

Policy and Procedure

Department: Emergency Preparedness	Section: CODES	Subject: Code Silver - Threatening Weapon
Policy:	Original Date: 2016-09-01	Supersedes: 2016-09-28
Last Reviewed: 2026-07-21	Next Review Date: 2027-07-21	Approver: Angie Brunetti (Emergency Preparedness Committee)

POLICY STATEMENT

Code Silver is the term used to declare a threat, attempt or active use of a weapon, regardless of the type of weapon. The Code Silver 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 Silver situation, in order to ensure the safety and protection of staff, patients, residents and visitors. The plan is reviewed, tested and evaluated annually by the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC).

The announcement of Code Silver will **not result in other hospital workers coming to assist**, as it is designed to keep people away from harm. Police will be contacted as soon as Code Silver is called and will assume management of the incident upon arrival. Code White (Violent/Behavioral Situation), Code Purple (Hostage Taking), and Code Black (Bomb Threat) may escalate to a Code Silver, as well as a Code Black (Bomb Threat/Suspicious Object) involving armed assailants.

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

AUTHORITY TO DECLARE

Any staff member can initiate a Code Silver calling 911 or activating the panic alarm system (portable or hardwired) OR by dialing 7777 (**ED Incident Command Centre**) when staff observe or are told of a person(s) who is(are):

- Attempting to harm or injure people with any weapon; or
- Carrying a weapon on or near hospital grounds

** If the Code Silver is in the ED - **Dial Switchboard (0)** to relay information and announce the code.

DEFINITIONS

Incident Command Centre: The central command and control location/group responsible for carrying out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management functions at a strategic level in an emergency, and ensuring the continuity of vital operations

Incident Commander (IC): The most responsible person at the time of an emergency. This person will depend on the time of day and may change as the situation progresses. The ED Ward Clerk may initiate the process during daytime hours, until relieved by the ED Nurse, or the most responsible person (e.g. Senior Manager or OPP).

Weapon: Anything used, designed or intended for use:

- In causing death or injury to any person
- For the purpose of threatening or intimidating a person

Emergency Codes that May Escalate into a Code Silver:

Emergency Code	Reason for Escalation
Code White	When a violent person acquires a weapon, poses an immediate threat, and police response is required.
Code Purple	May escalate to a Code Silver if armed hostage takers are able to move beyond a previously contained
Code Black	Bomb threat emergencies could involve armed assailants, requiring additional police presence

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees

- Review the emergency plan annually and when changes are made, ensuring understanding of the roles and processes.
- Participate in mock exercises, debriefs and educational programs as required
- Complete Workplace Violence Reports, Employee Incident Reports in Surge Learning as needed

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

Emergency Preparedness Lead/Committee:

- Review and update the policy annually
- Coordinate and conduct mock drills as required
- Review of all Code Response reports for process improvement opportunities

Incident Commander (ED Nurse or CEO/Senior Leader, until relieved by OPP)

- Assume responsibility for initiating and/or overseeing the situation until relieved
- Communicate with staff, visitors, clients and partners, and ensure others are prevented from accessing the area
- Determine the need for local evacuation
- Ensure complete documentation (census sheets, checklist, Code Response Report, Workplace Violence Report)

Any communication to the public will be vetted by the CEO or delegate, in collaboration with OPP

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

- If possible, press panic alarm immediately OR call 911 to initiate police response.
- Dial 7777 from any hospital phone and provide Incident Command (IC) specific instructions as to where the Code Silver is located i.e., the department and specific room/location.

- E.g. Code Silver, Main Entrance, Lab waiting area

When relaying information to the police or IC, include details such as location, room number, description of assailant and weapon, information on hostages, comments made by assailant etc.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

HEALTHCARE WORKERS WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE AREA or NEAR THE AREA OF THE ASSAILANT

1. Remain CALM and EVACUATE.

- Do not confront a person with a weapon
- Do not attempt to remove wounded persons from the scene
- If possible, assist others to leave the area and redirect those trying to enter
- Evacuate if you are able to do so safely (e.g. if you are close to an exit and can get there without attracting attention)
- While evacuating always keep hands visible (not to be mistaken for the assailant)
- Leave any belongings behind
- Follow police directions, if available

2. If unable to evacuate, HIDE.

- Protect yourself and others by quickly and quietly barricading yourself in a room with a lock. Close blinds and windows and move away from them, turn off lights, do not answer the door or respond to commands unless certain they are issued by the police. Bring any staff or clients that are in the immediate area to your secure room
- If possible, push large furniture in front of the door, and hide behind larger items
- Silence your cell phone and turn off any sources of noise (e.g., radios, televisions, etc.)
- Do not call IC for Code Blue Medical Emergency until the Code Silver situation is under control
- Remain quiet and low to the ground, and away from windows
- **If the assailant enters your work area**, contact Incident Command or 911 if it is safe to do so
- Hide in place until the "All Clear" is announced

3. FIGHT.

- **Fight only as a last resort and only if your life is in imminent danger**
- Attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the assailant by: Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her, throwing items and improving weapons, yell, committing to your actions
- If others are available, work together to distract and attack the assailant as fiercely as possible

4. CALL CODE SILVER as soon as possible

- Dial 7777 to initiate Code Silver, giving as much information as possible

HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN THE HOSPITAL

UPON HEARING A CODE SILVER ANNOUNCEMENT

- Do not return to your department or go to the area of the incident. Stay safe and assist others in the area with hiding.
- Divide into small mixed groups of staff, patients, and visitors. Hide in patient rooms, meeting rooms, bathrooms, offices, etc. Remain quiet and turn off phones, alarms, electronic devices. Move away from windows and doors. Lay on the floor, hide under/behind large furniture.
- Follow the instructions of the Incident Command/Manager in your current location
- Minimize movement within the area to essential only.

- Do not use the telephone unless it is related to the Code Silver incident.

Managers: If safe to do, perform a headcount to determine if all team members are accounted for.

Police must approve all movement throughout the hospital, until the Code Silver has been cleared. This includes responding to other codes and patient care needs

UPON THE ARRIVAL OF POLICE

Police Officers may:

- Be wearing normal uniforms or tactical gear, helmets, etc.
- Be armed with rifles, shotguns and/or handguns
- Use chemical irritants or incapacitating devices (e.g., pepper spray, stun grenades, tasers, etc.) to control the situation
- Shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

Police will be responding with the intent to use the required level of force to diffuse the situation. Ensure you do not present yourself as a threat to them.

- Drop any items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets, etc.), raise your hands and keep them visible
- Remain calm. avoid screaming and/or yelling.
- Avoid making quick movements toward Officers; do not stop an Officer to ask questions. Proceed in the direction from which Officers are entering the area
- Do not interfere or impede their movements

Police are the primary responders for Code Silver and will assume control upon arrival. The first priority is minimizing damage by disarming the assailant; the first officers at the scene will not stop to assist injured individuals.

Rescue teams comprised of additional Officers and emergency medical personnel may follow the initial Officers when it is safe to do so. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the area.

Once you have reached a safe location you will be held in that area by Police until the situation is under control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the safe location until Police have instructed you to do so.

CHARGE NURSE/INCIDENT COMMANDER (Refer to Appendix Incident Commander Code Silver Log)

The Incident Commander is to remain in Command Centre for the duration of the Code Silver unless unsafe to do so or at instructions of Police.

If more than one person is available, work to complete these tasks in tandem.

- Upon notification Code Purple, dial 911 to initiate police response ensuring as much information as possible is relayed including specific details such as location and room number of incident, name and number of hostage takers, physical description, names and number of hostages, weapons, comments made etc.
- Dial **9(pause) 00 to announce to entire campus
“Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please, Code Silver (specific location). Lock down and seek safety” x3
- Assess the situation to ensure the safety of residents/staff/visitors in your area and the need to evacuate
- If necessary, barricade yourself and others, if possible, in a room with a lock

- Remain on the phone with OPP dispatch to provide updates and accept instructions.
- Notify the CEO or Senior Manager as soon as safe to do so. The CEO or delegate will provide instructions regarding communication internally and externally, as well as directions to initiate ED Bypass or Closure.
- Upon Police arrival:
 - Provide any updates including location of assailant(s), victims, or people hiding
 - Provide master Salto (fob) if safe to do to
 - Follow police directions regarding announcements, communication, securing areas, moving patients/visitors etc.
 - Confirm attendance of persons from affected area, to determine if anyone is unaccounted for
 - Take notes and document activities, as much as possible

RECOVERY PLAN

Police will advise IC (or designate) when it is safe to end the Code Silver. At this time, the Incident Commander or Delegate will announce

“Your attention please, your attention please, *“Code Silver, All Clear”* x3.

- HCWs from the affected area should go to a designated meeting point that will be announced overhead when determined by Police, Incident Command and Senior Leadership
- Support will be provided for all involved regarding any physical or mental health needs. Social services, individual or group counselling and EAP will be coordinated.
- Workers should speak with their supervisor regarding any specific concerns, needs, or considerations.
- Some departments may not be able to resume immediately if the affected area is secured for investigation, or if damage to facilities and equipment inhibits their use. An action plan will be generated to support patient services and return to normal functioning.
- A debrief meeting will be held to evaluate current processes and identify process improvement opportunities.
- A Code Response Report will be submitted in Surge Learning by the staff member that activated the Code and will be reviewed with appropriate personnel. Critical injuries will be reported as required (MOHLTC, JHSC etc.). A Workplace Violence Report will also be submitted by the individuals involved.

EDUCATION

All employees complete the online Code Silver 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. Staff are required to participate in any mock drills or training opportunities.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

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2. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. (n.d.). *De-escalation series*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/de-escalation-series>
3. Deep River and District Health. (2023). Code Silver-Person with a Weapon
4. Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, RSO 1990, c E.9. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statue/90e09>
5. ERHHC. (2022). *Code Black- Bomb Threat/Suspicious Object*

6. ERHHC. (2022). *Code Purple- Hostage Taking*
7. ERHHC. (2022). *Code White- Violent Person*
8. ERHHC. (2021). ED Bypass Policy and Procedure.
9. ERHHC. (2022). Panic Alarm System
10. ERHHC. (2019). Reporting of Critical Incidents and Disclosure of Adverse Events.
11. Ministry of Long-Term Care. (2021). Fixing Long Term Care Homes Act 2021.
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12. North Shore Health Network. 2021. *Code Silver-Person with a Weapon*.
13. Ontario Hospital Association. (2008). Emergency Management Toolkit.



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14. Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1. Ontario.ca. (2022, April 11). Retrieved June 14, 2022, from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>
15. St. Joseph's Care Group. 2023. *Code Silver-Person with a Weapon*.
<https://sjcg.net/documents/emergency-codes/global-code-policies/AD-06-196-Code-Silver-Policy.pdf>

Appendix A**Code SILVER - Incident Commander (IC) Task Sheet (CEO or designate)**

The ED RN will assume the role of IC until relieved by the CEO/delegate, or police.

If more than one person is available, work to complete the following tasks in tandem.

	ACTION
1	Code Silver is reported to Nurse/Ward Clerk at Incident Command Centre (Red phone ext. 7777).
2	Establish the Emergency Command Centre at the ED Nurse Station if safe to do so.
3	Dial **9 (pause) 00 to announce to the entire health campus. "Your Attention Please, Your Attention Please, [Code SILVER_____ (location)]x3" If ED is compromised, dial switchboard (0) to make the announcement.
4	Call 911 and notify the police, providing the following information: • Location of incident • Description of assailant(s) • Type & description of weapon(s) • Information on hostages / victims (if any) • Any comments or demands made by the assailant Remain on the phone with OPP dispatch to provide updates and accept instructions.
5	Notify the CEO/Senior Manager as soon as possible. The CEO will provide instructions re: internal/external communication.
6	Work to ensure the safety of others in the area by assisting in evacuation or hiding.
7	Initiate ED Bypass or Closure process.
8	Upon Police arrival: • Provide any updates including location of the assailant, victims, or people hiding • Provide master Salto (fob) if safe to do to • Follow police directions regarding announcements, communication, securing areas, moving patients/visitors etc. • Confirm attendance of persons from affected area, to determine if anyone is unaccounted for • Take notes and document activities, as much as possible
9	When advised by police announce, "Code Silver, All Clear" overhead three times.
10	Coordinate debriefing for all staff involved and establish plans to return to normal functioning. Ensure Critical Stress Debriefing is set up with EAP provider.
11	Ensure all documentation is complete and submitted with the Code Response Report in Surge Learning.

Name

Date