



Emergency Response Plan

May 20, 2011

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GENERAL APPENDICIES

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B	Portfolio Distribution
C	Emergency Assessment Checklist
D	Telephone Fan-Out Call System
E	Policy C – 2 Emergency Communications Response
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G	Designated Meeting Areas and Evacuation Sites
H	Policy C – 9 Emergency Response Notification of Senior Management
I	Monthly On-Call List
J	Policy G – 1 After Hours Response to Tenants' Requests for Maintenance Service
K	Insurance Process
L	Policy C – 7 Emergency Placement Policy
M	Policy D – 5 Office Closure Policy
N	Canadian Mental Health Association After Hours Protocol
O	Staff Home Contact List for Emergencies
P	Contentious Issue Report
Q	Media Contact List
R	Community Emergency Services Telephone List: Transportation Contacts
S	Contractors' List

RESTRICTED APPENDICES – SR. TEAM ONLY

Appendix #	Document
R1	Staff Home Address & Tel. List - complete
R2	Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors
R3	Teleconference information
R4	Instructions for Activating Tenant and Staff Telephone Information Lines and NRH Conference Calling System
R5	Partner Agency Contacts (units leased to community organizations)

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose of the Emergency Plan

The Emergency Plan is intended to save lives, reduce personal injury and prevent or minimize property damage. This manual outlines the emergency response that will be used for all apartment buildings and houses owned by Niagara Regional Housing (NRH). It also includes NRH's response to emergencies experienced by Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing providers.

It includes policies, procedures and guidelines for the effective and efficient management of a wide range of emergency situations. The generic nature of the plan allows for easy adaptation to meet the needs of tenants and various building dynamics throughout the portfolio.

1.2 Declaring an Emergency

Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), 1990, defines an emergency as:

“ a situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, a disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise ...”

Authority to declare a Niagara Regional Housing emergency resides with the General Manager. In the absence of the General Manager, the responsibility lies with an identified delegate/ Acting General Manager.

If a municipality or Niagara Region declares a state of local emergency, or the Province declares a state of provincial emergency, the municipal, regional or provincial Emergency Response Plans come into effect. The General Manager or delegate serves as the Niagara Regional Housing representative on the Niagara Regional Emergency Control Group. The General Manager or delegate will make a determination as to the proper NRH response and consider activating the NRH Emergency Response Plan and notification to staff as warranted.

1.3 Defining the Emergency

All emergencies must be responded to in a manner that ensures the appropriate actions are taken as quickly as possible to mitigate the impact of the emergency. However it is imperative that all members of the emergency team have a common understanding of the response approach to be used and they are not to be placed in a situation that could threaten their well-being.

Generally, an emergency will go through three stages: assessment; response and follow-up. Within each of these stages, there will be a decision point that determines when to proceed to the next stage. This is described in Section 2 – Activating the Emergency Response.

1.4 Objective of the Emergency Response Plan

This Emergency Plan is to be used by employees of Niagara Regional Housing in the event of an emergency which is defined as follows:

- Any event which by its nature and magnitude requires intervention beyond normal provisions and is distinct from routine operations
- Any occurrence that could compromise the integrity of the organization (ie fraud, loss of data) or anticipated occurrence which could be considered potentially or actually dangerous to lives or property
- Any situation or crisis which is proclaimed as an emergency by the local municipality, Niagara Region, Province of Ontario or the Federal Government.

The Emergency Response Plan has been designed to meet the following objectives:

- To educate employees on what to do when an emergency is discovered
- To assist on efforts to provide tenants with temporary assistance (shelter, transportation and support) during the emergency
- To assist the area municipality or Niagara Region as requested
- To assist housing providers in ensuring appropriate actions are taken to mitigate the impact of the emergency

1.5 Legislative Requirements

- The *Social Housing Reform Act 2000* requires NRH and housing providers to maintain their properties in a condition fit for occupancy.
- The *Ontario Fire Code* requires NRH to maintain fire safety procedures and ensure that life safety systems are maintained to code.
- The *Residential Tenancies Act* sets out responsibilities of both the tenant and the landlord in regards to ensuring the safety of occupants and repair of damages by the landlord.
- The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* sets out legal obligations and processes necessary to protect employees from unsafe working conditions.
- The *Emergency Management Act RSO 1990 Volume 3 Chapter E9* describes municipal responsibility to have emergency plans to govern the provision of necessary services during an emergency and the procedures under and the manner in which employees of the municipality and other persons will respond to the emergency.

1.6 Organizational Structure

In preparing for and responding to an emergency the lines of communication must be clearly established. To make immediate decisions, the organizational structure must be understood by everyone. [Appendix A](#) demonstrates the organizational structure within NRH.

1.7 Emergency Response Plan Locations and Distribution

Copies of the Emergency Response Plan will be kept in areas accessible to all staff as follows:

- Master Copy - Niagara Regional Housing Main Office
- Electrical rooms with Fire Safety Plan in all apartment buildings

The full Emergency Response Plan consists of:

- The Plan including **appendices A through S**
- Restricted appendices **R1 through R5**

All employees of Niagara Regional Housing are provided with a copy of the Emergency Response Plan and appendices **A** through **S**. Senior Managers only, hold appendices R1 through R5 as well.

Copies of the Plan excluding the restricted sections are also provided to NRH Building Attendants, Niagara Regional Emergency Coordinator, Commissioner of Community Services, West Niagara Second Stage Housing, Anagram Premier, March of Dimes, Brain Injury Community Re-entry Association and Canadian Mental Health Association.

1.8 Annual Review of the Emergency Response Plan

Divisional Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff reviews the Emergency Response plan annually. This can be undertaken through a divisional meeting with employees. Confirmation of the annual review is provided to the General Manager through completion of a **Divisional Sign Off Form** by the end of March each year.

1.9 Review of Plan with New Employees

Managers are also responsible for reviewing the Emergency Plan with all new employees and ensuring that the employee signs the **Employee Acknowledgement Form** stating that they have read and understood the Emergency Response Plan. The Form will be retained by the Manager in the employee file.

1.10 Distribution of Updates to the Emergency Response Plan

Updates to the Emergency Plan will be provided to employees as changes occur. Generally the appendices will experience the most change and updates will be provided to staff through email from the AA to Manager of Housing Operations according to the following:

- Staff
- Electrical Rooms/**Portfolio Distribution (Appendix B)** via Property Administrator
- Building Attendants via Property administrator
- **Partner Agencies (Appendix R5)** – Semi annually (unless change is significant)

All staff are responsible for keeping their Emergency Plan updated. Any changes to the body of the plan are discussed with the Manager who brings it to the attention of the General Manager.

2. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS

2.1 Declaring the Emergency

The General Manager or delegate has the sole authority to declare a NRH emergency. Declaration of an emergency immediately activates the Emergency Response plan. All staff prepares to fulfill their roles by remaining on stand-by until Response Team Leaders call their committee members together to execute the Emergency Response Plan.

2.2 Stages of an Emergency

Generally, an emergency will go through three stages: assessment; response and follow-up. Within each of these stages, there will be decision points that determine the course of action and when to proceed to the next stage.

2.2.1 Assessment Stage

This stage starts with the first notification of the emergency which can be from many sources, including a phone call from a tenant, NRH staff, or a declaration of a state of emergency from Niagara Region or the Ontario government. Staff must immediately determine if Emergency Responders have been notified and if not, instruct the caller to contact 9-1-1. The assessment stage will identify, where possible, the range of the emergency (one building or several communities), the involvement of the Emergency First Responders (fire, police, ambulance), the potential risk to tenants and buildings and likely duration of the emergency. It is critical that as much information as possible be obtained as the assessment will determine what kind of response is required (refer to *Emergency Assessment Checklist - Appendix C*).

Where there is potential for any of the following, the General Manager is to be notified immediately:

1. threats to the life, safety and/or health of tenants and/or NRH employees caused by environmental factors (i.e.: extreme weather, high heat, storms, flooding, etc.)
2. threats or actual criminal or violent acts against an employee, tenant, or group of tenants
3. property damage that makes a housing unit uninhabitable for tenants
4. evacuation of the tenant and/or tenant family members as determined by Emergency First Responders (fire, police, ambulance) and/or Niagara Region Public Health authorities when the evacuee has suffered an injury or a death has occurred or property damage has occurred
5. damage to housing stock and property that poses imminent risk of injury to tenants, neighbours or general public.

2.2.1 Assessment Stage (concluded)

Decision Point

At this decision point there needs to be clarity on what the current situation is. Based on that assessment, the decisions that need to be made at this point are:

- what staff need to be notified;
- what do they need to do; and
- who is the lead

Role of NRH Staff

If the Emergency First Responders are on the scene, the role of NRH staff is to support them by providing information and following their direction. If this is an emergency that doesn't involve the Emergency First Responders, NRH staff are to take direction from the General Manager or delegate.

2.2.2 Response Stage

During the response stage, NRH staff will assist the Emergency Responders as needed. The degree of response should be in proportion to the extent and type of emergency. For example, a stove fire in a unit where the tenant has evacuated the unit would require a different response than a disaster that required the evacuation of a neighbourhood.

Emergency First Responders (fire, police, and ambulance) will arrive at an emergency scene within minutes of the call being received.

Decision Point

If the immediate emergency situation has been addressed (i.e. is the fire out or the hydro restored) the decision at this point is whether there will be ongoing follow-up required? If so the questions that need to be answered are:

Was there any displacement of tenants?

Was there any property damage?

Is there any further public communication needed?

Role of NRH Staff

While Emergency Responders, Community Services, Red Cross etc. are at the scene, NRH staff should support their efforts through provision or collection of information and by notifying appropriate NRH Staff.

2.2.3 Follow-Up Stage

Depending on the responses at the decision point there may be follow-up required to return tenants to their units or to find alternate accommodation. There may be insurance and building repair issues. A plan will be developed for the follow-up stage that will address any outstanding issues.

2.3 The Meeting Schedule – Operations Cycle

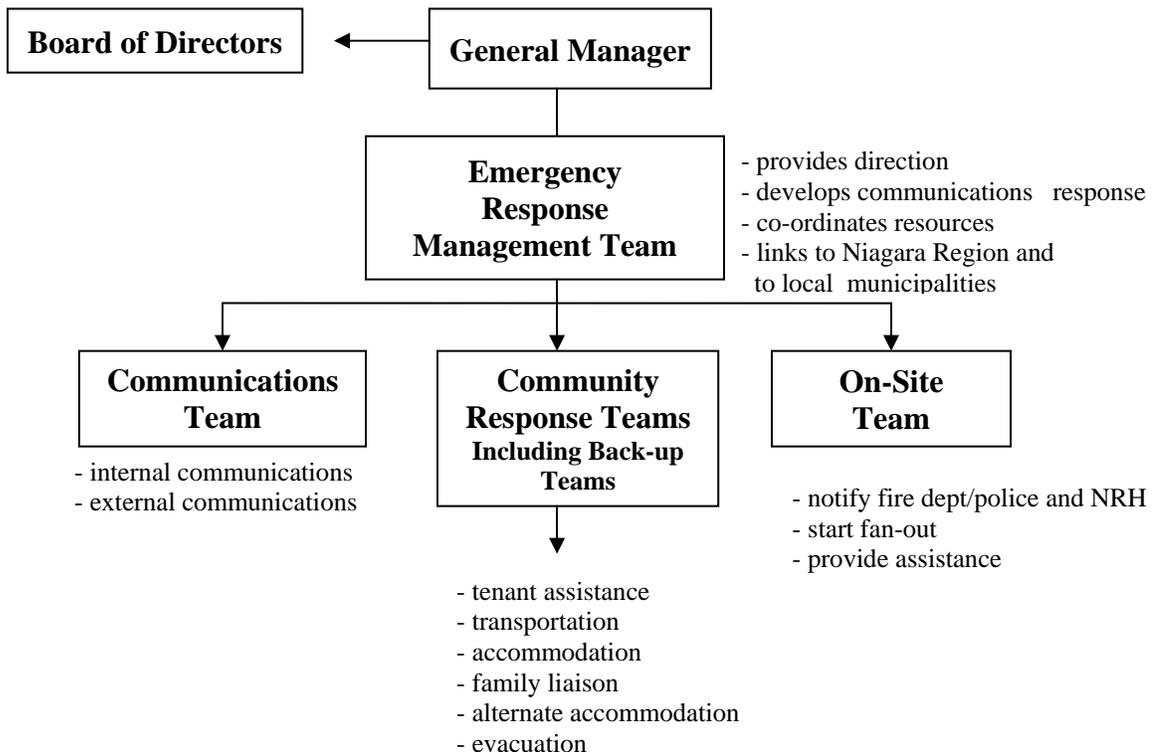
To ensure information sharing, coordination of response and teamwork within the Emergency Response Management Team (ERMT), an Operations Cycle of ERMT meetings is established by members at the start of the crisis.

The Operations Cycle meeting is the forum for group decision making and the exchanging of information. Front-line staff is invited to these meetings as required to brief the team and to provide current updates. All managers must be present at each meeting to hear reports from, and give reports to, the group as a whole.

Generally, the Operations Cycle meetings are held twice daily at 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., with activities and tasks assigned completed during the day.

The Operations Cycle meetings continue on weekends and statutory holidays using cell phones and teleconferencing options for the duration of the emergency.

2.4 Overview of the Emergency Response Teams



In an emergency, employees will perform specific responsibilities depending on which team they have been assigned.

2.5 Emergency Response Management Team

Members

General Manager - Chair

Manager of Housing Operations - Back-up Delegate Owned Units

Manager of Housing Programs – Back-up Delegate Housing Providers

Capital Works Manager

Manager of Community Programs

Executive Assistant to the General Manager

Resource Unit Manager

Program Financial Analyst

Responsibilities

The Emergency Response Management Team provides overall response to the emergency and directs the other teams, including the following:

- 1) identifying remediation initiatives required and assigning responsibility to staff teams and/or designated staff
- 2) liaising and coordinating interventions and communication with tenants, municipal/regional authorities and emergency personnel
- 3) determining the level of communications response based on the emergency
- 4) ensuring telephone scripts are prepared and issued daily to staff responding to public inquiries and for the Community Response Team
- 5) deciding if and when to evacuate the main office facility and relocate the Emergency Command Centre, which is the NRH Boardroom to the secondary location. (see Section 3.1)
- 6) deciding to contact Niagara Victim Crisis Support Service to assist with on-site support in the event of serious injury or death Call 905-682-2626 or Niagara Regional Police Service at 905-688-4111 ext 4492.

During the work day

- The staff member who first learns about the emergency must bring the incident to the attention of their Manager / Supervisor who will then notify the General Manager.
- The General Manager or delegate makes the decision to declare an emergency, calls together the Emergency Response Management Team, and notifies all staff via e-mail or phone to be on stand-by to receive further information and next steps

After Hours

- After hours, the Answering Service notifies the Property Administrator on call about the emergency. He or she begins the *Fan Out Call System* (Appendix D) to key staff, who, in turn, notifies the General Manager of the situation.
- If this is a housing provider emergency, the Answering Service notifies the Manager Housing Programs about the emergency. He or she begins the fan out call system to the applicable Housing Administrator and General Manager (if required).
- If the General Manager declares an emergency, the Emergency Response Management Team must assemble (either at a meeting or via *teleconference*, see Appendix R3) and coordinate interventions and communication with tenants, municipal/regional authorities and emergency personnel.

In a Regional or Provincial Emergency

Should Niagara Region activate its Regional Emergency Response Plan, the General Manager or delegate (Manager of Housing Operations) is a member of Regional Emergency Control Group and receives direction from the Niagara Regional Chair of the RECG in regards to appropriate responses/actions.

The General Manager or delegate calls together the Emergency Response Management Team, and also notifies all staff via e-mail or phone to be on stand-by to receive further information and next steps.

2.6 The Committees/Teams

2.6.1 Communications Team

Members

Resource Unit Manager – Chair

Manager Community Programs or Housing Programs (Back-up Delegate)
Tenant Support Representative (s)
Eligibility Assessment Representative(s)
Receptionist
Housing Initiatives Coordinator
Administrative Assistant (s)

Committee Responsibilities - Duties are assigned by the Chair

- Issue/distribute prepared communication as directed by the Emergency Response Management Team to tenants, staff and other identified groups
- Receive telephone scripts from Emergency Response Management Team and communicate message consistently in response to all outside inquiries

2.6.1 Communications Team (concluded)

- Provide a centralized source of expertise, judgment and accurate information for use by the spokesperson in response to media, public concerns and inquiries
- Provide “front line” telephone service and response to tenants, staff, members and all other external inquiries
- Phone lines in CE 308 and CE 309 are dedicated to NRH in emergencies. Pre-recorded messages will be updated regularly during emergencies. (See Appendix R4)
- Contact Central Communications (the contracted after hours phone service) to activate an emergency greeting after hours if needed to direct tenants to 905-682-3101 (the tenant info line).
- Keep Central Communications informed as the crisis progresses towards a resolution
- Ensure pre-recorded messages are updated regularly on voice mail boxes for both information lines identified above
- Monitor messages from Employee Info Line and respond to queries
- Identify any other communications channels and prepares necessary copy and products (i.e. web, media materials, etc.)
- Monitor media coverage and address any rumors with factual information
- Follow *Policy C – 2: Emergency Communications Response* in determining communications and information sharing with all groups (See Appendix E)
- Maintain ongoing contact with Community Response Teams
- If telephone service is totally disrupted, provide direct support to Community Response Team(s) as directed by the Emergency Response Management Team
- Monitor and maintain inventory of essential office supplies for the Command Centre and emergency building supplies for the communities as directed by the Community Response Teams
- Log all pertinent information (name, location, actions taken etc) for emergency service requests/ requirements
- Ensure that messages are shared between the Communications Team, the Community Response Team and the Emergency Response Management Team
- Maintain contact with Niagara Regional Corporate Communications staff to receive media releases and public statements as quickly as possible to ensure sharing of this information with tenants and other impacted groups.

2.6.2 Community Response Team

Members

Manager Housing Operations - Lead

Capital Works Manager - Back-up

Property Administrator (s)

Community Programs Coordinator (s)

Building Custodian (s)

Building Attendant (s)

Administrative Assistant

Responsibilities

Ongoing

Property Administrators will:

- Ensure annually, all buildings are properly equipped with an Emergency Kit and Building Custodians/Building Attendants know the location. (See Section 3.3 for details)
- Ensure mobility lists, which identify persons with special needs, are updated quarterly and stored in the building fire log books
- Provide up-to-date copies of the Emergency Response Plan to on-site staff and ensure that they have been instructed on their roles and duties in response to an emergency
- Ensure that the most current Fire Plan is located in the Mechanical or Electrical Room

Emergency

The Community Response Team Members will:

- Respond to the emergency on-site if personal safety is not endangered
- Report to the Emergency Command Centre if/when directed to do so (see Section 3.1 for locations)
- Use Voice Announcement System in those buildings where it is available (15 Gale Crescent, 4520 Huron and 4900 Buckley) See **Appendix F - Chart of Emergency Systems** for detail.
- Direct tenants to the **Designated Meeting Area (Appendix G)**
- Assist tenants in making calls to relatives
- Emergency First Responders will arrange transportation to Evacuation Centre
- Contact Agencies as directed by Emergency First Responders
- Contact tenant association representatives (where available) to assist in distributing information to community tenants by posting in community centers or door-to-door canvassing
- Document all relevant information (addresses, names, phone number, time etc) in detail if reported to you by a resident or on-site staff

- If building life safety systems fail, NRH staff will ensure hourly visual inspections/hallway monitoring are being done and assist if necessary.
- The Capital Works Manager, in consultation with the Property Administrators will arrange for the following repairs, if they are deemed to be critical/essential at the time.
 1. Fire damage
 2. No heat or water
 3. Elevator breakdown
 4. Falling wires/branches/icicles
 5. Major plumbing leaks
 6. Major electrical failures
- Relay emergency repair status to the Communication Team
- Coordinate/carry out the ordering and delivery of emergency supplies to on-site locations with the Communications Team and on-site staff
- Ensure daily communication releases are posted in all common areas and community centers and Notice of Service Disruption is posted
- Ensure all entrances are clear of ice/snow and salted/sanded
- Attend at the Evacuation Site and provide updates as available. Take attendance
- Community Program Coordinator keeps track of all tenants who have arranged for alternative housing
- Community Response Team members dispatched to the site will relay any media presence to the Team Lead who will then notify the General Manager.
- Assist in contacting tenants to inform them when the building/complex is safe to occupy. This information will also be provided to the media, on the web site and the pre-recorded telephone announcement.

2.6.3 Back- Up Team

Members

1. Community Response Teams from other areas
2. All other employees as needed

Responsibilities

Under emergency conditions the responsibilities of the back-up team are the same as the responsibilities listed above in 2.6.2 for the Community Response Team.

2.6.4 On-Site Team

Members

Building Custodian and Building Attendant
(Where there is a Building Custodian and Attendant on-site during the day the Custodian is the primary contact)

Responsibilities

Ongoing

- Ensure emergency back-up systems are functional
- Provide input to ensure Mobility List has up-to-date information
- Report any missing or non-functional items in the “Building Emergency Kit” immediately
- Ensure entrances are free of ice and snow and lobby floor is kept dry

Emergency

- Respond to emergency by phoning relevant authority – 911 and NRH
- Be available to provide details to relevant authority
- Undertake hourly Fire Watch Patrols when needed
- Maintain a written log of all incidents and events that occur during the emergency situation
- If an emergency causes a disruption in service, a “Notice of Service Disruption” will be placed by each elevator on each floor and in the main lobby
- Direct any media inquiry about the incident to Niagara Regional Housing via the Manager, Housing Operations

2.6 Declaring an End to the Emergency

The emergency is over when the General Manager or delegate makes a determination based on all available information and announces an end to the emergency. This decision is made with input from the Managers, the Fire Department and/or other emergency responders involved in the situation. See Section 8 for Post Emergency Evaluation.

3. PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

3.1 Location of Emergency Command Centres

Niagara Regional Housing

The Command Centre for NRH is as follows:

Primary Site

If power is intact

Niagara Regional Housing Boardroom
Campbell East, Third Floor, 2201 St. David's Road, Thorold

If power is out

15 Gale Crescent, St. Catharines – fax machine installed in custodian's office

Secondary Site Depending on Location of Emergency:

4900 Buckley Avenue, Niagara Falls – fax machine in custodian's office
211 King Street, Welland – fax machine in custodian's office

Niagara Region

The Command Centre for Niagara Region is as follows:

Primary Site:

Emergency Management Centre (EMC) Regional Headquarters,
2201 St. David's Road, Thorold.

Secondary Site:

NRPS Support Centre, 2 Cushman Road, St. Catharines.

NRH General Manager and the Manager, Housing Operations (delegate) are the NRH representatives on the Regional Emergency Control Group (RECG).

3.2 Supplies for the Emergency Command Centre

Emergency administrative kits will be kept at the NRH Office at Campbell East, Third Floor, 2201 St. David's Rd, Thorold and in the basement storage area. Each kit is to include the following:

Office Supplies: pens, paper, copying paper, note pads, high lighters, masking tape, scotch tape, elastics, staplers, staples, staple remover, paper clips, envelopes (plain and window) push pins, glue stick, scissors, pre-printed letter head, receipt books, construction paper for notices, post it notes.

Other supplies to include: Bull horn, extension cords, radio and batteries, flashlight and batteries. For communications purposes, the room must be equipped with, or provide easy access to, in and outgoing phone lines, fax machines, a radio, and computers. The room must be equipped with a fax machine, computer connected to the Niagara Regional system, radio, telephones, a photocopier.

3.3 Building Emergency Kit

All buildings are equipped with a Building Emergency Kit with the following contents:

- vice grip pliers
- adjustable crescent wrench
- multiple screw driver set
- electrical tape/duct tape
- 2- snake light with C cell batteries
- 1 - 6 volt flash light with battery
- 6 orange reflective arm bands
- crank radio

- 1 x 100 ft three amp extension cord
- 1- 10 pack C batteries
- 1 box ear plugs
- 2 rolls caution tape
- 5 pairs work gloves
- first Aid kit
- supply of M95 masks
- utility knife

These kits are stored in the electrical rooms of each apartment building, at the main office in the third floor file room and the basement locker. The Property Administrators will check the Kits **monthly** to ensure they contain the contents as specified above and that the batteries are operational.

Housing Providers will be encouraged to assemble similar Building Emergency Kits and include an emergency contact as part of the messaging on their phones for after hours.

3.4 Master Keys

Building Master Keys – Front Door, Suites, Mechanical Rooms and Gates

Master keys to all NRH owned communities are kept in the safe outside the Capital Works Manager's office. The General Manager, Manager, Housing Operations , Manager, Housing Programs, Capital Works Manager, Resource Manager and divisional Administrative Assistants have been provided with the code to the safe. Each Manager has a master list to match keys to properties.

Access to the NRH office and file room requires a programmed access card and is restricted to NRH staff.

Building Key Boxes

In the entrance to each building there is a wall mounted Building Key Box containing the master keys to the service rooms. Keys to that box are held by:

- General Manager
- Manager of Housing Operations
- Manager of Community Programs
- Capital Works Manager
- Manager of Housing Programs
- Property Administrators
- Resource Unit Manager
- Community Programs Coordinators
- Tenant Placement Coordinators
- Contractors

Master Keys to the Suites by Portfolio

The Property Administrator, Building Custodian and Building Attendant have master keys to the suites and service rooms in their portfolios.

Fire Gates

Some communities have Fire Gates for fire truck access. Keys to these gates are held by the Property Administrators.

Housing Providers will be reminded to keep master keys in a secure location and ensure that access to the master keys can be gained by designated board members and/or staff in case of an emergency.

3.5 Fan-Out List Instructions for Building Attendants and Custodians

The *Fan-Out list* describes who is responsible for calling other members of the team and under what circumstances those calls are to be made. See [Appendix D](#).

During working hours

In the event of an emergency from Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. the person who discovers the emergency must call NRH office and ask for the Property Administrator. The Manager of Housing Operations is immediately notified about the emergency, and, in turn, notifies the General Manager. ([Appendix H: Policy C – 9 Emergency Response Notification of Senior Management Team](#)).

After working hours

After 4:30 p.m. calls are received by the Answering Service (Central Communications in Welland) who will then call the staff member On-Call ([Appendix I: Monthly On-Call List](#)). [The Manager of Housing Operations provides the answering service with up-to-date information on staff and contractor phone numbers. The Property Administrators advise the answering service directly of any vacation leave and who is filling in for them.]

The fan-out procedure will be commenced by the first person to discover the emergency in accordance with the [Telephone Fan-Out list](#) in [Appendix D](#).

After being notified of an emergency by the Answering Service staff, Property Administrators contact the Manager, Housing Operations, who in turn notifies the General Manager. (See [Appendix J: Policy G – 1: After Hours Response to Tenants' Request for Maintenance Service](#)).

After working hours – housing provider emergency

After 4:30 p.m., calls are received by the Answering Service who will then call the Manager Housing Programs. The Manager Housing Programs will begin the fan out call system to the applicable Housing Administrator and General Manager (if necessary).

3.6 Mobility Lists

Mobility Lists identifying tenants who are not capable of evacuating their apartment independently are kept in each building in the electrical room with the Fire Safety Plan. Mobility lists are updated quarterly as follows:

- Administrative Assistant to the Manager of Housing Operations coordinates quarterly updates to the Mobility lists
- The Administrative Assistant to the Manager of Housing Operations gives the updated list to the Property Administrator who reviews it with the Building Custodian/Building Attendant
- The revised list is returned to Administrative Assistant , Housing Operations within two weeks or if no revision is required, the Property Administrator advises the Administrative Assistant accordingly
- AA updates list in system and fax copies to Fire Departments who have indicated that they want to receive it. Property Administrators update the Fire Safety Plan in each community and give the Building Custodian & Building Attendant a copy.

If the community has more than one building, a copy of the list is kept in each building with the Fire Plan.

Housing Providers will be required to ensure that their Mobility Lists, identifying tenants who are not capable of evacuating their units independently, are updated quarterly and kept with their Fire Safety Plan

4. EVACUATION PROCESS

4.1 General

The evacuation of a building will normally occur at the direction of the Emergency First Responders (Fire Department or Police). If the need for an evacuation is evident and the first responding authorities have not arrived, NRH staff will be responsible for directing tenants to leave the building. The Emergency First Responder will assume responsibility upon their arrival. NRH staff will provide support and assistance as requested by the responding authority.

In an evacuation, tenants will leave the building and meet in a designated area(s). If tenants are required to leave the community, primary and secondary evacuation sites for each community have been designated ([Appendix G](#)).

Based on direction from the first responders, the Capital Works Manager will either secure the building or make necessary repairs. Re-entry into the building will be determined by the responding authority.

4.2 Emergency Site Supervisor

The first NRH staff responder will act as the supervisor until relieved by a designated supervisor or the Fire Department or Police. An orange reflective arm band will clearly identify them as the “in charge” staff at the scene of the incident. Armbands are kept in the Building Emergency Kit (see Section 3.3). NRH staff identification badges will be worn at all times during emergencies.

4.3 Emergency Evacuation Procedures for NRH Tenants – Fire Situations

Tenants have been provided with the following instructions.

If you discover a fire

1. Leave the fire area closing all doors behind you.
2. Activate the building fire alarm system using the closest fire alarm pull station.
3. Fight the fire only if you are confident that it may be controlled, safely, with the fire-fighting equipment available.
4. Evacuate using the closest exit or exit staircase and proceed to the main lobby to inform the building attendant of the fire location and proceed to the designated meeting area.
5. In no case should elevators be used.
6. Ensure that the fire department has been called. Telephone 911. Ask for the (name of your city) Fire Department. Give the building address, building name, your name and telephone number and the nature of the emergency.
7. Call the NRH Offices and activate the Fan-Out List. (see [Appendix D](#))

If You Hear the Building Fire Alarm

1. Leave the building using the closest exit staircase and proceed to the designated meeting area.
2. Before opening your suite door, test the door and knob for heat.
3. If the door is hot, remain in your suite.
4. If the door is cool to the touch, open it slightly and check the corridor for smoke. If the corridor is filled with smoke, remain in your suite. If the corridor is clear, proceed to the closest exit staircase. If you find the staircase impassable, return to your suite.
5. In no case should elevators be used.
6. If you must remain in your suite, place damp towels or tape around the door frame to prevent smoke from entering your suite.
7. Telephone the Fire Department, at 911, and advise them of your location.
8. If the smoke enters the suite, proceed to the balcony or window and signal the fire department of your location using a towel or sheet.

Upon arrival of the Fire Department, the Building Attendant must provide whatever assistance the fire officer requires, including building keys, mobility lists and information about the building and equipment.

4.4 Emergency Evacuation Procedures for NRH Tenants – Non-Fire Situations

Until such time as it is determined that the building must be evacuated, staff will keep tenants apprised of relevant information on a need-to-know basis. Information can be shared in many ways, including: Notice of Disruption of Service at each elevator and in the main lobby; information sessions in the common room; flyer distribution etc.

If a building needs to be evacuated, because of a non fire related emergency, the fire bells can be activated after the fire department (911) has been informed.

See [Appendix G](#) for Evacuation Sites.

4.5 Tenants Requiring Assistance

Tenants with limited mobility, visual impairments, hearing impairments and/or medical conditions may experience major problems during an evacuation. The situation may cause some tenants to become confused and disoriented. In most cases, emergency personnel will arrive at the building in time to assist with the evacuation of tenants who require assistance.

Mobility Lists of those tenants requiring assistance are kept for each building and updated quarterly. See Section 3.6 Mobility Lists.

4.6 Designated Meeting Area

An internal and external Designated Meeting Area has been identified for each apartment building. For an internal gathering spot, the area must be fire separated e.g. the common room. The decision to move to an external Designated Meeting Area will be dependent on the extent of damage to the building and length of time required prior to re-entry.

Tenants will be encouraged to remain in the external “Designated Meeting Area” until they are either advised that it is safe to return to the building or that they will have to make alternate arrangements.

4.7 Evacuation Procedure and Sites

If tenants are not permitted to return to the building, they may need to be moved to a temporary evacuation site as identified in [Appendix G](#). NRH staff will take direction from Emergency First Responders and assist as requested.

The Fire Department will contact the Red Cross to mobilize an evacuation to provide shelter, food and clothing. If it is not beyond the capacity of the Red Cross (generally under 50 people displaced), the Red Cross will provide shelter, food and clothing as needed.

In cases where the emergency is beyond the capacity of the Red Cross or the emergency is external to the building (environmental or natural / weather disaster), the local municipality or Niagara Region may make a decision to open a temporary relief shelter. If a shelter is opened and established by the Niagara Region- Community Services Department, Niagara Regional Housing staff will assist as needed in transitioning tenants. The Community Program Coordinator will be responsible for noting tenant names as they reach the site.

For those tenants who are going to stay with relatives or friends, NRH staff will provide assistance as needed. Where possible, staff will make cell phones available for tenants to call their family for their own transportation and accommodation. The call should be kept short (1-2 minutes) and the key message should be: 1) I’m fine 2) the building was evacuated because ... 3) pick me up at

Status updates will be available by calling the NRH Office. Senior Team will record messages according to [\(appendix R4\) procedure to activate and record on the Tenant Info Line and the Staff Info Line](#).

5. NON EVACUTION EMERGENCIES

5.1 Hydro Disruption

If the hydro has been disrupted and there is no power to the building, the emergency back-up system should function for at least an hour. During working hours, the Building Attendants (BA) will notify the Property Administrator (PA) as soon as they are aware of the service disruption.

If the interruption occurs outside of regular business hours, the BA will call the After Hours Answering Service who will then contact the PA on call.

The BA then posts a Notice of Service Disruption at each elevator and in the main lobby.

At the 45 minute mark, the BA will update the PA who in turn will call the Manager of Housing Operations to advise that the power has been out for 45 minutes. The Manager of Housing Operations then advises the General Manager.

As soon as the back-up system is no longer functioning, the BA begins the Fire Watch. Once each hour, the BA will walk through the building to ensure that residents are safe and there are no potential hazards.

In the event that the BA is not on-site when the power disruption occurs and the PA is not aware of the outage, Fire Monitoring Canada will automatically receive a signal from the building monitoring panel when the electrical power goes out. They will then call the PA responsible for the property or the after-hours service. Alarm Systems and Fire Monitoring Panels have their own battery back-up which will provide a minimum of 24 hours coverage.

In the event that the black-out continues, the General Manager will advise the Emergency Response team who will assess the situation and take into consideration the following:

- a) If the BA is capable of providing hourly fire walks for the anticipated duration of the emergency situation,
- b) If mobility issues of tenants have been further limited by the nature of the emergency situation,
- c) If the risk to tenant safety and security is significantly greater because of the nature of the emergency situation, for example:
 - i) the building heating systems are not operational and the outside temperature is below zero
 - ii) the air conditioning is not operational and a heat alert is in effect.

Options that may be considered to reduce risk may include:

- Placing a yellow emergency advice card under each tenant's door directing them to the elevator or front lobby to read the Notice of Disruption sign for further information.
- Full time staff to attend the scene to provide information, to tenants, in person and by flyer. See Section 2.6 The Committees/ Teams.
- Calling security contractors and requesting one or more officers to be assigned duties on site.

5.2 Failure of Life Safety Systems

If there is a failure in any major building component (e.g. low pressure in the sprinkler system, trouble with a smoke detector) or a power failure, an intermittent beep will sound:

- in the Building Custodian or Building Attendant's apartment,
- in the annunciator panel in the lobby and
- at the main panel in the electrical room.

Upon hearing the beep, the Building Attendant/Custodian will report the situation to the NRH office. If the failure has resulted in the Fire System being down the Building Attendant/Custodian will start Fire Watch Patrols immediately and be completed every hour until the system comes back on line. If the time is extended past several hours and physically exhausting to the employee a security company can be called to assist with the patrols.

5.3 Chemical Emergencies

If there is a chemical emergency outside the building and tenants cannot evacuate, the Building Attendant/Custodian will:

- Turn off the air make-up system
- Close all doors and windows to the outside
- Turn off any heating system that draws air from the outside
- Place a yellow emergency advice card under each tenant's door directing them to the elevator or front lobby to read the Notice of Disruption sign for further information.

Tenants should be advised to:

- Turn off any air conditioners and switch inlets to the "closed" position
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels
- Seal gaps around windows, air conditioning units, bathroom, kitchen exhaust fans with duct tape
- Listen to the local radio station for public service announcements related to the incident

6.0 HOUSING PROVIDER EMERGENCY

6.1 Stages of an Emergency

Generally, a housing provider emergency will go through the same three stages: assessment; response and follow-up. Within each of these stages, there will be decision points that determine the course of action and when to proceed to the next stage.

6.2 Assessment Stage

This stage starts with the first notification of the emergency which can be from many sources, including a phone call from a housing provider, housing provider tenant/member or NRH staff. The assessment stage will identify, where possible, the range of the emergency (one unit/building or entire complex), the involvement of the Emergency First Responders (fire, police, ambulance), the potential risk to tenants/members and buildings, likely duration of the emergency and whether an onsite response is required by NRH staff. It is critical that as much information as possible be obtained, as the assessment will determine the appropriate response.

The Manager Housing Programs will advise the General Manager where there is potential for any of the following:

- threats to the life, safety and/or health of housing provider tenants/members caused by environmental factors (i.e.: extreme weather, high heat, storms, flooding, etc.);
- property damage that makes a housing unit uninhabitable for housing provider tenants/members and/or poses an imminent risk of injury to neighbours; and,
- evacuation of household(s) as ordered by Emergency First Responders (fire, police, ambulance) and/or Niagara Region,

First Decision Point

At this first decision point, there needs to be clarity on what the current situation is. The *Emergency Assessment Checklist* is completed by the Housing Administrator in conjunction with the Manager Housing Programs ([Appendix C](#)).

Based on that assessment, the decisions that need to be made at this point are:

- is there a need for NRH staff presence on-site
- what other staff need to be notified
- what staff need to do; and
- who is the lead

Role of NRH Staff

If the checklist determines that NRH staff are required on-site, and if the Emergency First Responders are on the scene, the role of NRH staff is to support them and the housing provider by following their direction and assisting where required. NRH staff should assess risks to the housing provider/NRH and ensure that provider is securing files and household lists, and retrieving insurance and other important documents where possible (*if these documents are at risk*).

If NRH staff are the only on-site personnel and there are no Emergency First Responders, but there should be, NRH staff will place the emergency call and also contact provider board members and/or provider staff. If this is an emergency that doesn't involve the Emergency First Responders, NRH staff are to take direction from the General Manager or designate.

6.3 Response Stage

During the response stage, the degree of response will be in proportion to the extent and type of emergency. For example, a stove fire in a housing provider unit where the tenant has evacuated the unit would require a different response than a disaster that required the evacuation of a building.

Emergency First Responders (fire, police, ambulance) will arrive at an emergency scene within minutes of the call being received and will provide direction on the response.

6.4 Meeting with NRH Emergency Response Management Team

When the immediate emergency (*identified in 6.2*) is addressed, the Manager Housing Programs will arrange a meeting of the NRH Emergency Response Management Team. The purpose of the meeting is for information sharing and coordination of a response (if required). Members of the ERMT team, related to housing provider emergencies, are:

- General Manager – Chair
- Manager of Housing Programs
- Manager of Community Programs
- Resource Unit Manager
- Manager of Housing Operations (for information sharing purposes)

The requirement for subsequent ERMT meetings, frequency and at what stages will be determined at this initial meeting.

Second Decision Point

When the immediate emergency is addressed, the decision at this point is whether ongoing NRH follow up is required. Within an appropriate time period after the immediate emergency, the Housing Administrator will review next steps with the

housing provider to ensure that proper follow up is taken related to tenants/members, insurance and building repair issues. The Housing Administrator will also ensure that a provider board meeting is held as soon as possible to make decisions and approve next steps.

At this decision point, the questions that need to be answered are:

Are there any displaced housing provider households? How many households?
Will households need to find alternate accommodation in the short or long term?
Was there any property damage?
Is damage significant?
Is an insurance company involved at this point?
Is there any public communication needed?

Role of NRH Staff

The Manager Housing Programs and Housing Administrator will assess the situation and determine the appropriate follow up.

6.5 Follow-Up Stage – Emergency Placement Policy

Depending on the response at the second decision point, there may be follow-up required to find alternate accommodation for displaced households.

Depending on the number of displaced households and extent of damage, the *Emergency Placement Policy (Appendix L)* may need to be implemented. If the placement policy is required, the Manager Housing Programs will advise the Manager Community Programs accordingly. At this point the Tenant Placement Coordinator will become involved. The Housing Administrator will coordinate and ensure that a list of displaced households is provided to the Tenant Placement Coordinator (TPC). The TPC will find alternate accommodation for the displaced households, according to the established policy.

The Housing Administrator, TPC and Manager Housing Programs (*if required*) will attend meetings arranged by the housing provider (*as required*), to provide information, application forms, status of placement and to answer questions.

The Manager Housing Programs will report to the ERMT and provide status reports as determined in the initial ERMT meeting.

6.6 Non Evacuation Emergencies

Housing Providers will be instructed to develop an emergency plan that contains procedures for non-evacuation emergencies (i.e., electrical power interruptions, failure of life safety systems and chemical emergencies) to ensure the safety of all households. Housing Providers will be required to advise their Housing Administrator of all non-evacuation emergencies that impact their tenants/members.

6.7 Committees/Teams

6.7.1 Communications Team

Members

Resource Unit Manager – Chair

- *Manager, Housing Programs - Back-up Delegate*
- Tenant Support Representative (s)
- Eligibility Assessment Representative
- Receptionist
- Housing Initiatives Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant (s)

Committee Responsibilities

Duties are assigned to members by the Chair

- Issue/distribute prepared communication as directed by the Emergency Response Management Team to housing providers, tenants/members, staff and other identified groups
- Provide a centralized source of expertise, judgment and accurate information for use by the spokesperson in response to media, public concerns and inquiries
- Monitor media coverage
- Address any rumors with factual information
- Follow *Policy C – 2: Emergency Communications Response* in determining communications and information sharing with all groups (See [Appendix E](#))
- Maintain ongoing contact with Community Response Teams
- Ensure that messages are shared between the Communications Team, the Community Response Team and the Emergency Response Management Team

6.7.2 Community Response Team

Members

Manager Housing Programs - Lead
Housing Administrator (s)

Responsibilities in Emergency

The Community Response Team will:

- Go to the housing provider site, if assessment determines onsite presence is required
- Provide assistance to Emergency First Responders and housing provider as needed

- Assess risks to the provider/NRH and ensure that household files and important documents are secured
- Obtain list of affected (and potentially displaced) households
- Assist tenants/members in making calls to relatives, if needed
- Contact Agencies as needed
- Community Response Team members dispatched to the site will relay any media presence to the Communications Team Chair for decisions about NRH spokesperson and/or media statement content
- The Housing Administrator will provide a list of affected households to the TPC for implementation of the emergency placement policy, if required.

7.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If there are any serious injuries, loss of life, major property damage or any potential claims for liability a full reporting of the incident will be required. This reporting has the following components:

Contentious Issue Report

Contentious Issue reports are written by the managers in consultation with those employees involved in the emergency. The report is then provided to the General Manager for approval within 24 hours of the incident. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, a copy of the report may then be provided to the NRH Board of Directors, Niagara Regional Chair/ CAO/ Commissioner of Community Services, etc. (See [Appendix P](#) for *Contentious Issue Report*)

This process will allow these individuals to respond to any situations that may be covered by the media. (See [Appendix H – Policy C – 9 Emergency Response Notification of Senior Management](#)).

If full details are not available at the time of writing the report, submit the report as is with the message that “spokesperson is currently obtaining more details”. Prepare the update when details are available.

Day to Day Reporting (not applicable for Housing Provider Emergency)

All Housing Operations staff are required to document all observations that are related to risk management. Staff have been provided with journals and direction as to what information should be documented.

Minutes from Team Meetings (not applicable for Housing Provider Emergency)

Each team requires an Administrative Assistant to be present at all meetings to record decisions and tasks assigned and their completion. Minutes from team meetings may be subject to Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Law rulings or required in court proceedings. Once the emergency is declared over, all minutes are to be submitted to the Executive Assistant for filing.

8. POST EMERGENCY EVALUATION

After each emergency, the Emergency Management Response Team will meet to debrief and evaluate performance and general staff response to the emergency. Recommendations arising from each new situation will serve to strengthen and update the Emergency Response Plan.

9. OFFICE CLOSURE POLICY

The *Office Closure Policy (D-5)* is located in *Appendix M*.