

Frequently Asked Questions

February 10, 2025

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has a responsibility to implement emergency and disaster management measures that support staff and patient safety, enable continuity of patient care, and work to reduce the negative health consequences of an emergency/disaster. These FAQs outline changes to the updated *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy* and identifies how it supports this responsibility.

What is the AHS Emergency / Disaster Management Policy?

The policy aligns with industry best practices, legislative requirements, and organizational needs and outlines the principles and elements that will direct AHS decisions related to emergency and disaster management measures. The policy:

- Provides and directs the course of action AHS will take in relation to emergency and disaster management with the organization.
- Promotes a standardized, integrated, organization-wide approach to emergency management planning, preparedness, response and recovery thereby enhancing AHS' capacity and capability in health emergency management.
- Continues to be supported by the *Provincial Framework for the Emergency/Disaster Management in Alberta Health Services 2018*
Note: Remains relevant and will be updated as the health system transformation evolves.
- Aligns and complements AHS *Business Continuity Management Policy*.

What is the purpose of the Policy?

The *Emergency & Disaster Management Policy* enables AHS to prepare for and effectively respond to an emergency or disaster situation. This includes a standardized, integrated, whole organization approach to emergency/disaster management planning, preparedness, response and recovery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What revisions have been made to the AHS Emergency / Disaster Management Policy?

The revisions include:

- Amalgamation of the content of the *Emergency Response Codes Policy* into this overarching policy, seen in section 4: Emergency Response Codes and Contingency Plans, and Appendix A – Emergency Response Codes/Plans. The *Emergency Response Codes Policy* will no longer exist.
- Inclusion of definitions of terms such as “disaster” and “emergency” for better understanding of concepts.
- Incorporation of patient and family perspectives where applicable.
- Addition of value-based considerations in the Principles section to incorporate diversity and inclusion.
- Provision of additional information about the Incident Management Structure and use of the Incident Command System.
- Removal of the Emergency/Disaster Equipment and Supplies Stockpile section as this information is provided in the Framework.
- Removal of references to Business Continuity Management as this information is provided in a separate policy.
- Outlined roles and responsibilities of the Emergency/Disaster Management Division, Senior Leadership, Department/Portfolio Leaders, and AHS people in more detail throughout the document, but specifically in section 1: Emergency/Disaster Management Division and section 5: Education, Training and Responsibilities.
- Greater focus on the responsibility of all AHS People to familiarize themselves with emergency response plans, undergo training, and participate in exercises and drills.
- Simplified language and re-organized content to ease flow and improve readability.

The policy is effective as of February 10, 2025.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who does this Policy apply to?

Compliance with this policy is required by all AHS employees, members of the medical staff and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of AHS including continuing care contracted service providers (CSPs) of home and community care (HCC) and continuing care homes (CCHs).

How does this policy impact patients?

The policy aims to:

- Sustain continuity of patient care services in the event of an emergency or disaster (e.g. evacuation plans).
- Provide for the safety of patients through mitigating risks where possible, developing emergency response plans, and staff training.
- Provide access to health services to support those impacted by a disaster. This may include service delivery plans to address surge capacity (increased number of patients), surge capability (caring for patients with unique requirements such as infected or contagious patients), and service delivery at alternate care centres.
- Minimize the potential negative health effects (physical and psychological) of an emergency/disaster.

How does this policy impact me?

All persons to whom this policy is applicable, need to have a fundamental understanding of emergency and disaster management measures and procedures. This will enable you to function independently and/or as part of a coordinated emergency/disaster response effort.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I prepare myself to respond to an emergency/disaster?

It is important to know in advance exactly what is expected of you during an emergency or disaster. AHS has several emergency/disaster management resources and tools to support you. To be prepared:

- Know your emergency response codes and plans and where you to locate them.
- Complete the Emergency & Disaster Management Learning modules available on the external AHS website at [Emergency & Disaster Management | Alberta Health Services](#) or on the Continuing Care Connection under Resources > Business Resources > [Emergency Response Codes & Plans](#).
 - *Code Red (Fire)*
 - *Orientation to Emergency Management*
- Attend / participate in exercises and drills when opportunity presents itself.
- Access the Be Ready program materials available on Continuing Care Connection
- Create a personal and family preparedness plan to prepare yourself and your families for an emergency located at [Emergency preparedness | Alberta.ca](#)
- Be proactive and [sign up](#) for Alberta Emergency Alerts on your mobile device

What resources are available to support my preparedness?

In addition to the training modules noted above, several resources are available to support staff preparedness and response to emergencies and disasters on Continuing Care Connection including:

- Emergency response codes and plan templates
- Contingency planning resources
- Evacuation response toolkit
- Practice scenarios
- Education modules.

Frequently Asked Questions

What can HCC and CCH CSPs expect from the AHS Emergency/Disaster Management (E/DM) Division?

The E/DM Division's mandate is to support AHS, their facilities, and staff to respond to, and recover from any **major** emergency or disaster. Their work is directed by AHS' *Framework for Emergency and Disaster Management 2018*

NOTE: The Framework remains relevant and will be updated as the health system transformation evolves.

AHS E/DM will assist and support HCC and CCH CSPs in the following manner:

- Share approved Emergency Response Plan templates for posting to Continuing Care Connection
- Share E/DM tools and resources for posting to Continuing Care Connection (e.g., Evacuation Toolkit)
- Invite participation in local community-based exercises as opportunities present
- Provide access to select online education, and
- Facilitate participation in post incident debriefings as required.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

Please contact:

- [Emergency/Disaster Management](#) at emergencydisaster.management@ahs.ca,
- [Provincial Seniors Health & Continuing Care](#) at continuingcare@ahs.ca, or
- your designated AHS Zone operations contact.