



Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors

Loss of Essential Services



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

Title: Loss of Essential Services	
Section/Manual: Emergency Manual	
Reviewed:	
Revised: Oct/23, Oct/24, Oct/25, Mar/26	
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 in place which will be implemented in the event of a loss of any essential service. 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 This plan could move into a Code Green should other factors be involved which would move the Home into an evacuation plan.
- 1.6 Extended power outages are to be communicated to Emergency Social Services at ess@durham.ca.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide for the safety and wellbeing of Residents, Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors in the event of a loss of essential services
- 2.2 To complement and be used in conjunction with other existing Emergency Plans such as: Durham Region Nuclear Emergency Response Plan, Social Services Emergency Plans,

Health Department's Facilities Plans, Durham Region Emergency Master Plan, Emergency Plan for the specific municipality.

3. Communications

- 3.1 Emergency plans will be posted on the Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors website and physical copies are made available on request.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 RAVE Alert system of communication will be used if family/substitute decision maker (SDM)/staff need to be informed on any aspect of an emergency.

4. Loss of Power Procedures

- 4.1 Power Loss/Failure
 - A. All Homes are equipped with a generator to provide power to colour coded plugs to ensure essential equipment has access to power.
 - B. Generator testing is completed monthly with the generator at a minimum of 50% load. During an outage of services, please refer to the Emergency box for a list of supplies.
- 4.2 Momentary/Short Period of Power Loss
 - A. If the power in the home flickers or is lost for a brief period of time (less than five minutes) the Emergency Coordinator (EC) or Senior Manager must ensure all equipment is checked (see Appendix 1 – Loss of Power Checklist).
- 4.3 Loss of Power with Generator Back up
 - A. Homes are on back-up generator and will be able to supply/power essential equipment including IT equipment (phones).
 - B. Phones are Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) - run off of the internet
 - C. There is a designated landline in case of internet disruption.
 - D. When phones and computers go down, this sends a critical alarm to IT, and IT will investigate immediately.
 - E. If cell service is unaffected by the power outage, Managers have regional cell phones that could be used to hotspot the laptops if needed for access to the electronic health record etc.
 - F. Emergency Access can be turned on for the electronic health record; staff can use cell phones to access the eHR for the duration of the power outage.
 - G. Generator fuel should be monitored by Environmental Services Manager/delegate
 - H. Fuel refilling should be coordinated by Environmental Services Manager/delegate
 - I. Fuel certification should readily be available in the home at all times, to be shown at fuel delivery as required
 - J. Senior Manager on Duty or Emergency Coordinator will:
 - (1)Reset the Maglock system when the generator starts

- (2) Use Appendix 1 to ensure all applicable equipment is checked and powered on by generator during a power outage.
- (3) Contact the local utility supplier to determine the length of time the power is to be off.
- (4) Contact the Environmental Services (ES) Manager or Designate to provide update.
- (5) Assign mechanical maintenance staff to check main breaker to ensure breaker has not been tripped. If it has been tripped, relay this message to the ES Manager. The breaker is clearly labeled On/Off/Tripped. Do not attempt to reset breaker until notified from the utility supplier that repairs have been completed. **Note:** Staff must be qualified or competent as an electrician or have arc flash training prior to resetting breaker. If not, contact an electrician to reset the breaker.
- (6) Place signage at front entrance notifying visitors of power outage.
- (7) If phones do not work, locate the Emergency telephones and plug the telephones into the Emergency Telephone Jack. Note: Resident phones will not be operational. Emergency telephones are located:
 - (a) Hillsdale Terraces – Administration photocopy room
 - (b) Hillsdale Estates – ES supervisors office/Fire panel room
 - (c) Fairview Lodge – Front Reception Desk
 - (d) Lakeview Manor – Admin Area (plugged into fax jack for landline)
- (8) Assign staff member to periodically (every 30 minutes) call the utility supplier for updates.
- (9) Assign RHA staff to ensure all air loss mattress and medical equipment are in appropriate plugs (orange/red generator plugs) and/or that they are functioning. Air loss mattresses should remain inflated for hours without power.
- (10) Once notified that power has been restored, assign mechanical maintenance worker with arc flash training and or electrician to reset main breaker. Do not attempt to reset breaker until notified from utility supplier that repairs have been completed.
- (11) Unplug the Emergency telephones, if used, and return them to their storage location. The electronic telephone system will operate once power has been restored only when the emergency phone has been unplugged from the jack.

K. Environmental Services Manager will

- (1) For extended generator use, ensure the generator has enough fuel
- (2) Arrange for fuel delivery
- (3) Submit the certification to the fuel

4.4 Total Loss of Power with no Generator Backup

A. Senior Manager/Emergency Coordinator

- (1) Assign staff and RHA staff to man all exit doors.
- (2) Contact the local utility supplier to determine the length of time the power is to be off.
- (3) Contact Emergency Social Services at ess@durham.ca
- (4) Contact the Administrator and the Director of Long Term Care and Social Services
- (5) Assign mechanical maintenance staff to check main breaker to ensure it has not been tripped:
- (6) Contact 24-hour Emergency Call number for contractor in order to initiate service call for generator repair.
- (7) Locate the Emergency Telephones and plug the telephones into the Emergency Telephone Jack.
- (8) Obtain status updates from various RHAs and departments in the building, providing support and assistance as required.
- (9) Consider the environmental conditions (extreme heat/cold) in combination with the projected length of time that the power will be off and the ability of the facility/staff to cope.
- (10) Changing menus - ensuring there was applicable food and nutrition available for Residents. See Code Green – Food and Fluid Plan.
- (11) Coordinate staff to arrange the delivery of food and fluid from kitchen to the resident home areas via stairwells
- (12) Calling other facilities for aid if required.
- (13) Implementing hot weather contingency plan if required.
- (14) Call in additional staff if required
- (15) If the power is expected to be off for an extended period of time (greater than two hours), determine in consultation with the EC as to what additional responses will be needed to deal with the situation.
- (16) Ensure Ministry of Long Term Care is notified if loss of power exceeds 6 hours
- (17) If at any time the home is deemed unsafe for residents, a code green can be initiated and residents evacuated to designated evacuation site.

4.5 Once the Power is Restored

A. EC/Emergency Assistant (EA)

- (1) Notify the Administrator/Designate.
- (2) Unplug the Emergency Telephones, if used, and return it to the storage location.

- (3) The electronic telephone system will operate once power has been restored only when the emergency phone has been unplugged from the jack.
- (4) Assign registered staff to ensure all medical equipment and air loss mattresses are working properly.
- (5) Use Appendix 1 to ensure applicable equipment is checked or reset following the power outage. Ensure batteries/flashlights have been returned for storage and replaced as required.
- (6) Ensure applicable reports are completed (i.e., reporting to the Ministry of Long-Term Care through the Critical Incident System (CIS)). See section 7. Reporting.

B. Administrator/Designate:

- (1) Chair a debriefing meeting at maximum 30 days post power loss
- (2) Ensure vendor is contacted to top up of diesel fuel as required.
- (3) Ensure that the appropriate reporting takes place. See section 7. Reporting.

5. HVAC System Failure/Disruption Procedures (Appendix 2)

5.1 Senior Manager on Duty/EC/Designate

- A. Will contact the HVAC contractor (see contractor contact list for each home). Contractor would respond as per the agreements outlined.
- B. Depending on the time of year, extended failure (2 hours or more or drop in temperature less than 22 or higher than 26) would result in monitoring Residents, temperature and supplies needed for heating or cooling.

5.2 Administrator/Designate

- A. Obtain status updates from various RHAs and departments in the building, providing support and assistance as required.
- B. If the HVAC is expected to be off for an extended period of time (greater than two hours), determine in consultation with the EC as to what additional responses will be needed to deal with the situation.
- C. For cooling failure, follow Heat Related Illness Prevention and Management Plan.
- D. For heating failure:
 - (1) Obtain supply of blankets.
 - (2) Work with Food Services to consider possible changes to the menu.
 - (3) Consider redeploying Recreation, Food Services, and Environmental Services to assist where required or calling in additional staff.
- E. Call in extra staff as required
- F. Ensure residents are being monitored
- G. If temperature becomes a risk, follow Code Green evacuation.

6. Water Loss (Boil Water) Advisory Procedures (Appendix 3)

- 6.1 In the event there is a water distribution issue, Homes will ensure that there is a system in place for adequate drinking water and water that is able to be used for hygienic means.

- 6.2 The extent of restriction on water use during a boil water advisory (BWA) depends on the situation and the reason for issuing a BWA (i.e., it could be a precautionary measure to accommodate repairs, adverse water result, illness associated with the water, lack of disinfection etc.). Additionally, whether the BWA affects the entire municipality or just the building needs to be considered.
- 6.3 Durham Region does have a list of local water haulers included in emergency planning documents but the decision to connect with a water hauler is dependent on the BWA in affect. Work with Durham Region Public Health (DRPH) to determine if it's appropriate to connect to a water hauler.
- 6.4 Planning
- A. Prepare a contingency plan to estimate water demands for the entire Home in advance of significant water disruptions (i.e., those expected to result in extensive and heavy microbial or chemical contamination of the potable water). When a significant water disruption or an emergency occurs, adhere to any advisory to boil water issued by the municipal water utility.
- 6.5 Water Disruption
- A. Senior Manager on Duty/EC/Designate:
- (1)Alert Residents, Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors to not consume water from drinking fountains, ice, or drinks made from municipal tap water, while the advisory is in effect. Have clear signage posted throughout the Home indicating the advisory. Consider RAVE Alert notification to staff and family members.
 - (2)Contact the food supply vendor and ESS to help get alternate sources of potable water such as commercially bottled water.
 - (3)Work with ESS to contact Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Program (IPDC), Safe Water Program, and Durham Region Works Department if applicable.
 - (4)Work with DRPH to determine where in the Home water needs to be shut off and have Environmental Services shut off accordingly.
 - (5)Determine with DRPH if it's appropriate to connect to a water hauler.
- B. Please see Durham Region Boil Water Advisory Fact Sheet to help guide how to use water safety during a BWA. **Note:** these are generic guidelines, always follow DRPH guidance and direction on acceptable water use:
- (1)Use bottled water or boiled tap water (brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute) for drinking, preparing food and beverages, oral hygiene, and any direct consumption.
 - (2)Untreated water can be used for baths/showers as long as no water is swallowed.
- C. If unable to restore water to building, follow Code Green for evacuation.
- 6.6 Water Advisory is Lifted
- A. Administrator/Environmental Services manager/EC/Designate will:

- (1) After the advisory is lifted, run faucets and drinking fountains at full flow for at least five minutes, or use high-temperature water flushing, or chlorination.
- (2) Flush out the hot water tanks.
- (3) Work with the external vendor to decontaminate the system when the fewest occupants are present in the building (e.g., nights) if possible.
- (4) Follow direction from the vendor to flush and restart equipment and fixtures according to manufacturer's instructions.
- (5) Work with DRPH to determine whether any other equipment, such as a water-holding reservoir or water-storage tank, needs to be drained, disinfected and refilled.

B. Maintain a high level of surveillance for waterborne disease among Residents after boil water advisory is lifted.

7. Reporting

- 7.1 If applicable, report the incident to the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) through the Critical Incident System (CIS) (i.e., loss of an essential service lasting more than six hours). See ADM-01-07-16 Mandatory and Critical Incident Reporting.
- 7.2 For any staff injury, ensure Occupational Incident Report is completed. Report any critical injuries to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, as required.

8. Summary and Debriefing

- 8.1 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 event is over.
 - B. Participate in debriefing to evaluate the emergency and in the post, review providing reports and recommendations.
 - C. Formally conduct a formal debrief of the emergency within 30 days of the emergency being declared over.
 - D. Assist in creating revisions and implementation of adjustments to the plan
 - E. In-service any modifications with staff in their respective departments

9. Training Requirements

- 9.1 General Orientation – New Staff
 - A. Education and training on the Emergency Plans are provided through the Divisional Orientation and at Departmental Orientation.
- 9.2 Annual and Ongoing – All Staff
 - A. Education is provided on the all-emergency codes on an annual basis through e-learning platform.

10. References

10.1 Fixing Long Term Care Act, O Reg 246/22 s 268

11. Attachments/Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – Loss of Power Checklist

11.2 Appendix 2 – HVAC System Failure Check List

11.3 Appendix 3 – Water Loss/Boil Water Advisory Checklist

Appendix 1 - Loss of Power Checklist

Home: _____

Date/Time of Power Loss: _____

Date/time power restored: _____

Please review the following items during a power outage and after power has returned.
Please check off as completed.

Item	Power Outage: Check to ensure the following is connected to Back up Generator	Power is Restored: Check/Reset the following
Elevators		Breaker may need to be re-set – Elevator company must do
Mag Lock	Check all doors	Reset if needed
Nurse Call System		
Phone System		
All Resident Security Doors		
Lights in Resident Hallways		
Resident Room lights		
Radiator - Hot Water Heat Circulation Pumps.		
Air Handling Units		
Fire Alarm/Emergency Exit Light System		
Electronic Telephone system		
Medication/Vaccine Refrigerators		
Main kitchen equipment		
• Hot water		
• Coffee machine		
• Juice machine		
• Refrigerators/Freezers		
• Ovens		
• Grills/Deep fryers		
• Steam Wagons		
• Pot Wash machine		
• Refrigerators/Freezers on units		
• Re therm Units		
• Microwaves		
Wall Plugs – Identified by Orange or Red Plugs/Plate Covers. The use of these plugs is intended for equipment that is necessary for Resident safety and life support.		
• Oxygen Concentrators		
• Specialty Mattresses		

• Suction Machines		
• Tube Feed		
• CADD Pump		

*In each checklist at the end it would be determined if an evacuation is required

Appendix 2 - HVAC System Failure Check List

Date: _____ EC: _____

Time: _____

Contacted and time:

Administrator: _____

Environmental Services Manager: _____

Maintenance lead: _____

Depending on the time of year, extended failure (2 hours or more or drop in temperature less than 22 or higher than 26) would result in monitoring Residents, temperature and supplies needed for heating of cooling.

Was this system failure 2 hours or more? Y or N

If yes, please provide more information: _____

If yes, initiate a temperature log for each RHA to monitor _____

For extended heat/ cooling failure:

Discussion with ESS and Administrator for next steps: _____

Monitoring Residents' safety initiated? _____

Extra supply of blankets/ extra beverages provided for residents and staff: _____

Are possible changes in the menu required? _____

Have staff in Recreation, Food Services, and Environmental Services been redeployed to assist?

If temperatures become a risk, has there been a discussion with EC and Administrator for next steps?

Communicated with the following and debrief completed:

Lead	Yes or No	Comments
Administrator/ Designate		
Director of Care		
Environmental Manager/ designate		
Mechanical Maintenance		
Dietary manager		
Manager Rec and Therapy		

*In each checklist at the end it would be determined if an evacuation is required

Appendix 3 - Water Loss/Boil Water Advisory Checklist

Date: _____

EC: _____

Outline incident details

Contacted and time:

Administrator: _____

Environmental Manager: _____

Maintenance lead: _____

Food Services Manager: _____

Director, Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors _____

Contact vendor for delivery of additional bottled water. _____

Delivery of water and other available fluids for residents and staff provided. _____

Call to Emergency Social Services (ESS) 905-666-6251 _____

ESS recommendations: _____

*In each checklist at the end it would be determined if an evacuation is required