



CODE BROWN – CHEMICAL, NUCLEAR, RADIOACTIVE, OR BIOHAZARDOUS/INFECTIOUS THREAT

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MANUAL: Emergency Procedures	SECTION: Codes

VALUE STATEMENT

In keeping with its value of *Excellence*, the organization is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place in the event of an emergency.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of Code Brown is to provide procedures/guidelines for responses to both internal and external disaster situations that may affect staff, patients/residents and visitors. Several types of hazards pose a threat to any facility or nursing home and they include; fire, severe weather, water shortage, power outage, chemical spills, bomb threat and nuclear, or radiological accidents (specific procedures).

DEFINITIONS

N/A

POLICY

Code Brown is a procedure that outlines the steps to be taken in the event of a major internal/external environmental disaster that could pose a health risk to the occupants of the organization. For example, an accidental chemical spill or an explosion that released extensive noxious gases could have an immediate and negative effect on air quality.

Code Brown can also be used in the event of a deliberate act of terrorism using chemical, nuclear, radioactive and biohazardous or infectious agents such as anthrax, smallpox, Ebola and plague.

The following is a hierarchy as to who is in charge during an emergency for those present on site:

Hierarchy of Authority during an emergency:

- VP of Clinical Services at SJCCC/Site Administrator at SJV/VSGV
- DOCs at the Villas/Clinical Managers at CCC
- ADOC
- Charge RN
- RPN

Brigade Members Include:

Day Shift/Afternoon Shift

- SJCCC:
 - 2 RPN from each unit;
 - Two Allied Health; and
 - All Maintenance Staff.

- SJV:
 - Personal Care Assistant (#1) from Lakeview, Hillcrest and Sunnyside;
 - One Dietary staff – Cook;
 - One Recreation/Program Staff;
 - One Laundry Staff; and
 - One Maintenance Staff.
- VSGV:
 - Personal Care Assistant (#1) from Whitson, Whitewater and High Falls;
 - One Food Services Assistant – Whitewater
 - One Recreation/Program Staff;
 - One Laundry Staff; and
 - One Maintenance Staff.

Nightshift

- When a Code Brown is called, it is assumed that all night shift staff members will respond to the Code Brown.

PROCEDURE

In the event of a spill (which involves the release of a type or quantity of a chemical that poses an immediate risk to health or involve an uncontrolled fire or explosion), the staff member discovering the event will be designated as the Scene Captain and will notify the most senior person on the hierarchy within the building . This person will be designated as the Emergency Response Boss for the event. If the event occurs after business hours, the Administrator on call needs to be notified by the Emergency Response Boss.

The emergency response boss will provide direction for the following:

1. Announce over the P.A. system "Code Brown" and state the exact location three times.
2. Initiate Code Brown accordingly.
3. If necessary Call 911 and give details of the accident including the location, type of hazardous materials involved and whether there is personal injury.

The Scene Captain will:

1. Coordinate the evacuation of everyone from the immediate area and the provision of first aid procedures as required, including:
 - Locating nearest emergency eyewash station.
 - Removal of any contaminated clothing from the victim and flushing all areas of the body contacted by chemical with copious amounts of water for 15 minutes unless contraindicated by the MSDS/SDS or poison control.
2. Have all doors closed and isolate the affected area to prevent the spread of potential fumes and contact with more people.
3. Coordinate the efforts of the Brigade (Members) who will report immediately to the announced site.

4. Locate "Material Safety Data Sheet/Safety Data Sheet" (MSDS/SDS) or any information regarding the chemical spill if it is possible to do so safely. There is a contact number available on all MSDS/SDS for further assistance.
5. Complete and forward any incident reports to respective manager.

Chemical Spill – External Procedure

1. Direct maintenance staff to shut down outside intake ventilation.
2. Close all doors to the outside and close and lock all windows.
3. Turn off all exhaust fans in the bathrooms.
4. Close as many internal doors as possible in the building.
5. Shut down all units that provide conditioned air to the building and that exhaust air from the building.
6. If the gas or vapor is soluble or partially soluble in water, hold a wet cloth over your nose and mouth if gases start to bother you.

Note: Health care facilities may have various hazardous products on site depending on their mandate. The mishandling of these products may present risk to staff and patients/residents.

Note: Departments using these products are required to have detailed protocols in place to address each product's unique properties and hazards and how to handle them.

General Guidelines for Prevention and Reduction of Risks

1. Staff who normally handles a potentially hazardous substance must be trained in proper handling and clean up procedures for spills specific to the product involved.
2. Staff should know which products, in combination with others, could form hazardous mixtures.
3. These products should not be stored, or transported near each other in case of breakage, spillage or leakage causing the possibility of a chemical interaction.
4. Protective clothing depending on the risk of the product in question should be worn or immediately available in case of a spill.

In health care facilities, there can be general types of potentially hazardous substances:

- Solid Products,
- Liquid Products,
- Gaseous Products,
- Flammable and/or Explosive Products, and
- Human Blood and Bodily Fluids.

Note: Protocols for a spill of any hazardous substance must include specific guidelines for the particular product. Appropriate protective clothing is mandatory in dealing with each. All information can be found on the MSDS/SDS for the chemical being dealt with. Staff should consider the following measures to protect themselves when handling the five general types of potentially hazardous substances.

Department/Service Responsibility

Current protocols for the use and cleanup of specific hazardous substances are the responsibility of the service/department in which they are used, in compliance with the appropriate legislation and policies. These are to be provided annually through site specific WHMIS training.

Solid Products

Solid products do not normally present a major problem and should be handled by wearing appropriate protection. Some powders and small particle products can cause a problem of inhalation and eye irritation.

1. Skin protection is necessary, especially for the respiratory tract and the eyes.
2. When handling fine particle contaminants, the use of fans and air exchange systems should be restricted.
3. Sweeping should be performed in a non-vigorous manner to avoid spreading dust like particles. Vacuuming is recommended and the vacuum should be decontaminated following use.
4. Reclaimed material should be properly sealed in approved containers to avoid dispersion during transport for disposal.
5. Showering may be indicated for anyone who comes in contact with dust like materials.
6. Depending on the hazardous substance, shower water may need to be captured and disposed of properly.

Liquid Products

Staff may handle many types of hazardous liquids in a health care facility.

1. Staff should avoid contact with exposed skin.
2. No attempts should be made to flush hazardous materials down drains or into the sewer system.
3. Spills of hazardous liquids should be contained.
4. Neutralizers or absorbents should be applied cautiously by trained staff to avoid spreading or splashing the hazardous liquid.
5. All spilled products should be placed in approved non-porous containers for disposal.
6. Liquids that produce toxic vapors must be handled accordingly.

Gaseous Products

In the event of a leak or escape of a hazardous gaseous product:

1. Move affected persons to fresh air at once. Notify the fire department immediately if victims cannot escape unaided and rescue by staff is not possible.
2. Avoid inhaling vapors, some of which may be odorless.
3. Close doors to adjoining areas to lessen the spread of the fumes.
4. Shut down all air exchange systems and fans except systems that exhaust directly to the outside.
5. Open doors and windows leading directly to the outside to vent gases to the exterior of the building.

Flammable/Explosive Products

During an emergency involving flammable and/or explosive products:

1. All persons should be removed to a safe location and the fire department notified.
2. Appropriate fire extinguishers and/or fire hoses should be taken to the area. Staff should only attempt suppression to save or protect a life.
3. Avoid activating lighting or other electrical switches.

Note: Microphones or portable radios, walkie-talkies or cellular telephones should not be turned on in the presence of potentially explosive gases.

Human Blood and Bodily Fluids

All staff need to take appropriate precautions to avoid contact with possibly contaminated blood and bodily fluids.

1. Standard precautions should be used and contact with unprotected skin avoided.
2. Access spill kits to manage such spills while adhering to the Blood Spill policy in the Infection Control Manual.

REFERENCES

N/A

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