



Policy and Procedure

Department: Emergency Preparedness	Section:	Subject: Code Brown - Internal Chemical Spill
Policy: 8297	Original Date: January 1, 2004	Supersedes: August 22, 2016
Last Reviewed: May 5, 2021	Next Review Date: July 6, 2024	Approver: Angie Brunetti

Purpose

The purpose of the Code Brown (In-facility Hazardous Spill) policy and procedure is to alert the hospital community of a hazard due to the presence of an uncontrolled hazardous substance released into the hospital facilities or the natural environment and to define procedures required for the safe containment and management. The policy and procedure will also ensure a timely, effective, and safe response and resolution of the spill occurs.

Implementation of a Code Brown will occur if there is a serious internal spill/contamination, leak, suspicious or unusual smell, gas, or vapor, or discovery of an unknown substance, liquid or powder that is too large for the person who identifies the spill to clean up.

If a coordinated emergency response by several agencies is required, please consult the Town of Espanola Emergency Response Plan

Definitions

Hazard: A situation with a potential for harm to persons, property, or the environment (CSA Z1600-17)

Safety Data Sheets (SDS): Summary documents that provide information about the hazards of a product and advice about safety precautions. SDS's tell users what the hazards of the product are, how to use the product safely, what to expect if the recommendations are not followed, how to recognize symptoms of exposure, and what to do if emergencies occur. (Adapted from CCOHS.ca)

Localized (in-facility) Response: Area response will be carried out by those staff working in the Area/unit/department of the spill site using the appropriate spill kit in accordance with this procedure.

External Response: following localized response, if it is identified by the Incident Commander (local) that the situation:

Cannot be safely handled by or is beyond the capacity of trained responders due to volume, chemical nature (including unknown substance), or location of spill

Presents a significant uncontrolled or uncontainable health hazard

Will or may create a serious adverse environmental effect or condition in the natural environment

Requires personal protective equipment and/or special clean up protocols or equipment unavailable (vacuum trucks, pressure washers, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), full encapsulation chemical suits, etc.)

The Incident Commander (local) will activate a Code Brown. The Code Brown Incident Commander will initiate contact with:

External Spill Response Contractor

Espanola Fire Department in the event a Flammable Combustible liquid(s) or any Gas/Vapor release.

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 (adapted from CSA Z1600-17)

Perimeter: A boundary surrounding the site of an emergency, established at the scene by the Incident Commander 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)

The following definitions for spill size (SMALL vs LARGE) are provided as a guide (30-30 Rule) for staff to determine when to activate the local spill response and when to activate an overhead paged Code Brown. In some cases, due to the chemical nature/properties of the hazard a smaller quantity of hazardous material may still require an overhead Code Brown activation.

Small Spill: A small spill is a spill that is less than 30 liters of liquid or thirty kilograms of solid. The spilled material is of a chemical nature, size, or quantity that the staff in the area can safely contain the spill and it can be quickly cleaned up by one or two individuals without evacuating adjacent space(s).

Large Spill: A large spill is a spill that is greater than thirty liters of liquid or thirty kilograms of solid. The spilled material is of a size, quantity, or chemical nature that staff in the area need EXTERNAL Spill response assistance to safely contain the spill and facilitate remediation of the area.

From the Ontario Environmental Protection Act:**Adverse Effects:**

- Impairment of the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it
- Injury or damage to property or to plant or animal life
- Harm or material discomfort to any person
- An adverse effect on the health of any person
- Impairment of the safety of any person
- Rendering any property or plant or animal life unfit for human use
- Loss of enjoyment of normal use of property
- Interference with the normal conduct of business

Natural Environment:

Means the air, land and water, or any combination or part thereof, of the Province of Ontario

Scope:

This policy is specifically intended for Espanola Regional Health Centre, Long-Term Care, the Family Health Team. The objectives are:

To alert other staff members working in the building of the release of a hazardous substance

To provide a standard response for immediate implantation in the event of hazardous spill that poses a risk to building occupants at the site

To identify defined roles and responsibilities for ERHHC, LTC, FHT staff upon notification of a hazardous spill event

To identify proper management and safe clean-up of the hazardous substance

To minimize the potential number of individuals and preserve the safety of staff, clients, and other building occupants.

Authority to declare a Code Brown

Any person discovering a chemical spill.

Procedure

Immediately upon DISCOVERING A CHEMICAL SPILL:

- Activate a Code Brown: Dial 911 to contact the Charge Nurse, who will be Incident Commander
- Report the location of the spill and type of spill (small or large)
- Isolate area
- Identify spill and consult the Material Safety Data Sheet located on all computer



desktops

- Only those required for the clean up should attend the area, all others should evacuate to a safe pooling area
- Avoid walking in spill, skin contact, or breathing vapors/aerosolized product
- If person or clothing becomes contaminated, immediately follow decontamination procedures appropriate to the product (identify from the Material Safety Data Sheet prior to working with the product) and seek medical attention as required.
- Obtain spill kit from the following locations: lab, penthouse, generator/fuel room, decontamination room, acute care under the medication room sink, pharmacy and don appropriate personal protective equipment including gloves, face shields and shoe covers. Prevent contamination of person, shoes, and clothing.
- Follow procedure in Spill Kit.
- Contact Maintenance and/or Housekeeping
- Prevent spreading of the product. Control the source and confine the spill to a small area using spill kit supplies. Apply neutralizing products if appropriate and available.
- Collect product using spill kit supplies.
- Clean residual product from the spill area with water.
- Place all contaminated materials and debris in a polyethylene waste container or bag (note: polyethylene biohazard/autoclave bags are chemically resistant). Dispose of as hazardous waste.

Debrief meeting/recovery plan

- A debrief meeting will take place within one business day where possible to evaluate current process and process improvement opportunities. The Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair/Co-Chair will facilitate.
- Immediate notification to the Departmental Manager for small spills and Departmental Manager and Senior Manager for large spills when this code is initiated to ensure timely follow up.
- Once the Clean-up is complete and the impacted space remediated, staff can return to the area.

References

Health Sciences North. (December, 2021). Code Brown (Hazardous Spill/Release: Including Hazardous Drugs Natural Gas & Radioactive Material).

Ontario Hospital Association. (2008). Emergency Management Toolkit. [Emergency Management Toolkit.pdf \(oha.com\)](#)