



CODE SILVER – Person with a Weapon

Approved by: Administration

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POLICY

CODE SILVER is a planned response to a situation involving an individual with a weapon posing a threat to personnel within the hospital or on hospital grounds and requiring a police response. It is called when there is a threat or use of a weapon by one or more individuals, regardless of the type weapon used. It can also be initiated in combination with **CODE PURPLE** (Hostage Taking) or **CODE WHITE** (Violent Person).

PURPOSE

The purpose of **CODE SILVER** is to prevent/limit harm being inflicted by any person (s) with a weapon until police can respond and deal with the situation. When a **CODE SILVER** is initiated, all personnel will make every reasonable effort to protect themselves, their patients/residents, visitors, and others in their immediate area.

NOTIFICATION OF THREAT

Emergency Department (“ED”) staff should contact Security at “**888**” if confronted with or observing a person with a weapon in or in proximity to the ED.

Any staff member observing a person(s) attempting to harm someone with a weapon of any sort within the hospital or on the hospital grounds should immediately call Security at extension **888** and then contact Switchboard at extension **333** or the ED after hours at extension **225** and provide:

- The location and description of the person with the weapon.
- The type of weapon (gun, knife, baseball bat, etc.).
- Information on victim(s), if any.
- If the person with the weapon has made any comments or demands.

The switchboard operator or ED staff member taking the call must then contact the **Police** by dialing **9-911** and relay the information above. Should the person initiating the sighting not be able to contact either Security, the Switchboard or ED, they should contact the Police directly and relay the information.

AUTHORITY TO ACTIVATE CODE SILVER

In the event of **an immediate threat of bodily harm**, any staff member may initiate **CODE SILVER** by dialing **333** and requesting Switchboard to page a **CODE SILVER**. If afterhours, call ED at **225** and make the request or **781** and announce **CODE SILVER** and the location three (3) times over the intercom.

If it is **not deemed an immediate threat of bodily harm** and/or the police have already arrived on site, the CEO/delegate will determine if code activation and response escalations should be announced.

PROCEDURE

IMMEDIATE AREA OF THREAT

Staff should leave the area immediately if it is safe to do so. If it is not, they should:

- Avoid confronting the person with the weapon.



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- Answer any of his/her demands with “I’ll do my best” but never say “No”.
- Not attempt to remove any injured persons from the scene.
- If possible, assist uninjured persons to leave the area and redirect anyone trying to enter.
- Evacuate the scene if able and it is safe to do so, leaving any belongings behind and keeping hands empty and visible so as not to be mistaken for the person with the weapon.

Staff members unable to evacuate should hide as best they can until the police can respond. When doing so, they should:

- Use rooms with doors that lock.
- Barricade doors with heavy furniture.
- Silence cell phones and turn off any other sources of noise in the room.
- Hide behind large, solid objects.
- Remain quiet and low to the ground until the danger is past.

As a last resort, staff members believing that they are in immediate danger, should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate their assailant by acting as aggressively as possible, screaming at the top of their lungs, throwing items at the threatening individual and/or using anything available to bludgeon him/her until they are no longer a threat.

NEAR THE AREA OF THREAT

1. **Those that can do so safely should EVACUATE**

- Remain calm and follow police direction, if available.
- Quickly leave the area, evacuating as many persons as possible.
- Redirect any people entering the area to evacuate to a safe location.
- Move to a safe, pre-determined meeting point (if possible).
- Once at the meeting point, supervisors should perform a headcount.

2. **Those who cannot evacuate safely should HIDE:**

- Remain calm.
- Protect yourself and individuals in your area by quickly and quietly:
 - Closing doors, locking and barricading yourself and others inside.
 - Positioning people out of sight and behind large items that offer protection.
 - Silencing personal alarms, mobile phones and other electronic devices.
 - Turning off monitors and screens to reduce backlighting.
 - Instructing other, who are capable of assisting, to do the same with other patient/resident rooms.
 - If able and safely to do so, call 9-911 to report where occupants are hiding.
 - Do not use the telephone unless directly related to the **CODE SILVER**. Medical Emergency Codes will not be called for victims of the assailant until the incident site is secured by Police.
 - Hide in place until “**CODE SILVER, All Clear**” is announced overhead.
- If the assailant enters your work area, contact **9-911** only if, it is safe to do so.



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STAFF IN OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN THE HOSPITAL

1. Do **not** attempt to return to your department.
2. Follow the instructions of the Area Charge Person/Supervisor in your current location and/or the police.
3. **Lock down** all external doors and doors between zones.
4. Stay where you are, protecting yourself and assisting others in your area, if possible. If you are in a room or office, stay there. Secure the room by locking or barricading doors and closing curtains and blinds and await further instructions. Do not open the door once it has been secured until you are officially advised “all clear” or are certain it is the Police requesting entrance.
5. If you are in a corridor go into the closest room not already secured and secure the room. If necessary, divide into small mixed groups of staff, patients/residents and visitors. Hide wherever is available and safe to do so.
6. Do not travel – Do not assemble in large open areas (cafeterias).
7. Advise patients/residents, visitors and others to hide and ask them to remain calm, quiet, and to avoid using their phones, any other electronic devices, or posting to social media.
8. Move away from exposed windows, walls, and doors. Cover interior windows if possible. Lay on the floor or under/behind furniture. If possible hide against the wall that is on the same side as the door into the room. The room must appear empty.
9. Minimize movement within the area except for essential safety-related matters.
10. Silence personal alarms, mobile phones and other electronic devices.
11. Do not use the telephone unless directly related to the **CODE SILVER** incident.
12. Supervisors: Once lockdown of the area is complete, and only if safe to do so, perform a headcount.

Police must approve all movement throughout the hospital, until the **CODE SILVER** has been declared over. This includes responding to other codes and patient/resident care needs.

FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF POLICE

The **Ontario Provincial Police** are the primary responders and will assume control in any **CODE SILVER** response. On their arrival:

1. Do not interfere with the Police Officers by delaying or impeding their movements. Officers will proceed directly to the area the assailant was last seen or heard. The first officers at the scene will not stop to assist injured individuals.
2. Police Officers will be responding with the intention of using whatever force is required to diffuse the situation. Avoid being mistaken for the threat by:
 - Dropping any items in your hands (bags, jackets, etc.).
 - Immediately raising your hands and keeping them visible at all times.
 - Remaining calm and following police instructions.
 - Avoiding screaming and/or yelling.



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- Avoiding making quick movements towards the police.
 - Not attempting to make physical contact with police officers.
3. Do not stop to ask the police for help or direction when evacuating. Proceed in the direction from which Officers are entering the area or take direction from internal command officer.
 4. Be aware that Police Offers may:
 - Be wearing normal uniforms or tactical gear, helmets, etc.
 - Be armed with rifles, shotguns and/or handguns.
 - Use chemical irritants or incapacitating devices to control the situation.
 - Shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
 - 6 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.
 - 7 Once you have reached a safe location you will likely 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.

TELECOMMUNICATION OPERATOR

1. Announce overhead three (3) times “**CODE SILVER** and specific location, if known.
2. Call **9-911**.
 - Advise 911 operator of all available information such as:
 - Location of incident, including current location and any affected locations
 - Description of persons with weapons.
 - Type & description of weapon(s)
 - Information on hostage/victims (if any).
 - Any comments or demands made by the assailant
 - Any other information you received from the staff member who reported it.
 - Remain on the line to provide updates.
 - Follow instructions of the 911 operator.
 - Notify the CEO, Chief Nursing Office or Administrator On Call immediately after placing 911 call.
 - Close, lock and, if possible, barricade the door to the Telecommunication room.
3. When the police arrive:
 - Provide a situation update
 - Provide proximity access cards and master keys.
 - Provide with floor plans
 - Confirm attendance of persons from affected area, to determine if anyone is unaccounted for.



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- Take notes and document all activities.
- Follow all directions from Police.

INCIDENT MANAGER IN CHARGE

1. Remain calm.
2. Notify the Senior Administration/Administration on call.
3. Assist police with all requests.
4. When it is safe to do so, establish hospital IMS team and undertake the role of Incident Manager.
5. Assign roles within the IMS team.

RECOVERY

1. Police will advise the Incident Manager/Designate when it is safe to end the **CODE SILVER**.
2. The switchboard operator will announce “**CODE SILVER, All Clear**” overhead three (3) times.
3. Staff should return to their work area for debriefing. Staff from the affected area should go to the designated meeting point.
4. The organization should consider how to address any operations that may not be immediately available following the incident. This may occur if the affected area is declared to be off Limits until an investigation can be conducted or if damage to facilities and equipment prohibits their use.
5. As soon as possible, the IMS team should conduct a debriefing including participation of any responding law enforcement personnel.
6. As part of the recovery process, the hospital will consider the physical and mental health needs of all workers and patients/residents. Support will be provided, utilizing existing and additional identified programs (e.g. Employee and Family Assistance Program, individual and group counseling, and workers compensation, as necessary).
7. Workers should speak to their supervisor regarding any specific concerns, needs, or considerations.
8. Complete Emergency Code Response Form located on the PPM and submit to Director/Manager responsible for Risk

REFERENCES:

[Emergency Response Report for Codes - Form 423](#)

[Emergency Preparedness - Incident Management System IMS- Health & Safety 4-80](#)



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