

Policy and Procedure

Department: Emergency Preparedness	Section: CODES	Subject: Code Aqua-Flooding
Policy:	Original Date: 2023-09-19	Supersedes: 2023-09-19
Last Reviewed: 2026-05-04	Next Review Date: 2027-05-01	Approver: Angie Brunetti (Emergency Preparedness Committee)

POLICY STATEMENT

Code Aqua is the term used to declare uncontrolled flooding or heating water release. The Code Aqua policy is a risk management strategy used to ensure Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre (ERHHC) employees are able to react appropriately in a Code Aqua situation, in order to ensure the safety and protection of staff, patients, residents and visitors, and to mitigate related damage, losses or service interruptions. The plan is reviewed and evaluated annually by the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC).

Code Aqua may prompt additional emergency codes depending on the severity and location of the incident:

- **Code Green (Evacuation):** May be initiated if the water-related event poses a threat to occupant safety.
- **Code Grey (Infrastructure Loss):** May apply if the event results in significant damage to systems or utilities.

Code Aqua may also be related to Code Red if the sprinkler system was deployed during a fire event. Refer to these respective policies in Surge for additional information.

AUTHORITY TO DECLARE

Any staff member who discovers a flood or hot water release may initiate Code Aqua by dialing ext. 7777.

DEFINITIONS

Category Of Water

While there are various categories of water, it is important to apply the highest precautionary principle when responding to a flood of unknown sources. Once clean water leaves the exit point, it may not remain clean once it contacts other surfaces or materials. Therefore, initially treat the response as responding to **Black Water** until the sources of the water can be isolated.

- Category 1 (Clean/White Water) – does not pose a human risk (e.g., broken water line.)
- Category 2 (Grey Water) – carries microorganisms (e.g., overflows from washing machines and dishwashers.)

- Category 3 (Black Water) - grossly unsanitary (e.g., sewage water sources, toilet backflow & Category 2 water that has not been removed promptly.

ERHHC

Includes the hospital, Espanola Nursing Home, Espanola & Area Family Health Team, Queensway Place Assisted Living, Non-Profit Housing (Seniors Apartments), Maintenance garage.

Flood

An overwhelming, uncontrolled quantity of water deemed to be a physical, health or environmental hazard that can result in, but is not limited to, slips, falls, electrical hazards, or contamination involving sewage and/or other pollutants.

Hazard

A situation with a potential for harm to persons, property, property, or the environment. (*Definition from CSA Z1600-17*)

Heating Hot water

Pressurized water used for heating or sterilization. Due to the obvious dangers to the external body, precautions must be taken when approaching heating water.

Immediate debriefing

An immediate process debriefing session following an exercise/incident, to review code response and procedure, while events are still fresh in everyone's mind. (*Adopted from Emergency Management Ontario definition*)

Perimeter

A boundary surrounding the site of an emergency, established at the scene by the Incident Commander (IC) for safety reasons, to prevent unauthorized access to the site and in some cases, to preserve evidence for investigation and follow-up. (*CSA Z1600-17*)

Responders

Persons identified as being responsible for minimizing the risk, loss, and damage resulting from an emergency. These persons may be employees of an organization directly affected by the emergency or be external to the organization. (*CSA Z1600-17*)

Scene Coordinator

Maintenance personnel in charge of flood/heating water release event.

Staff

All employees of Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre

Staff Pool Coordinator

Individual in charge of the Emergency Pool Area in the event of staff/patient relocation in the event of a flood

Water Damage

The physical loss resulting from the accidental discharge, escape, leakage, back up of overflow of water or sewage from the plumbing system or environmental sources.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**Employees**

- Review the emergency plans annually and when changes are made, ensuring understanding of the roles and processes.
- Assist in patient/resident reassurance and evacuation (as required)
- Complete resident/patient census record (in patient/resident areas)
- Assume role of Staff Pool Coordinator in the case of departmental evacuation/relocation.
- Participating in mock exercises, debriefs and educational programs as required

Managers:

- Review the emergency plans upon new staff orientation, annually and when changes are made, ensuring understanding of the roles and processes.
- Participate in mock exercises and attend educational programs as required
- Ensure all employees review and can respond competently in an emergency situation
- Ensure employees attend scheduled education programs or training opportunities
- Be prepared to assist with the emergency as required
- Assume the role of IC if Incident Command Centre is transferred from the Emergency Department

Emergency Preparedness Lead/Committee:

- Review and update the policy annually, in conjunction with the Maintenance Manager
- Coordinate and conduct mock drills
- Review of all Code Action reports for process improvement opportunities

Incident Commander (IC): ED Nurse or Senior Leader, until relieved by Senior Leader) refer to Appendix A

- Assume responsibility for initiating and cancelling the situation, in conjunction with the Scene Coordinator
- Direct employees to respond as needed, including escalation to Code Green or Grey, or in response to sprinkler deployment.
- Ensure complete documentation (census sheets, checklist, Code Action Report)

Maintenance Team (refer to Appendix B and C)

- Respond to the announced location and assume role of Scene Coordinator.
- Communicate with Incident Command (ext. 7777) regarding the extent of the situation throughout the emergency
- Communicate with any staff, clients, contractors in the area regarding temporary relocation
- Collaborate with management, IPAC and EVS regarding salvaging and discarding of contaminated items

- Follow the established Preventative Maintenance program in place to identify and correct areas that may result in an unanticipated flood and/or heating water release incident before it occurs.
- Assess for electrical system exposure and ensure all electrical systems are de-energized prior to starting clean-up efforts
- Direct remediation of the area
- Assess areas requiring mould treatment and escalate to Maintenance Manager regarding the need for professional assistance.
- Participate in debrief and potential mitigation opportunities.
- Once determined safe to do so, communicate with Incident Command to announce “Code

Environmental Services Team

- Respond to scene upon notification by IC or Scene Coordinator to assist with containment and clean up.
- Disinfection of surfaces of equipment/furniture that are removed from the area.
- In collaboration with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Lead and Scene Coordinator, discard any contaminated single use items, salvage and send any sterile supplies for reprocessing, disinfect any equipment that is to be removed from the area prior to relocation.
- Once resolved, terminally clean and disinfect the area and notify Management or Scene Coordinator.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Lead

- Participate in scene assessment and provide recommendations regarding required personal protective equipment (PPE), staff and client safety, salvaging/discarding contaminated items, and evacuation (if required)
- Participate in planning for restoration work, if necessary.
- Provide guidance regarding necessary actions involving food items, food preparation areas, and vaccine refrigeration including contacting the Public Health Unit.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

If deemed necessary by the Scene Coordinator and IC, a “Code Aqua” will be initiated through the emergency activation system.

Dial 7777 from any hospital phone and provide Incident Command (IC) specific instructions as to where the Code Aqua is located i.e., the department and specific room/location.

E.g., Code Aqua, kitchen

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

The response will vary based on the extent of the flood and the extent of the area affected. All employees should listen to the announcements and proceed with ‘**business as usual**’ in unaffected areas, remain vigilant to any situational changes and listen to overhead announcements.

DISCOVERY OF INTERNAL FLOOD/HEATING WATER RELEASE

Upon discovery of an influx of water that is **beyond your ability to control and contain**, or heating water release in the area:

- Dial **7777** to report a Code Aqua and provide (IC) with the exact location and nature of the incident (specify the source of water, if known).
- If necessary, remove persons or vital equipment in the immediate area.

ED WARD CLERK (700-2300) OR ED NURSE (2300-700) at Incident Command. Refer to Appendix A for the IC Checklist.

Upon notification of Code Aqua, IC will:

- Dial **9(pause) 00 to announce to entire campus:
“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua _____ (location and/or room number)]” x3
- Contact Maintenance Staff as well as Environmental Services.
- Upon escalation of the situation, Senior Management on Call may assume the role of Incident Command and will announce overhead:

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua Incident Command Post (location and extension)]” x3

- If required, in collaboration with the scene coordinator, IC will initiate the Code Green and/or Code Grey procedure, and announce:

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Green _____ (location), Immediate evacuation of location required. Please move to (location) via (route)]” x3

OR

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Grey. Loss of _____. Please await further instruction]”x3

- Notify Infection Prevention and Control to assess the risk of contamination.
- In collaboration with the Scene Coordinator, cancel the code by announcing:

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please (Code Aqua All Clear)”x3

EXTERIOR FLOOD

In the event of overland flooding on Hospital property/grounds whereby the typical water diversion systems are impacted (e.g., clogged drains, floods by nearby water ways, etc.) a Code Aqua Exterior will be initiated.

- Dial **7777** to report Code Aqua and provide IC with the location and nature of the incident (e.g., parking lot, front entrance, etc.).

Upon notification of Code Aqua, IC will:

- Dial **9(pause) 00 to announce to entire campus:

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua _____ (location)]” x3

- IC will notify maintenance.

Upon escalation of the situation, Senior Management on Call may assume the role of Incident Command and will announce overhead:

“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua Incident Command Post (location and

extension)]]” x3

EDUCATION

All employees complete the online Code Aqua policy review in Surge Learning upon orientation and annually. It is the responsibility of the department manager to ensure their staff review the document following any revision.

RECOVERY PROCEDURES

A debrief meeting will be organized by the IC, Emergency Preparedness Lead, and Scene Coordinator as soon as reasonably possible. All documentation for the event will be collected by the meeting leader to be reviewed with appropriate personnel.

Immediate actions will focus on displaced residents, resuming patient services, and building infrastructure.

An action plan to resume operations, evaluate current processes, and identify improvement opportunities will be created as required.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

CSA Group. 2022. Emergency and Continuity Management Program. CSA Z1600:17 (R2022) Retrieved Sept 9, 2023 [CSA Z1600:17 \(R2022\) | Product | CSA Group](#)

ERHHC. (2025) Code Green-Evacuation.

ERHHC. (2023) Code Grey- Air Exclusion and Infrastructure Loss

Ontario.ca *Emergency Management Ontario*. Retrieved Sept 6, 2023. [Emergency management | ontario.ca](#)

Public Health Ontario. (2018). Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings, 3rd Edition. [PIDAC: Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections | January 2018 \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)



Appendix A Code Aqua Incident Command Checklist

INCIDENT COMMANDER:

ED WARD CLERK, NURSE, SENIOR MANAGER

Date/Time of Incident: _____

		Time/Initial
1	Upon notification of Code Aqua, Dial **9(pause) 00 to announce to entire campus: "Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua _____ (location and/or room number)]" x3	
2	Establish an Emergency Command Centre at the ED Nurse Station or Main Entrance if ED is compromised.	
3	Contact Maintenance Staff. Maintenance will take over as Scene Coordinator and will provide IC with ongoing updates. After hours: On-Call staff 705-869-8691.	
4	Notify Infection Prevention and Control to assess the risk of contamination.	
5	Contact Environmental Services staff. EVS may assist with the containment during the situation but will need to clean and disinfect the area once resolved.	
6	If after hours, notify on call manager.	
7	Upon escalation of the situation, Senior Management on Call may assume the role of Incident Command and will announce overhead: "Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Aqua Incident Command Post (location and extension)]" x3	
8	Complete or designate completion of patient census record.	
9	Delegate to Ward Clerk – Repeat announcement Q15 for 1 hour, then Q30 until 9pm or resolved. "Code Aqua (location) remains in effect."	
10	If evacuation is required: ➤ Dial **9 (pause) 00 to announce to entire health campus "Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please [Code Green _____ (location), Immediate evacuation of location required. Please move to (location) via (route)]" x3 If infrastructure or services are affected: ➤ Dial **9 (pause) 00 to announce to entire health campus "Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please, [Code GREY, Loss of _____] x3.	
11	Coordinate communication to staff, clients and public.	
12	Once notified by maintenance, Dial **9 (pause) 00 to announce to entire health campus "Your attention please, your attention please. [Code Aqua All clear] x3	
13	Submit IC checklist and Census sheets to Emergency Preparedness Lead.	



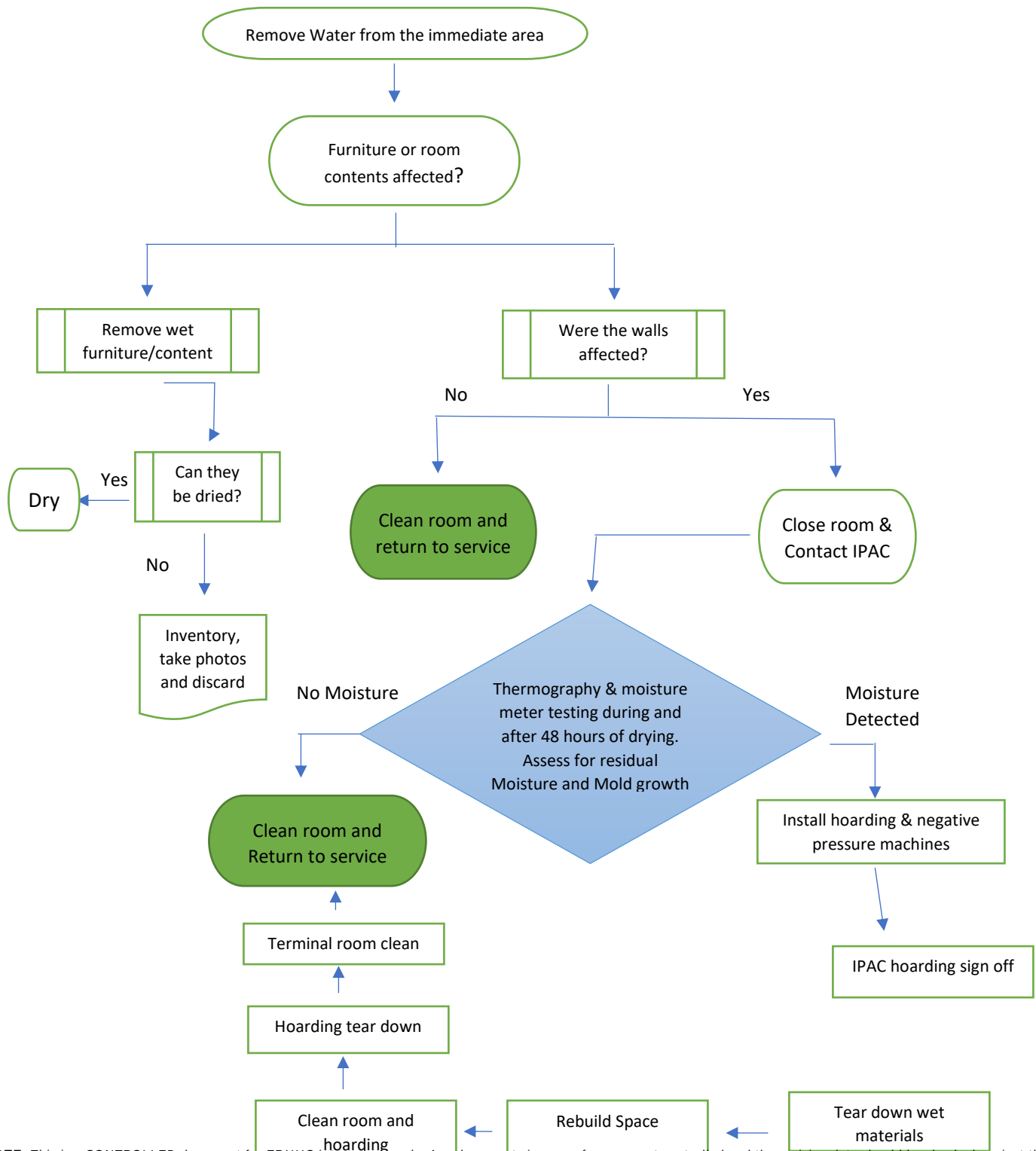
Appendix B Code Aqua Maintenance Action Sheet

Name/Date:

1. Attend the scene, assuming role of **Scene Coordinator**
2. Obtain briefing from the Initial Incident Commander and lead staff member from the affected department.
3. Complete an assessment of the situation to ensure occupant safety (e.g., electrical, ceiling integrity) and equipment safety (e.g., if safe, move or cover with plastic). Take action to reduce risk of mechanical hazards.
4. Locate and close shut-off valves if possible/required; consider clinical impacts.
5. Provide ongoing communication with Incident Commander.
6. Designate and assign roles to Code Aqua Responders (Maintenance Staff and Environmental Services), if safe and able to do so:
 - ✚ Establish perimeter control around flood
 - ✚ Facilitate flood containment and remediation:
 - Place spill barriers around affected areas to contain flood
 - If safe and able, dike water with available material (e.g., Towels, Linen)
 - Utilize wet-vacuum systems or page EVS to bring a floor machine to remove excess water
 - ✚ Where appropriate and safe to do so, unplug electrical equipment from power source.
 - ✚ Assist in relocating items and documents.
7. Contact the Maintenance Manager for additional scene support and assistance as required.
8. Dry all wet electrical/mechanical equipment affected by the flooding after securing power under lockout/tag out procedures.
9. Continue to update Incident Commander on remediation efforts and advise when flood contained, and situation resolved.

Appendix C

Scene Coordinator (Maintenance) Water Remediation Process – Algorithm



NOTE: This is a CONTROLLED document for ERHHC internal use only. Any documents in paper form are not controlled and the revision date should be checked against the electronic version prior to use.