



## HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

**POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 3.15.09**

**DEPARTMENT:** *Admin – Emergency Planning and Response*

**SUBJECT:** *Code Purple – Severe Weather*

**APPROVAL DATE:**

**REVISION DATE:** Oct. 2019; July 2022; Dec. 2023; Dec. 2024

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### Weather Related Emergencies

Environment Canada's Meteorological Service is responsible for issuing all Canadian weather alerts using a variety of [different technologies](#). [Watches](#), [Warnings](#) and [Special Weather Statements](#) alert Canadians to a number of weather conditions that are occurring or are expected to occur, that could impact your safety or cause damage to property or the environment.

**Watches** provide a “heads-up” that conditions **are favourable** for a possible storm. This storm could affect your safety or at the least cause inconvenience, but at this time there is uncertainty about the track and strength of the system. A watch in the summer may be issued up to six hours before the event and in the case of winter events at least 12 to 24 hours in advance.

**Warnings** alert you when severe weather **is occurring or will occur**. Warnings are issued ideally when severe weather is expected to affect land-based communities within at least six to as much as 24 hours. Storms related to thunderstorms offer shorter advance notification and may be issued less than one hour in advance. Updated statements are reissued at least every six to eight hours or as needed, so you can stay up to date on the developing situation. More than one type of warning for a location can be in effect.

**Special Weather Statements** are issued for weather events that are **unusual, cause general inconvenience or public concern and cannot adequately be described in a weather forecast**.

For further information please see Environment Canada's web site at: [https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index\\_e.html?prov=son](https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html?prov=son)

### Tornado's

Notification of a tornado alert will come from Environment Canada through the use of the radio, social media and Television. The alerts they may issue are:

- A **Tornado Watch** is issued when severe thunderstorms have *developed* and there is the possibility of one or more tornadoes developing within the areas and times specified in the watch. Be prepared to take action if a warning is issued.



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- A **Tornado Warning** is issued when one or more *tornadoes are occurring* in the area specified *or detected on Doppler radar*. The expected motion, development and duration will be given in the warning. Find appropriate shelter.

Safety tip: remember that severe thunderstorms sometimes produce tornadoes with little or no warning. Treat all funnel clouds and tornadoes seriously. If you see a funnel approaching or large hail is falling you should immediately notify the Registered Staff so appropriate steps can be taken to secure the safety of the residents and staff.

Any employee on duty who hears a tornado warning will advise the Registered Staff on their Home Area.

### **Registered Staff**

Steps for Registered Staff:

1. Announce overhead the following:

**“Attention all staff Code Purple,” X 3;**

2. Don emergency vest;
3. Provide direction to the staff for the safe relocation of residents in the home, relocate all residents to the corridors away from windows;
4. Delegate an employee(s) to check the outside grounds quickly and bring in any residents, visitors and staff from all courtyard and designated smoking areas.
5. Based on assessment of current weather conditions, consider securing loose outdoor items
6. Ensure staff are accounted for and relocated away from windows and exterior doors; consider closing fire/smoke doors for additional safety measure
7. Ensure dietary staff have shut off all equipment, closed doors and ensure that the kitchen is left in a safe manner.
8. Utilize the resident census sheet located on the fire clipboard on the unit to account for all residents.
9. Utilize code purple watch and warning checklists;
10. Following the tornado the Registered Staff will notify the Director of Homes and Seniors Services or designate if the home was contacted by the tornado;
11. The Director/Administrator will contact the Corporate Facilities Manager and/or Director of Engineering in regard to the warning and direction for potential need



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- for gas/other shut offs; and for an assessment of the damage and assign other staff to assist the assessment as required;
12. Residents and staff who are in immediate danger will be relocated (utilize the resident A, B, C, D evacuation codes if possible) within the home as quickly and safely as possible, and will be evacuated outside the home if necessary and safe to do so;
  13. If an updated assessment needs to be provided to the Director of Homes and Seniors Services or designate the Registered Staff will do so as quickly as possible, at that time the Director of Homes and Seniors Services or designate will provide any necessary further instructions and will determine if the fan out/mass messaging lists will be activated;  
If after the tornado if there is limited or no damage to the home the Registered Staff will announce overhead the following: “Attention all staff, all clear please return residents to their rooms” X3
  14. The Registered Staff will ensure any necessary clean-up is started/completed and that all staff and residents are accounted for;
  15. The Registered Staff will document any reports of damage and the response and provide the information to the Director of Homes and Seniors Services or designate at the end of shift.

### **Director of Homes and Seniors Services and/or Administrator or Designate**

The Director of Homes and Seniors Services/ Administrator/Designate, will determine based on the extent of damage from the tornado, what of the following needs to be completed:

- Determine at that time, if at all, that the following groups need to be notified:
  - Members of the management team of the Home(s)
  - Chief Administrative Officer and County Council;
  - County Emergency Management Coordinator
  - Ministry of Labour;
  - Ministry of Long-Term Care
  - Fire



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- Police
  - EMS
  - Local hospital(s)
  - Ontario Health at Home
- Oversee the clean-up and repair of the home as required. If the damage to the home is extensive partial or complete evacuation may be required. If so please refer to Administration Policy 3.15.06 - Code Green – Evacuation; and Administration Policy 3.16 Loss of Essential Services

The County of Elgin Homes Management Team are responsible for coordinating the provisions of the essential services necessary to minimize the effects of an emergency affecting the home. The team consists of the following members:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ● Director of Homes and Seniors Services   | Alternate: Administrator  |
| ● Administrator                            | Alternate: Manager of Resident Care                               |
| ● Manager of Resident Care                 | Alternate: Resident Care Coordinator                              |
| ● Manager of Support Services              | Alternate: Manager of Program and Therapy Services                |
| ● Corporate Facilities Manager             | Alternate: Building Services Technologist                         |
| ● Medical Director                         | Alternate: On-Call Physician                                      |
| ● Infection Prevention and Control Manager |   |
| ● Communications onsite and general        | Assign at front door with clear direction regarding communication |

Providing assistance to the Management Team from the County of Elgin would be the Manager of Emergency Management as well as the Human Resources Department.

### **Thunderstorms, Rainfall & Flooding**

A **Severe Thunderstorm Watch** is issued *when conditions are likely* for the development of thunderstorms, some of which may become severe thunderstorms with large hail, heavy rain,



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deadly lightning or damaging winds and possibly tornadoes within the areas and times specified in the watch.

Staff should use this time to secure loose objects, ensure residents and/or staff are prepared to take action and listen carefully for an updated weather report. This is the time to *develop a plan*.

A **Severe Thunderstorm Warning** is issued *when a severe storm has developed*, producing one or more of the following conditions: flooding rain, destructive winds with gusts greater than 90 km/h, hail of at least 10 to 20 mm in diameter or intense lightning. Severe thunderstorms may also produce tornadoes.

The storm's expected motion and developments will be given in the warning. If you are in the area specified, *take shelter*.

Safety Tip: Use the lightning safety **30-30 Rule**...if you count less than **30 seconds** between the lightning flash and the sound of thunder, it is time to take shelter. Wait **30 minutes** after the last clap of thunder to resume activities.

A **Rainfall Warning** is issued when heavy or prolonged rainfall is sufficient to cause local or widespread flooding or flash floods.

A rainfall warning is generally issued not more than 24 hours in advance and is not preceded by a watch.

Safety Tip; 15 cm of swiftly moving water can knock people over. Four times that amount can sweep a car away. Never drive in a flooded roadway, it may be washed out.

Ensure all residents are inside during a thunderstorm warning.

**Snow storm/ice storm**



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When more than one winter hazard is expected to occur, then a winter storm alert may be issued. Be aware of the potential for heavy snow, reduced visibilities, strong winds, freezing rain or extreme wind chill.

A **Winter Storm Watch** will alert you to the potential of hazardous conditions. It will precede a variety of potential warnings and may be issued up to 48 to 60 hours in advance.

A **Winter Storm Warning** will alert you that combinations of hazardous winter conditions are occurring or expected to develop shortly. A warning is normally not issued more than 12 to 14 hours in advance.

A **Snowfall Warning** is issued when hazardous amounts are expected to fall over a 12- or 24-hour period. Snowfall warnings are not issued more than 12 to 24 hours in advance and in some regions a **Winter Storm Watch** may give advance notification to a warning. A **Special Weather Statement** may be issued for lesser amounts in special circumstances.

Safety Tip: remember that a thin layer of snow offers less traction than a few centimetres.

A **Blizzard Warning** is issued when winds of 40 km/h or more, are expected to cause widespread reductions in visibilities to less than one kilometre, due to blowing snow, for at least four to six hours. Warnings are generally issued 12 to 24 hours in advance. In some regions a blizzard warning may be preceded by a **Winter Storm Watch**. Blizzard conditions generally do not last more than six to 12 hours, but have been known to last four to six days. Often blizzard conditions will develop suddenly after the passage of a storm system.

Safety Tip: Be prepared to encounter sudden lower visibilities when travelling through open areas away from wind breaks such as trees and buildings.

Steps for Director of Homes and Seniors Services and /or Administrator:

1. Discuss with Registered Staff and the Manager of Support Services (MSS), the supplies that may be required on the units (access stockpile resources as needed), such as additional blankets & food;
2. Discuss with Maintenance to ensure generator diesel tank is full;



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3. Discuss with Manager of Resident Care/MSS where sleeping quarters could be established for staff if required.
4. Communicate with County of Elgin Emergency Management Coordinator

Loss of essential services may occur with any severe weather incident. Refer to Administrative policy 3.16 Loss of essential services for detailed direction(s).

Communication is critical during a severe weather incident, communication devices such as land line, mobile devices, overhead paging, walkie talkies and a runner are recommended as available and required.

### Post Incident Plan for Recovery

Following a Code Purple, a debrief will be conducted and will include staff, management, and, as applicable, others (students, volunteers, etc.) involved in the incident. Debriefing is an opportunity to build morale, listen to concerns, document lessons learned, and plan for regular operations. Emotional/physical support for those directly involved/witness to the code purple will be provided as determined by assessed need(s).

A documented evaluation of the incident, policy and procedure shall be conducted within 30 days of the Code Purple including what went well, opportunities for improvement, those in attendance, and dates changes implemented.

### Testing and Evaluation

Homes are required to test emergency plans including arrangements made with emergency providers. Code purple testing must be conducted annually.

Exercises can be developed to test essential elements, interrelated elements, or the entire plan. These can take the form of table-top exercises, drills, functional exercised and field exercises. Testing shall include a written record of testing and changes made to improve the plans including the corrective action, and timeframes.

Emergency plans must be evaluated and updated within 30 days of an emergency being declared over and annually should the plan not be activated.

References:

Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021

ON Reg. 246/22



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Administration Policy 3.15.06 Code Green Evacuation  
Administration Policy 3.16 – Loss of Essential Services