

# BOIL WATER ADVISORY EMERGENCY PLAN — CODE GREY

## Purpose

The policy provides guidelines for staff to respond to and manage a boil water advisory or respond to water quality issues at the Homes to ensure the safety and security of residents, staff members, volunteers and visitors in the Homes.

## DEFINITIONS

### Boil Water Advisory

A boil water advisory (BWA) is issued by the local public health unit when water is not safe for drinking or other uses

### CODE GREY

A term that alerts staff to an infrastructure loss or failure of substantial significance [such as boil water advisory or water quality issues (such as discoloration, foul smell, etc.), flood, gas leaks or loss of one or more essential services]

### Emergency

An urgent or pressing situation or condition presenting an imminent threat to the health or well-being of residents and others attending the home that requires immediate action to ensure the safety of persons in the home

### Potable Water

Potable Water is drinkable

### Staff

A person who works at the Home who:

(a) Is an employee of the Region/Home. This includes:

## PARAMEDIC AND SENIORS SERVICES

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[york.ca/longtermcare](http://york.ca/longtermcare)



- Unionized staff, including but not limited to CUPE 905 Long-Term Care Bargaining Unit Staff (excluding Seniors Community Program Staff)
- Non-Union staff working in the Homes,
- Any redeployed Regional staff, and
- Other Regional staff, as required.

(b) Has a contract or agreement with Region/Home. This includes but not limited to the Medical Director, Registered Dietician, Pharmacy Service Provider, Physiotherapist, etc.

(c) Is at the Home due to a contract or agreement between the Region/Home and an employment agency or other third party. This includes agency staff (including those who may not provide direct care to residents)

## Policy

The key requirements of this policy are:

1. Activation: The *Boil Water Advisory Emergency Plan (CODE GREY)* MUST be activated by the Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours):
  - Upon staff observation of water quality issue (e.g., discolouration), and/or
  - Upon receipt of a boil water advisory from the Medical Officer of Health or a Public Health Inspector
2. All staff have a duty to support and respond to a CODE GREY
3. Equipment and Supplies: The Homes will ensure staff have access to resources, supplies, personal protective equipment, and equipment to adequately respond to a CODE GREY
4. Communications: The Homes will be equipped with an effective public address system for announcing CODE GREY to those in the Home
5. Reporting: The Home has a duty to report to the Ministry of Long-Term Care
  - An emergency, such as an environmental hazard that affects the provision of care or the safety, security, or well-being of one or more residents for a period greater than six hours, including a loss of essential services no later than one business day after the incident occurred, and/or
  - The contamination of the drinking water supply immediately
6. Education and Training: All staff, students and volunteers will be provided with education and training on the emergency plans at orientation and annually thereafter

**Note:** For emergency plans testing and exercise requirements, please see the *Long-Term Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Training and Exercise Plan*

# Procedures

This section contains procedures for the following:

- A. Activating and responding to a CODE GREY
- B. During a CODE GREY
- C. Ending a CODE GREY
- D. Post CODE GREY Procedures and Documentation

## A. Activating and responding to a CODE GREY

**Any staff member, student or volunteer who notices an issue with water quality (such as discoloration or a foul smell) must:**

- Notify the Charge Nurse (or designate) immediately

**The Charge Nurse (or designate) will:**

- Notify the Administrator (during business hours) or the Manager-on-call (after hours), Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security (or designate) and Adult Day Program Supervisor (Maple only)

**The Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) will:**

- Take command of the emergency
- Consult with York Region Public Health, the Home's municipal water operators, and, for Newmarket Health Centre only, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) (as water comes from wells on Gladman)
- Notify all users of the system regarding the boil water advisory or water quality issue. See the *Long-Term Care Emergency Communications Plan* to find communication templates and approval processes.
  - Delegate staff members to put Do Not Drink signage up, as appropriate. Pre-printed do not drink signs are in the Homes' *General Emergency Kit*
- Follow the *Mandatory and Critical Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures*, as required

**Note:** The contamination of the drinking water supply must be reported immediately. The homes will report a water quality issue that lasts longer than six hours no later than one business day after the incident occurred.

- Inform and consult with the Director, Seniors Services on:
  - Whether to activate the Incident Management System (IMS). See *Long-Term Care Emergency Plan*

- When to delegate a staff member to announce the following statement three times over the public address system: “CODE GREY BOIL WATER ADVISORY”
- How those who live and work at the Home will have access to potable water. The *Resources, PPE, Supplies and Equipment Emergency Plan (Policy and Procedures)* outlines the supply of bottled water that the Homes have on hand  
**Note:** Staff will obtain more bottled water from local sources, as required.
- When to order a tanker truck of potable water. The *Food and Fluid Plan (Policy and Procedures)* confirms the Supervisor, LTC Maintenance and Security (or designate) will order tanker trucks and perform connection procedures

## B. During a CODE GREY

### Designated staff identified below will:

- Carry out actions in *Appendix A: Guide to Using Water Safely During a Boil Water Advisory*, according to the following colour code:
  - **Administrator (or designate)** – Communication, Water for Drinking (as coded) and Personal Services
  - **Manager, Support Services (or designate)** – Food Preparation, Dishwashing and Laundry and cleaning Environmental Services, Devices and Equipment
  - **IPAC lead (or designate)** – Hand Hygiene and Personal Hygiene
  - **Charge Nurse (or designate)** – Medical Procedures
  - **Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security (or designate)** - Water for Drinking (as coded) and Steps to take after the Boil Water Advisory is Lifted

**Note:** Carry out actions in response to any issue with water (discolouration, odor) in the same way as receiving a boiled water advisory, unless advised otherwise.

### The Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) will:

- Provide timely situational updates to those who live in and work at the Home and senior management through the incident management system (IMS)
- Ensure the Home is compliant with guidance provided by York Region Public Health
- Support and facilitate any water testing needed at the Homes

### The Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security (or designate) will:

- **If the Home identifies an issue with the quality of water**, plan for and implement actions required to flush the building plumbing per the established operations and maintenance protocols, such as:
  - Primary system flushing (mechanical rooms)

- Point of use flushing (serveries, resident rooms, etc.)
- Point of use filter changes

**Note:** Estimated time to flush the building plumbing is 1-2 hours when staff are on site to assist

- **If the issue with the quality of water continues for longer than 6 hours, or upon receipt of a boil water advisory from York Region Public Health,**
  - Notify the Administrator (during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) and Manager, Support Services (or designate)
  - If required, plan for and implement actions required to connect a tanker truck of portable water to the home, such as:
    - Ensuring all filters are removed
 

**Note:** Filters not to be replaced until boil water advisory lifted
    - Starting on the first floor of each Home, open each faucet (hot and cold) for three minutes to flush municipal water from the system
    - Remove signage as each faucet is flushed )
 

**Note:** All steps must be completed prior to use of water taps/appliances

#### **The Charge Nurse (or delegate) will:**

- Check all residents, staff and others for signs and symptoms of enteric illness and ensure care is provided. The *Resident Surveillance Policy and Procedures* outlines that resident surveillance occurs on every shift
 

**Note:** Notify the IPAC Lead, DOC, attending physician and Medical Director of any residents with enteric illness
- Upon notification of incident/injury of employees, request that the employee's supervisor follow the employee incident / injury process
- Upon notification of incident/injury of students, volunteers, agency staff and contracted service providers, notify the supervisor of that individual about the need to complete the *Non-Regional Incident Reporting Form*

## **C. Ending a CODE GREY**

#### **The Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) will:**

- Receive confirmation of a boil water advisory ending from the Medical Officer of Health or a Public Health Inspector, **and/or**

- Receive confirmation from the Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security that the building has been appropriately flushed, the water is no longer discoloured and York Region Public Health has confirmed there is no boil water advisory in place

**The Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security (or designate) will:**

- Plan for and implement actions required to disconnect a tanker truck of portable water from the Home and reconnect the municipal supply, if required, such as:
  - Place signage on each faucet prior to reconnection)
  - Disconnect potable water and reconnect municipal water

**NHC Only:** Flush hydrants outside first, then using the sprinkler flow valves flush the rest of the system, then flush remaining pipe before back flow preventer

  - Starting on the first floor open each faucet for three minutes to flush new municipal water through the system.
  - Remove signage as each faucet is flushed
  - Ensure all filters are replaced

**Note:** All steps must be completed in order prior to use of water taps/appliances
- Notify the Administrator (during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) that municipal water is reconnected

**The Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) will:**

- Ensure any additional measures are taken
- Delegate a staff member to announce the following statement three times over the public address system: “CODE GREY BOIL WATER ADVISORY. All clear”
- Once a CODE GREY has been declared over, normal operations can resume

## **D. Post CODE GREY PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION**

**The Administrator (or designate during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours) will:**

- Delegate staff to ensure all emergency response equipment taken from the General Emergency Response Kit is replenished and cleaned.
- Conduct debrief(s) and other actions as required by the *Long-Term Care Emergency Recovery Plan*
- In consultation with the Director, Seniors Services:
  - Deactivate the Incident Management System (IMS), if activated

- Notify the Wellbeing Team to ensure staff supports in place for those who experienced distress

**The Director of Care (or designate) will:**

- Follow the *Mandatory and Critical Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures*

**Note:** The contamination of the drinking water supply must be reported immediately. The homes will report a water quality issue that lasts longer than six hours no later than one business day after the incident occurred.

- Notify Joint Health and Safety Committee regarding all incidents involving staff, volunteers, visitors, and contract workers

**The Charge Nurse (or designate) will:**

- Report any incidents for visitors and other members of the public using the *Bodily Injury Reporting Form*

**A Supervisor of any employee involved in the incident (and who sustains an injury or a near miss) will:**

- Follow the employee incident / injury process. All incidents must be reported through the *Online e-Incident Report Form* on the Homes' Incident Reporting System

**Note:** All incidents (including near misses) must be investigated by employers.

**Supervisor of a student, volunteer, agency staff or contracted service providers, involved in the incident (and who sustains an injury or a near miss) will:**

- Complete the *Non-Regional Incident Reporting Form*

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**All staff, students and volunteers**

- Support a CODE GREY

**Administrator (during business hours) or the Manager-on-Call (after hours)**

- Assume command of a CODE GREY and, in consultation with the Director, Seniors Services (or designate), manage the emergency response

**Administrator and Director of Care**

- Ensure the Home complies with its *Mandatory and Critical Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures*

## **Emergency Management Specialist**

- Provide education and training on Emergency Plans
- Complete After-Action Review (AAR)

## **Education Team, Seniors Services**

- Maintain staff records of education and training

## **York Region Public Health**

- Issue and lift Boil Water Advisories
- Provide guidance during Boil Water Advisories, as required

## **Supervisor, LTC Maintenance & Security (or designate)**

- Complete actions required to connect/disconnect a tanker truck of potable water to the home, as required

## **AUTHORITY**

*Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021; General Regulation 246/22; Occupational Health and Safety Act; Accreditation Standards Manual, as current; and York Region Seniors Services Administration*

**Alternate formats or communications supports are available upon request by contacting [newmarkethealthcentre@york.ca](mailto:newmarkethealthcentre@york.ca) or [maplehealthcentre@york.ca](mailto:maplehealthcentre@york.ca).**