will work in collaboration with the fire department to complete a planned evacuation. Records will be kept of the testing of emergency plans, planned evacuations, and the changes made to improve the plans.

8. Attachments/Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Emergency Communication Notification Checklist
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Code Orange Emergency Checklist – Incoming to the Home
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Code Orange Evacuee Receiving Form
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Types of Disasters
- 8.5 Appendix 5 – Code Debrief and Summary Report

Appendix 1 – Emergency Communication Notification Checklist

Date: _____

Incident Manager: _____

Internal Senior Administration notified

Title	Time notified/ Time on site	Comments
Administrator		
Assistant Administrator		
Director of Care		
Director, LTC and SS		
Emergency Social Services		

Services notified and NOK updates

Service Provider	Time notified/ Time on site/ frequency of update	Comments
911		
Ministry of Long-Term Care		
Ministry of Labour (if applicable)		
External Partners (Transit, Home and Community Care Support Services etc.)		
NoK, Residents, and Staff updated		

General Information

Task	Comments
Any injuries	
Any deaths	
Identified Emergency code	

Appendix 2 – Code Orange Emergency Checklist – Incoming to the Home

Date:	
Emergency Management Coordinator:	
Upon Receiving a Call	
Name	Position
Location call is coming from:	
Contact #	
Phone number:	Email
Time of Arrival	
Reason for Relocation	
Number of people expected to arrive	
Social Services Contact	
Checklist/Info	
Administrator notified	
Director of LTC and SS notified	
Joint Health and Safety Committee notified	
Ministry of LTC notified	
Ministry of Labour notified.	
Review of receiving area to ensure prepped	
Code Orange called and kit brought to reception	
EC assigned leads and roles for each department	
Environmental	
Food Services	
Recreation/Therapy	
Business office	
Area of Refuge in Home	
Location of Triage	
RN/RPN assigned	
ID tags provided	
Location of housing post Triage.	

Appendix 4 – Types of Disasters

Durham Region is vulnerable to a wide range of potential emergency situations. Some of these emergencies happen frequently with localized impacts (e.g., fires, chemical spills) while others are rare but would have severe consequences on the population and the environment (e.g., ice storm). As a result, large-scale devastating emergencies occur very rarely. In general, disasters or emergencies can be categorized into 2 groupings:

Natural-Caused

Natural hazards are those related to naturally occurring elements and conditions including but not limited to floods, severe weather, ice and snowstorms.

Human-Caused

Human-caused hazards are accidental and include chemical spills, explosions and leaks, train derailments, plane crashes, public transit crashes, multi-car pileups and power outages.



Technological emergencies are also human-caused and can affect critical infrastructure, computer technology, telecommunications and other information technology issues.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)

The Region has a number of situations that present potential hazards to residents. DEM has completed a hazard analysis and risk assessment, with all hazards identified relative to risk.

The top hazards by rank relative to risk for the Region can be grouped into 3 major categories:

Severe weather (major winter storm, high winds, heat wave, flooding, etc.)

Hazardous materials release (toxic spill/gas) either at a site or as the result of a transportation accident

Mass casualty event such as a train derailment, major accident on the 401 and 407 highways or a major building fire.



Types of Disasters (Continued)

Durham Region must not only plan and prepare for current hazards but also plan and prepare for hazards that will increase in risk due to a number of reasons. Evolving hazards in Durham Region include but are not limited to:

- Industry expansion in lakeshore communities
- Highway 407 extension (increased transportation of dangerous goods)
- Climate change
- Influenza pandemic
- Terrorism, including bio-terrorism
- Computer viruses
- Power outages (See loss of essential services plan)
- Gas leaks
- Potable water contamination (See loss of essential services plan)

Gas Leaks

The Regional Municipality of Durham operates four accredited long term care homes located in the City of Oshawa, the Town of Whitby, and Brock Township. Enbridge is the primary service provider for natural gas in all the aforementioned lower tier municipalities.

Signs of a natural gas leak:

- Sight – Damaged connections to natural gas appliances and surrounding plants or vegetation that is dead or dying
- Sound – Hissing or whistling
- Smell – A sulphur-like scent similar to rotten eggs

If a gas leak is suspected:

- Act calm and quickly.
- Leave area immediately.
- Call 9-1-1 in a safe area and advise dispatcher of gas leak.
- Call Enbridge emergency line 1-866-763-5427.

Abide by following safety precautions:

- Do not use phones or electronics near suspected leak.
- Do not turn appliances or lights on or off.
- Do not use ignition sources or open flames.
- If natural gas leak is burning, call 9-1-1 immediately. Do not attempt to put out fire.
Source: Enbridge Inc.

1. Once on scene, the fire department assesses the extent of the gas leak and establishes command.

2. If an evacuation is required, the fire department will work in coordination with LTC staff to safely remove residents and staff from the affected area and in accordance with Code Green (total evacuation plan).
3. Enbridge personnel on scene of an incident will work with the Fire Department unit to identify needs.
4. Enbridge personnel shall be responsible for locating and eliminating the source of the leak.
5. Return to the building will be determined by the Fire Department, Enbridge, and other applicable authority when it has been deemed safe for the staff and residents' return.

Durham Region Nuclear Emergency Plan

One of the Risk Specific Plans is the Durham Region Nuclear Emergency Plan (DRNEP).

The Nuclear Emergency Plan prescribes the planning and operational guidelines for the Durham Region **emergency response organization** to be used during a nuclear event.

Durham Region is considered a "designated municipality" under the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan (PNERP) and is mandated to have a nuclear emergency plan. Durham Region and local municipalities must be prepared to implement protective measures in a 10 km zone around each nuclear station to protect the public from exposure to a radioactive plume.

Protective measures include:

Evacuation - Residents will be advised to evacuate to designated facilities following evacuation routes designated by the province.

KI (Potassium Iodide) Pills - Potassium Iodide pills prevent or reduce the radioiodine absorption by the thyroid gland through the ingestion of a stable iodine compound. Residents may pick up Potassium Iodide pills free of charge at **designated pharmacies**.

KI pills are onsite for all Long-Term Care homes. Please see Nuclear Awareness - Region of Durham information sheet and Potassium Iodide Tablets (KI) Fact Sheet.

Public Alerting - The Province will order the public alerting system to be activated to warn the public if required. The current **Public Alerting System** is an automated telephone dialing system that covers the 10-kilometer area surrounding each nuclear station.

Reference: <http://insider/demo.asp>