

FACILITY Standard Operating Procedure	
Title: Code Black – Bomb Threats or Discovery of a Suspicious Package	Policy Number: 06-04-V2
Facility Name: Stanton Territorial Hospital	
Applicable Domain: Emergency Measures	
Additional Domain(s): NA	
Effective Date: 09/01/2026	Next Review Date: 09/01/2029
Issuing Authority: Stanton Territorial Hospital COO	Date Approved: 09/01/2026
Accreditation Canada Applicable Standard: Leadership Standard 1.6, 2.3.7, 2.5, 2.6; Emergency and Disaster Management 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1	
Accrediting Body and Standard: NA	

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA)-Stanton Territorial Hospital (STH) have a responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for patients, residents, volunteers, visitors, contractors and staff within its facilities. Should a threat to the safety of persons within its facilities occur, processes will be implemented to mitigate the threat and the risk of potential harm.

PURPOSE/RATIONALE:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to provide a guideline for staff to follow to keep themselves and others around them safe in the event of a bomb threat or discovery of a suspicious object or package. In the event of a bomb threat, staff must take immediate action to maintain patient, resident, client, visitor, and other staff safety. This SOP provides guidance on the temporary protective actions staff should take, based on the situation, until the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) arrive on site.

DEFINITIONS:

Avaya Phone: The internal telephone system used within the STH facility, located on all units in both clinical and non-clinical spaces (refer to Figure 1).

Bomb: any type of explosive device.

Bomb Threat: any information, whether in-person, by telephone, electronic or communicated verbally or written, which states that an explosive device or package

containing a potentially harmful substance has been placed in any location within the STH facility or property.

Incident Commander (IC): the most senior and/or qualified NTHSSA leader on site with delegated authority to direct proportionate interim protective actions and coordinate with RCMP/YKFD, until formally relieved by a more qualified/authorized NTHSSA leader.

Suspicious Package: any package, box, container, envelope, bag, backpack, suitcase, or other similar item within STH facility or premises, which appears out of place, unattended or behaving unusually (i.e. ticking or buzzing), and/or shows characteristics that indicate a potential safety or security threat.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP): police services in Yellowknife area responsible for responding to calls for service for STH.

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

Compliance with this document is required by all Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) employees, members of the health care staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of NTHSSA (including contracted service providers, subcontracted service providers as necessary) working at STH.

PROCEDURE:

Emergency Preparedness and awareness of the required response is required in any emergency situation. In the case of Code Black, all staff are to review the Bomb Threat-Be Ready Scenarios (refer to **Appendix D**). The principle *review before you need it* will assist in an awareness of response actions.

Depending on the time of day, the Code Black Response Team will vary.

Monday to Friday (daytime business hours)	
Role	Action
STH Chief Operating Officer	Assume IC role for incident
Dexterra General Manager	Assume role of Search Co-Lead
Security Services	Contact and liaise with RCMP and YKDF throughout response, secure area if required;
Facility Services Manager	Assume role of Search Co-Lead
Manager of affected service area (or designated)	Communicate information and provide direction to staff of the area once received

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After-Hours	
Role	Action
Patient Care Coordinator (PCC)	Assumes role of IC until relieved by authorized COO or delegate. Contact Security Services, COO, Dexterra General Manager, Facilities on Call, Senior Manager on Call

1. In the event of a bomb threat, the staff member receiving notification (phone call, email, letter, etc.) will:
 - a. Remain calm;
 - b. Treat the threat seriously;
 - c. Speak in a normal voice;
 - d. Do NOT interrupt the informant;
 - e. Take notes, if possible, including any observations about the informant, background noises if a telephone call etc;
 - f. Attempt to ask questions and obtain as much information as possible, such as who/what the threat is directed against; and,
 - g. Wherever possible, alert a co-worker to contact Security to respond to your location.
2. If a staff member finds a suspicious package, such as an unidentified package or comes across an unknown substance (e.g. white powder), remain calm and do not move the item.
3. Immediately after the bomb threat notification or discovery of a suspicious package, the staff member must:
 - a. **Notify Security** by dialing **67802** from any internal Avaya phone;
 - b. Provide Security with as much information as possible, if known;
 - c. Notify a supervisor/manager/PCC;
 - d. Clear away any staff, patients or visitor from the immediate area;
 - e. Record all pertinent information in **Appendix A** or **Appendix B**.
4. Upon receiving notification of a bomb threat or suspicious package, Security will:
 - a. Immediately call **911** and request assistance of the RCMP;
 - b. Present to area to secure location until police/fire respond;
 - c. Follow instructions received from emergency responders;
 - d. Only when directed by RCMP, or the IC, access the overhead public announcement system directly by **dialing 46666 on the Avaya phone; then entering code: 900#** to make the following overhead announcement (to be repeated three times):

"Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]"

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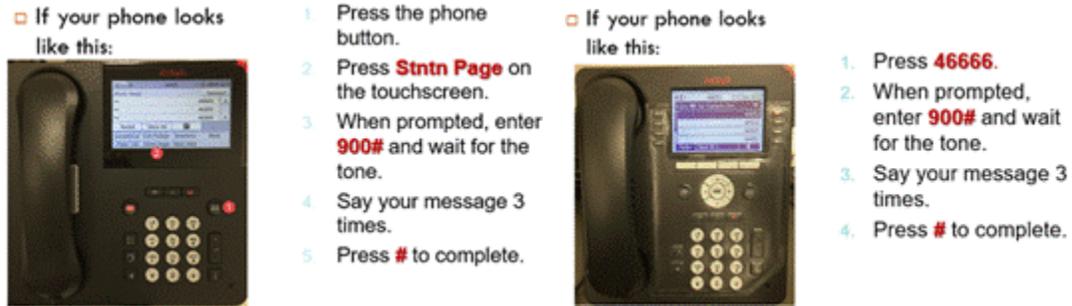


Figure 1- Avaya Phone Types

5. The activation of Code Black immediately initiates the Incident Command structure. The Incident Command Centre will be located in the Large Boardroom on Level 2 of STH. If this location is not available, the alternate site will be in the Łiwegòatì building, Room 1025 (multipurpose room).
6. All Code Black Response Team members will immediately report to the Incident Command Centre. The staff involved in receiving and recording the notification should also be directed to attend.
 - a. The Chief Operating Officer (COO), or designate, assumes the role of the Incident Commander (IC) and will make the decision as to the phase of an evacuation from the threat area or from the facility, if required, in accordance with the STH Code Green (Evacuation Plan) and under direction of RCMP.
 - b. Security staff will secure the building.
 - i. Security will restrict access to the building to authorized people only. If permitted, staff entering the building will be required to provide photo identification and enter through the staff entrance on Level 0.
 - ii. Security services will be prepared to perform duties of Code Green on the direction of the IC or designate.
7. Facilities Services Manager (or designate) will work in conjunction with the RCMP. Search guidelines should be established under the direction of the local RCMP.
8. Security personnel will record all actions and observations made during Code Black in an appropriate format using existing tools and guidelines per Dexterra.
9. All other staff will follow instructions from incident command and:
 - a. Maintain patient care and safety, where possible;
 - b. Reduce unnecessary movement;
 - c. Remain calm and avoid the area, where possible;
 - d. Refrain from using communication devices such as pagers, radios, or cellular telephones, as transmissions from these devices could set off an explosive device.

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- e. Report suspicious persons, vehicles, or unusual packages/items to Security; and,
 - f. Continue with regular duties and not leave the building unless otherwise instructed
 - g. Direct/restrict further access to the facility, if warranted.
10. Depending on the threat/risk location and assessments, staff may be instructed to:
 - a. Shelter in place;
 - b. Relocate within the unit;
 - c. Evacuate in accordance with Code Green procedures.
11. On neutralization of the threat and stabilization of the scene, the RCMP will notify Security to make the following overhead announcement, repeating three times:

“All Clear. Cancel Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]”
12. The STH COO, in close collaboration with the NTHSSA-Chief Operating Officer (CEO), NTHSSA communications and the RCMP, will make any public statements about the incident. Staff must not make any statements to media or members of the public as a serious criminal offense may have taken place. It is important not to jeopardize any investigation that may be taking place. Should any further NTHSSA leadership support be required, such as the activation of the NTHSSA Health Emergency Response Team (HERT), the STH COO will assess the need and initiate appropriate action.
13. A debriefing session will be held following the completion of Code Black, facilitated by the COO (or designate) in conjunction with the Facilities Manager (or designate). See **Appendix C** for post recovery and debrief guidance.
14. An incident report must be completed in RL6, ideally by the person who discovered the package/substance or received the initial email/phone/verbal notice.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

1. All staff working in STH will review this SOP, and review Code responses per mandatory training schedule.
2. All staff working in STH will review **Appendix D**, Bomb Threat-Be Ready Scenario
3. The STH Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPPC) will arrange mock code drills on a biannual basis (twice a year) at least.

CROSS-REFERENCES:

06-01-V2 Code White Response – Stanton Territorial Hospital SOP
06-13-V1 Code Black – Bomb Threats or Suspicious Package Łiwegòati
28-01-V2 NTHSSA Incident Management Policy
28-02-V2 Incident Management Procedure
06-07-V1 Code Green, Evacuation Procedure – Stanton Territorial SOP
28-03-V2 Incident Reporting Roles and Responsibilities

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Receiving a Written Bomb Threat– Checklist Procedure
Appendix B: Receiving a Verbal Bomb Threat – Checklist Procedure
Appendix C: Recovery & Post-Incident Debrief – Checklist Procedure
Appendix D: STH Code Black: Bomb Threat - Be Ready Scenario
Appendix E: STH Floor Plans-Level Maps

REFERENCES:

Accreditation Canada. 2025. Qmentum Program Standards, Leadership.

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Alberta Health Services. (2024, August). *Be Ready Program: Emergency Response Plan – Code Black*. Alberta Health Services.

Barten, D. G., Janssen, M., De Cauwer, H., Keereweer, D., Tan, E. C., van Osch, F., & Mortelmans, L. J. (2024). Threat awareness and counter-terrorism preparedness of Dutch hospitals: a cross-sectional survey. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 102, 104311

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2023, September 7). *Bomb threat*. OSH Answers. <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/bomb-threat.html>

Norfolk General Hospital. (2025). *Code Black – Bomb threat or suspicious object/package* [PDF]. Norfolk General Hospital. <https://www.ngh.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Code-Black-Bomb-Threat-or-suspicious-object-final.pdf>

APPROVAL:

09 January 2026

Date

 A/COO
Stanton Territorial Hospital COO

Appendix A – Receiving a **Written** Bomb Threat: Checklist Procedure

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Completed By: _____

Note: This document is reviewed during the Post Incident Debriefing. As each item is completed, record the time and initial when the situation permits.

TIME	INIT	ACTIONS
TIME	INIT	1. If the threat is on paper, set the paper down and refrain from handling it any more to preserve any fingerprints for evidence.
TIME	INIT	2. If the threat is electronic, DO NOT close the email! Leave it open until the RCMP arrive.
TIME	INIT	3. Immediately request Security for assistance. State location, contact name, and telephone extension. The Supervisor/Manager and/or PCC (after hours) should then be notified.
TIME	INIT	4. Security will immediately call 911 and request assistance of the RCMP.
TIME	INIT	5. The most senior and/or qualified individual assumes the role of Acting Incident Commander (IC) and is responsible for coordinating the response and delegating tasks to Staff until relieved by a more senior and/or qualified individual, if warranted.
TIME	INIT	6. If/when instructed by RCMP, Security will announce " Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]" three times (3x) using the overhead paging System.
TIME	INIT	7. The IC will notify the COO for assistance, or Senior Manager On-Call (after hours).
TIME	INIT	8. The IC will set up a Command Center.
TIME	INIT	9. When the RCMP arrives, follow their instructions. During business hours, the Dexterra General Manager and Facilities Manager may assume the role of Search Coordinator if/when directed by the RCMP. If after-hours, Security assumes the role of Search Coordinator.
TIME	INIT	10. The IC will set up a Command Centre (STH 2 nd floor Large Boardroom or Łiwegòatì building, Room 1025 [multipurpose room]) and ensure the area has a working phone.
TIME	INIT	11. If during the day, maintenance staff shall secure the area until the RCMP arrives. If after-hours, Security shall secure the area until

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		the RCMP arrive
		12. The Search Coordinator will prepare the Zone (Appendix E) maps for RCMP.
		13. Only with RCMP instructions, the IC will inform staff of the threat and instruct staff on next actions provided by the RCMP.
		14. The IC shall instruct staff to "Do Not Touch or Move" any suspicious packages.
		15. The RCMP are the only ones who will determine the status of the Bomb Threat (ie. "hoax" or "actual bomb threat").
		16. If an evacuation is required, the RCMP will provide directions to the IC and the IC will provide instructions to activate the Code Green response for STH.
		17. If an "All Clear" can be called, this should be communicated over the overhead paging system stating All Clear. Cancel Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]" three times (3x).
		18. The IC will follow post incident procedures (Appendix C).

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Appendix B- Receiving a **Verbal** Bomb Threat: Checklist Procedure

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Completed By: _____

Note: This document is reviewed during the Post Incident Debriefing. As each item is completed, record the time and initial when the situation permits.

Note: If a bomb threat is received verbally, attempt to:

- Write down everything said by the caller-gather as much information as possible.
- Pay attention to voice, background noises, and anything else noticeable
- Write down the number if visible on call display

TIME	INIT	ACTIONS
TIME	INIT	1. Remain calm. Try to keep the Caller talking to gather as much information as possible. Do not put the Caller on hold. Try to keep the person on the line as long as possible.
TIME	INIT	2. Take notes about the threat and the Caller.
TIME	INIT	3. The staff receiving the call shall write the words "Bomb Threat" on a slip of paper and pass to a co-worker.
TIME	INIT	4. The co-worker shall immediately notify Security for assistance. State location, contact name, and telephone extension. The Supervisor/Manager and/or PCC (after hours) should then be notified.
TIME	INIT	5. Security will immediately call 911 and request assistance of the RCMP.
TIME	INIT	6. The most senior and/or qualified individual assumes the role of Acting Incident Commander (IC) and is responsible for coordinating the response and delegating tasks to staff until relieved by a more senior and/or qualified individual, if warranted.
TIME	INIT	7. When instructed by RCMP, Security will announce "Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]" three times (3x) using the Overhead paging System.
TIME	INIT	8. The IC will notify the COO for assistance, or Senior Manager On-Call (afterhours).
TIME	INIT	9. The IC will set up a Command Centre (STH 2nd floor Large Boardroom or Łiwegòatì building, Room 1025 [multipurpose room]) and ensure the area has a working phone.
TIME	INIT	10. When the RCMP arrives, follow their instructions. During business hours, the Dexterra General Manager and Facilities Manager will assume the role of Search Coordinator. If after-hours, Security assumes the role of Search Coordinator.

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		11. The IC will contact TSC. The TSC may be able to trace the phone number of the caller making the threat.
		12. Only with RCMP instructions, the IC will inform staff of the threat and instruct staff on next actions.
		13. The IC shall instruct staff to "Do Not Touch or Move" any suspicious packages.
		14. The RCMP are the only ones who will determine the status of the Bomb Threat (ie. "hoax" or "actual bomb threat").
		15. If an evacuation is required, the RCMP will provide directions to the IC and the IC will provide instructions to activate the Code Green response for STH.
		16. If an "All Clear" can be called, this should be communicated over the overhead paging system stating All Clear. Cancel Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME] three times (3x).
		17. The IC will follow post incident procedures (Appendix C).

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Appendix C – Recovery & Post-Incident Debrief: Checklist Procedure

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Completed By: _____

Note: This document is to guide actions during the Post Incident Debriefing. A debriefing session will be held following the completion of Code Black, facilitated by the COO (or designate) in conjunction with the Facilities Manager (or designate).

TIME	INIT	ACTIONS
TIME	INIT	1. Upon conclusion of the incident, the RCMP will provide direction to announce " All Clear " this should be communicated over the overhead paging system stating All Clear. Cancel Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME] " three times (3x).
TIME	INIT	2. The IC will work closely with STH senior management in implementing the phased approach to providing services and allowing staff to re-enter the building. Priority is to be given to patients and residents requiring time sensitive health care.
TIME	INIT	3. The Command Centre team will establish a timeline for restoring normal services once the priority services have been re-introduced.
TIME	INIT	4. The COO (or designate) will communicate the timeline for all staff to return to normal operations.
TIME	INIT	5. The Command Centre team will collect all documentation related to the incident and forward to the IC for Post-Incident Debrief.
TIME	INIT	6. Affected patients, residents, clients, visitors, and staff, particularly those in the immediate vicinity of the incident, may require Critical Incident Stress De-briefing. Arrangements should be made for this service with the support of the COO and Directors.
TIME	INIT	7. The COO (or designate) is to prepare for an After-Action debriefing involving all staff involved within two days or as soon as can be organized.
TIME	INIT	8. The COO and Executive Leadership Team shall arrange a Post-Incident Debrief within 5 business days of return to normal operations. The Debrief shall include Executive Leadership Team, any Acting Incident Manager(s), and Director P3 Operations.

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Appendix D – Code Black: Bomb Threat-Be Ready Scenario

Code Black Bomb Threat-Be Ready Scenario

Purpose

These scenarios are meant to familiarize staff with their role, and the role of their colleagues, in identifying and responding to a Code Black scenario. Please allow 10 minutes to complete the exercise to enhance the safety of NTHSSA staff, clients/patients/residents, property, and our environment.

Scenarios (Please choose a scenario as most applicable to your role):

General: an employee logs into their email in the morning and discovers a bomb threat noting their area, from an unknown email address.

Clinical: the Emergency Department received a disgruntled individual who threatens to blow up the building if he doesn't get medical treatment immediately.

Office/Administration: a worker at a clinical office received an email with a threat of a bomb going off the next day if certain listed demands are not met.

Support Services: an employee received a phone call stating that a bomb has been placed in a package in the warehouse. The caller simply noted the package is like all the others and hangs up.

Questions to ask:

1. What immediate actions should you take when you receive a bomb threat?
2. What actions should you take if you are advised of a bomb threat having been received, which is in your work area?
3. Can any NTHSSA-STH staff activate the response to a bomb threat, if so, how?
4. How can Security support the response to a bomb threat?
5. Who is responsible for recording and reporting the actions taken during a bomb threat?
6. What other emergency response plans may be activated as a result of a bomb threat?
7. What phrase is used to inform that there is no longer the threat of a bomb?
8. Where can leaders find business continuity planning support to aid in minimizing service impacts from a bomb threat, including relocation planning and downtime procedures.

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Answer Key

1. What immediate actions should you take when you receive a bomb threat?

Actions may be site specific, but generally, staff should:

- Turn off all two-way radios and radio equipment.
- Immediately report to Security services and supervisor/manager/PCC. Do not hang up the phone. Record the call display number. Remain calm and courteous. Do not argue.
- If threat is telephone / face to face: Do not hang-up the phone and record call display number. Remain calm and courteous. Do not argue.
- If the threat is received by email or text do not reply to, relay to, forward, delete, or destroy. Preserve evidence for the RCMP.
- Record as much information as possible using the Bomb Threat Checklist in Appendix A and B of the SOP.

2. What actions should you take when you are advised of a bomb threat having been received, which is in your work area?

- Immediately cease the use of two-way radios and radio equipment until notified otherwise.
- Remain calm. Reassure patients and visitors (if required).
- If directed, conduct a visual scan of all workplaces and common areas.
- Scan the entire room from your waist down.
- Scan the entire room from your waist to head level.
- Scan the entire room from head level to ceiling.
- Report any abnormalities to your supervisor/manager/PCC.

3. Can any STH staff activate the response to a bomb threat, if so, how?

- Yes, a bomb threat can be received, and response initiated, by any member of STH.
- The notification should include **notifying Security** by dialing **67802** from any internal Avaya phone, then notifying a supervisor/manager/PCC.

4. How can Security support the response to a bomb threat?

- Security will be able to support by responding to the incident location, determining the need for, calling, and liaising with RCMP and by announcing a Code Black page overhead. They will also be responsible for assisting in clearing the area, where needed.

5. Who is responsible for recording and reporting actions taken during a bomb threat?

- The COO, or delegate, will determine the need to establish a Incident Command Centre to coordinate facility-wide actions and communications to staff.

6. What other Emergency Response Plans may be activated as a result of a bomb threat?

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- Other emergency responses/code scenarios may include a Code Green (evacuation), Code White (violent patient), a Code Silver (active assailant or threat with a weapon) or a Code Orange (mass casualty).
- Staff should be familiar with each code and their associated responses and actions, as well as the location of the code binder on the STH X1A links online, and the physical copy on each unit.

7. What phrase is used to inform that there is no longer the threat of a bomb?

- The following announcement will be paged overhead:
“All Clear. Cancel Code Black on [UNIT/DEPARTMENT NAME]”

8. Where can STH staff find business continuity planning support to minimize service impacts and enhance their recovery from a bomb threat?

- Business Continuity supports the recovery and continuity of critical business, facilities, equipment, and supplies, staffing and technology services in the event of a disaster.
- More information can be found by accessing Appendix C: Recovery & Post-Incident Debrief – Checklist Procedure and the STH Down-Time Information Document found on the STH Share Drive here: I:\Stanton Hospital Share\EPPC\DownTime Documents

This *Be Ready Scenario* has been adapted from Alberta Health Services (AHS) Be Ready Program, part of AHS Emergency Response Plan: Code Black (August 2024).



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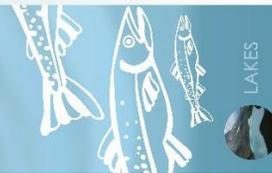


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LEVEL 3

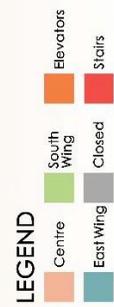


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LEVEL 4



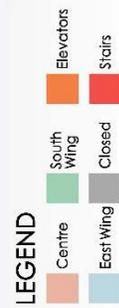
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