

STRATHMERE LODGE

NATURAL DISASTERS AND EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS RESPONSE PLAN

CODE PURPLE

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to establish a coordinated response to natural disasters and extreme weather events that may affect Strathmere Lodge.

The Plan is intended to:

- protect residents, staff, visitors, volunteers and others in the Home;
 - identify and respond to weather-related threats;
 - provide clear direction to staff;
 - maintain essential resident care and services;
 - minimize disruption to operations; and
 - support recovery (normalized operations) following an emergency.
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2. SCOPE

This Plan applies to natural disasters and extreme weather events reasonably foreseeable within Strathroy and the surrounding area, including:

- tornadoes;
- severe thunderstorms;
- damaging winds;
- hail;
- blizzards and significant snowstorms;
- freezing rain and ice storms;
- wildfire smoke;
- extreme heat; and
- extreme cold.

Flooding is addressed under the separate Flood Emergency Response Plan.

Weather events resulting in loss of electricity, heating, cooling, water, communications or other essential services may also trigger the applicable Loss of Essential Services Emergency Response Plan.

3. WEATHER MONITORING AND ALERTS

Strathmere Lodge will monitor weather information and alerts issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and other applicable provincial or municipal emergency alert systems.

Weather alerts include:

Watch – GET READY

Conditions are favourable for potentially severe weather. Staff should monitor conditions and prepare for possible escalation.

Advisory – TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Significant weather is occurring or expected. Appropriate preventative measures should be implemented.

Warning – ACT

Severe weather is occurring or expected. Immediate protective actions may be required.

Weather alerts from ECCC may also be assigned a colour indicating anticipated risk and impact:

YELLOW – PREPARE

Potential for moderate, localized or short-term impacts.

- Monitor conditions.
- Review staffing and operational readiness.
- Confirm appropriate supplies and equipment are available.
- Prepare for escalation.

ORANGE – HEIGHTENED READINESS / ACT

Potential for significant, widespread or longer-lasting impacts.

- Notify appropriate leadership.
- Assess staffing and operational risks.
- Implement preventative measures.
- Prepare for disruption of essential services.
- Consider activation of the Incident Command (Administrator/designate, or Charge RN after hours).

RED – EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Very dangerous conditions with potentially extensive, prolonged or life-threatening impacts.

- Immediately assess resident and staff safety.
- Establish Incident Command where warranted.
- Implement applicable protective actions.
- Maintain ongoing communication and situational awareness.

The alert colour alone does not automatically determine Strathmere Lodge's response. Staff shall consider the alert type, anticipated impacts, timing, location, resident vulnerability and actual conditions affecting the Home.

4. PLAN ACTIVATION AND INCIDENT COMMAND

This Plan may be activated when:

- a weather alert indicates a significant potential threat to Strathmere Lodge;
- severe weather is occurring or imminent;
- weather conditions threaten resident or staff safety;
- operations or essential services may be disrupted; or
- municipal or provincial emergency authorities provide direction requiring action.

During regular business hours, the Administrator or designate will normally provide overall emergency leadership (i.e., be the “Incident Commander”).

After hours, the Charge Nurse (RN) shall initiate the response and assume initial emergency leadership (as “Incident Commander”) until relieved by the Administrator or designate.

The Incident Commander shall:

- assess the situation;
- determine required protective actions;
- assign responsibilities;
- maintain communications;
- coordinate with external agencies where required;
- ensure resident care continues;
- monitor changing conditions;
- determine when emergency operations may be terminated;
- refer to the term “Code **Purple**” when making public address system announcements regarding activation/deactivation of this response plan.

5. GENERAL EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE

When significant severe weather is anticipated or occurring:

Charge Nurse / Incident Commander

- Monitor official weather alerts and changing conditions.
- Determine whether immediate protective actions are required.
- Notify the Administrator or designate when warranted.
- Ensure Resident Home Areas receive appropriate instructions.
- Assess staffing and resident care requirements.
- Monitor for interruption of essential services.
- Activate related emergency plans where required.

Registered Staff

- Maintain resident care.
- Identify residents at increased risk from the weather event.
- Ensure medications and treatments continue.
- Monitor residents for adverse health effects.
- Prepare residents for relocation if required.

Personal Support Workers

- Reassure and supervise residents.
- Follow protective action instructions.
- Assist residents away from unsafe locations.
- Report environmental or resident safety concerns immediately.

Environmental Services / Maintenance

- Monitor building systems.
- Secure exterior equipment and objects when safe to do so.
- Monitor heating, cooling, electrical and other critical systems.
- Assess building damage.
- Report loss or deterioration of essential services immediately.

All Staff

- Remain alert to changing conditions.
- Follow emergency instructions.
- Keep residents away from identified hazards.

- Report damage, hazards or service interruptions immediately.
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6. HAZARD-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

6.1 TORNADO

Tornado Watch

- Monitor weather conditions closely.
- Advise the Charge Nurse.
- Review tornado protective locations.
- Ensure staff are prepared to assist residents quickly.
- Minimize unnecessary outdoor activities when conditions deteriorate.

Tornado Warning or Imminent Tornado

Take immediate protective action.

- Move residents away from windows, exterior doors and exterior walls.
- Move residents to designated interior protected areas where practical and safe.
- Close resident room and corridor doors where appropriate.
- Protect residents who cannot be safely relocated in the time available by moving them as far from windows as possible and providing additional protection.
- Suspend outdoor activities.
- Do not use elevators where building damage or power interruption makes their use unsafe.
- Remain sheltered until the immediate danger has passed.

Following the event:

- account for residents;
 - assess injuries;
 - assess building damage;
 - call 911 where required;
 - restrict access to damaged areas; and
 - activate additional emergency plans as necessary.
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6.2 SEVERE THUNDERSTORM / DAMAGING WIND / HAIL

When severe thunderstorms, damaging winds or significant hail are imminent:

- bring residents and staff indoors;
- suspend outdoor activities;
- keep residents away from windows and exterior doors;
- close windows;
- secure outdoor furniture and loose equipment when safe to do so;
- monitor for water intrusion and building damage;
- monitor electrical service and other essential systems; and
- prepare for possible power failure.

Where extremely damaging winds are expected, relocate residents away from exterior windows and walls where practical.

6.3 BLIZZARD / HEAVY SNOW / ICE STORM

When significant winter weather is forecast:

- monitor weather and road conditions;
- assess anticipated staffing impacts;
- consider calling in replacement or additional staff before travel becomes unsafe;
- assess food, medication, oxygen and essential supply levels;
- communicate with suppliers where deliveries may be affected;
- ensure snow clearing arrangements are operational;
- maintain emergency vehicle access;
- monitor heating and electrical systems; and
- prepare for extended power interruption.

If staffing levels become affected, implement staffing contingency procedures while maintaining priority resident care.

6.4 EXTREME HEAT

During extreme heat:

- monitor indoor temperatures;
- maintain cooling systems;
- ensure residents have frequent access to fluids;
- increase hydration opportunities;
- reduce strenuous activities;

- modify outdoor activities;
- keep blinds or curtains closed where appropriate;
- move residents to cooler areas when necessary;
- monitor residents at increased risk of heat-related illness.

Registered staff shall assess residents displaying:

- unusual weakness;
- dizziness;
- confusion;
- headache;
- nausea;
- excessive sweating;
- hot or unusually dry skin;
- changes in level of consciousness.

Where cooling systems fail or indoor temperatures cannot be safely maintained, activate the applicable Essential Services Emergency Response Plan and consider resident relocation.

6.5 EXTREME COLD

During extreme cold:

- monitor indoor temperatures;
- maintain heating systems;
- limit unnecessary resident exposure outdoors;
- ensure residents are appropriately dressed when leaving the building;
- monitor exterior doors and windows;
- monitor plumbing and building systems for freezing;
- monitor residents at increased risk from cold exposure.

Where heating systems fail or indoor temperatures cannot be safely maintained, activate the applicable Essential Services Emergency Response Plan and consider resident relocation.

6.6 WILDFIRE SMOKE / POOR AIR QUALITY

Wildfire smoke originating locally or from distant forest fires may result in poor outdoor air quality affecting Strathmere Lodge.

Strathmere Lodge shall monitor:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) air quality alerts;
- the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI);
- local public health information and recommendations; and
- observable conditions affecting the Home.

When Wildfire Smoke or Poor Air Quality is Anticipated or Occurring

The Charge Nurse/Incident Commander, in consultation with leadership as appropriate, shall:

- monitor the AQHI and applicable air quality alerts;
- notify Resident Home Areas and departments when protective measures are required;
- limit or suspend outdoor resident activities based on conditions and public health advice;
- keep exterior windows and doors closed as appropriate;
- minimize unnecessary opening of exterior doors;
- ensure residents have access to appropriately cooled indoor areas during warm weather;
- consult Environmental Services/Maintenance regarding operation of the building's HVAC and air filtration systems;
- use the highest efficiency filtration appropriate for the building's HVAC system and equipment specifications;
- consider use of appropriate portable air cleaners or designated cleaner air spaces where available;
- monitor indoor conditions; and
- follow recommendations or directions from public health or other emergency authorities.

Resident Monitoring

Registered staff shall identify and monitor residents who may be particularly vulnerable to wildfire smoke and poor air quality, including residents with:

- respiratory disease;
- cardiovascular disease;
- other conditions that increase susceptibility to poor air quality; or
- symptoms associated with smoke exposure.

Staff shall promptly report and clinically assess new or worsening symptoms such as:

- coughing;

- wheezing;
- shortness of breath;
- chest discomfort;
- dizziness;
- unusual fatigue; or
- other significant changes in condition.

Emergency medical assistance shall be obtained where clinically indicated.

Outdoor Activities

Outdoor recreation, walking, gardening and other resident activities shall be modified, relocated indoors or cancelled when air quality creates an unacceptable health risk.

Staff performing necessary outdoor duties should minimize exposure and follow applicable occupational health and safety measures.

HVAC / Building Operations

Environmental Services/Maintenance shall:

- monitor HVAC system operation;
- ensure filters are maintained and replaced as required;
- optimize filtration and recirculation where technically appropriate and consistent with equipment specifications;
- minimize introduction of contaminated outdoor air where this can be safely accomplished without compromising required building ventilation or indoor environmental conditions; and
- immediately report HVAC or cooling-system failures that may increase resident risk.

Staff shall not independently shut down building ventilation systems unless authorized by Environmental Services/Maintenance or directed by emergency authorities.

Prolonged or Severe Smoke Event

Where poor air quality is severe or prolonged, the Incident Commander shall consider:

- enhanced resident monitoring;
- further restriction of outdoor activities;
- establishment or use of cleaner air areas;
- additional portable air cleaning equipment;
- staffing implications;

- availability of medications and respiratory treatments;
- consultation with Public Health;
- communication with residents and SDMs/families; and
- activation of related emergency plans where building systems or essential services are affected.

If wildfire itself threatens Strathmere Lodge or emergency authorities order evacuation, activate the **Evacuation Emergency Response Plan**.

7. STAFFING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Severe weather may prevent employees, suppliers or service providers from reaching the Home.

The Incident Commander shall assess:

- current staffing;
- anticipated shift coverage;
- ability of incoming staff to safely reach the Home;
- availability of essential supplies;
- food and fluid requirements;
- medications;
- oxygen and clinical supplies;
- fuel and generator requirements;
- transportation availability.

Priority shall be given to maintaining essential resident care and safety.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

During an activated emergency, Strathmere Lodge shall provide appropriate ongoing information to residents, families/Substitute Decision-Makers, staff and other required parties.

Communication should occur:

- when the emergency begins;
- when significant changes occur; and
- when the emergency has ended.

The Lodge's OneCallNow broadcast message software will be used.

Information shall be accurate, concise and based on confirmed information.

Where telephone, internet or other communications are disrupted, alternate communication methods shall be used.

9. RECOVERY

When the immediate weather threat has passed, the Incident Commander shall:

- confirm resident and staff safety;
- account for residents where relocation occurred;
- assess building damage;
- confirm essential services are functioning;
- restrict access to unsafe areas;
- coordinate repairs;
- restore normal resident routines and services;
- communicate that the emergency has ended;
- arrange debriefing of affected residents, families/Substitute Decision-Makers, staff, volunteers and students as applicable; and
- identify individuals requiring additional support following the emergency.

The Plan shall be evaluated following activation and updated where required.

10. TRAINING, TESTING AND REVIEW

Staff, volunteers and students shall receive education regarding this Plan appropriate to their responsibilities before performing their responsibilities, and at least annually thereafter.

The Natural Disasters and Extreme Weather Events Response Plan shall be tested at least annually.

Testing may use different weather scenarios from year to year, for example:

- Year 1 – Tornado;
- Year 2 – Blizzard with staffing disruption;
- Year 3 – Extreme heat with cooling system failure;
- Year 4 – Severe thunderstorm and prolonged power outage.

Exercises should test both the hazard-specific response and related emergency arrangements with external organizations where appropriate.

A written record shall be maintained of testing and improvements made to the Plan.

APPENDIX A – EXTREME WEATHER QUICK RESPONSE MATRIX

Event	Prepare / Watch	Immediate Response	Key LTC Concern
Tornado	Monitor; prepare shelter areas	Move away from windows/exterior walls; shelter immediately	Safe rapid protection of non-ambulatory residents
Thunderstorm / Wind / Hail	Secure exterior; monitor	Indoors; away from windows	Building damage / power failure
Blizzard / Snow / Ice	Staffing and supply readiness	Maintain essential operations	Staffing, access, deliveries, power
Extreme Heat	Monitor forecast and cooling	Hydration, cooling, resident monitoring	Heat-related illness / HVAC failure
Extreme Cold	Monitor forecast and heating	Maintain warmth; limit exposure	Cold-related illness / heating failure
Wildfire Smoke / Poor Air Quality	Monitor AQHI/air quality alerts; prepare HVAC/filtration	Limit outdoor activity; close windows/doors; optimize indoor air quality; monitor vulnerable residents	Respiratory/cardiovascular effects; prolonged indoor exposure

If an essential service is lost: Activate the applicable Essential Services Emergency Response Plan.

If evacuation becomes necessary: Activate the Evacuation Emergency Response Plan.

If flooding occurs: Activate the Flood Emergency Response Plan.