

COPLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
POLICY/PROCEDURE

Title: Code Black (Tornado Watch/Tornado Warning)

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline the recommended plan of action to be implemented at Copley Memorial Hospital in the event of the announcement of a tornado watch or a tornado warning in the vicinity of the Medical Center.

POLICY

Copley Switchboard staff will primarily be notified about the threat of severe weather via its dedicated NOAA Weather Alerting Radio. (Once an alert tone has been sounded, the National Weather Service, via NOAA Weather Radio, issues broadcast advisories, watches and warnings.) The approach of severe weather will prompt Security to notify those entities appearing on the hospital's Severe Weather Call List. (See attachment).

Switchboard staff may also be notified via reception of a bona fide report from Medical Center staff regarding either the activation of the local tornado siren or the actual sighting of a tornado or funnel cloud in the immediate vicinity.

Switchboard and Security staff shall notify Medical Center staff, according to the procedure outlined below.

DEFINITIONS

Tornado Watch Weather conditions are expected which could POSSIBLY produce one or more tornadoes. Watches are issued by the National Weather Service and typically cover a large geographic region.

Tornado Warning Severe weather conditions exist in the immediate area and have produced one or more ACTUAL tornadoes or rotational winds within a thunderstorm cell, as detected by Doppler radar. Warnings are issued by the National Weather Service and typically cover a smaller, more localized, geographic region. Projected storm paths are included in broadcast warnings.

Code Black,
Category "B" LOW THREAT
The immediate area of the Medical Center is NOT threatened, although a tornado warning exists for Kane, Kendall, DuPage and/or Will Counties. (E.g.: A tornado has been reported in Elgin, moving northeast.) Moderate safety precautions are to be initiated and staff are to maintain a heightened state of alert.

Code Black,
Category "A" HIGH THREAT
The immediate area of the Medical Center IS threatened.

- An Alert Radio has broadcast a warning such that the Medical Center is in the ANTICIPATED PATH of a tornado (e.g.: a tornado has been reported in Yorkville, moving northeast), AND/OR
- A Medical Center employee has reported that the local tornado siren has been activated (at a time other than a scheduled test), AND/OR
- A Medical Center employee has reported the sighting of a tornado or funnel cloud in the immediate area.

Immediate and maximum patient safety precautions are to be initiated.

PROCEDURE

Medical Center staff shall provide for the safety and well being of patients and visitors, consistent with the announced category of the Code Black. Whenever possible, patients and visitors shall be moved as safely and quickly as practical to areas of relative strength and safety. The general recommendations hereafter outlined may be modified by the constraints of time, personnel and patient acuity.

This plan establishes that the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) shall be implemented as needed and shall be operational to the extent necessary.

In the event of an actual tornado touchdown affecting the Medical Center campus, staff should anticipate the activation of the Code Triage /Mass Casualty Plan.

Severe Weather Notification:

In an effort to insure that the hospital and RCMG unit leadership are aware of developing severe weather and the potential for a Code Black, Security will contact the IS Help Desk at x1234 with a request for a SnapComm message launch. This system delivers announcements at all computers on the hospital's network, including those on outlying locations, e.g., FEC, Yorkville.

Text of announcement:

"Be aware that, as of (time/date), a severe weather condition exists. Please review your unit's procedures should a Code Black have to be announced." (Text may be altered to suit conditions.)

Timing of announcement:

- 1) When first announced by the National Weather Service, in conjunction with calls being made to entities listed on the Severe Weather Call List;
- 2) As appropriate, at recognized times for "change of shift", i.e., between 3pm and 6pm and between 10pm and midnight.

SnapComm is not an authorized vehicle for the announcement of a Code Black nor are the announcements to be relied upon as a substitute for unit walk-throughs by Security during which unit leadership is to be updated on weather conditions.

Note that severe weather watches and warnings are announced by the National Weather Service via NOAA radio. Upon receipt of such a broadcast, Switchboard should notify Security without delay so that the monitoring and notification process can begin.

I. Tornado WATCH

A. Notification & Switchboard Staff Responsibilities

1. Switchboard is a 24/7 staffed area. Within the switchboard is a weather alert radio providing National Weather Service alerts, watches, and warnings for DeKalb, Kane, DuPage, Will, and Kendall counties.
2. If a TORNADO WATCH has been issued specifically for Kane, Kendall, DuPage or Will Counties, switchboard staff shall NOTIFY the Security staff, in a *timely manner*, via telephone, radio or pager contact, that the National Weather Service has issued a TORNADO WATCH. Security will thereafter notify the following:

- Administrative Nursing Supervisor on duty
- Administrator On-Duty or On-Call
- Facilities Management (Maintenance) Staff
- Financial Services, Waubensee CC
- Healthplex
- RCMC/RCMG entities operating in POB 1, POB 2, and Montgomery Road
- Heart Center
- Urgent Care, Yorkville

No overhead page/announcement shall be made for a WATCH condition.

B. Notified Staff Responsibilities

1. Notified staff (see #2 above) shall be vigilant of weather conditions.
2. Notified staff shall review emergency preparedness procedures, should severe weather be encountered and the status upgraded to a warning.
3. Switchboard staff will monitor this equipment for severe thunderstorm and/or tornado watches and warnings and receipt of either of these will be communicated to Security via radio. Note that it is essential that this communication partnership be maintained for the duration of the threat period.
4. Upon notification of a severe thunderstorm or tornado watch, one Security Officer will establish a continuous post in the ED Security office, performing the following functions:
 - a. Alert the Administrative Nursing Supervisor to the weather threat;
 - b. Monitor the NOAA weather alert radio, located in the ED Security office for further developments;
 - c. Maintain contact with the switchboard;
 - d. Visually monitor www.weather.gov or other appropriate web site to view and track the approaching storm track. Remember that imagery may have to be “refreshed”, depending on the web site selected.

C. All Clear

1. Upon receiving a tornado watch cancellation, switchboard should contact Security to insure that they are aware of the cancellation.

II. Tornado WARNING

A. Notification and Staff Responsibilities

1. If switchboard staff receives notification of the issuance of a TORNADO WARNING via its dedicated NOAA Weather Radio, its dedicated Aurora Office of Emergency Management Alerting Radio, or the reception of a bona fide report from Medical

Center staff regarding either the activation of the local tornado siren or the actual sighting of a funnel cloud, Security should be notified immediately.

2. The decisions required will be made by the Security Department according to the following order:
 - a. The Security Manager, if present
 - b. The Security Team Leader, if present
 - c. The Security Lead Officer, if present
 - d. The senior Security Officer on duty.

Below are listed criteria to be used in the decision making process:

Alert Radio announcement of Tornado WARNING for Kane, Kendall, DuPage and/ or Will Counties, but <u>anticipated path of tornado is not in the vicinity of Medical Center</u> (e.g.: a tornado has been reported in Elgin, moving northeast)	Category "B"
Alert Radio announcement of Tornado WARNING for Kane, Kendall, DuPage and/ or Will Counties with the <u>Medical Center in the anticipated path</u> (e.g.: a tornado has been reported in Yorkville, moving northeast)	Category "A"
Staff Report of Tornado or Funnel Cloud near campus	Category "A"
Staff Report of Local Siren Activation at a non-test time (Routine test occurs on 1 st Tuesday of the month at 10: 00 AM)	Category "A"

Issuance of a tornado warning for any location within Kane, Kendall, DuPage, or Will Counties requires Security to direct switchboard to announce a Code Black, category "B". Also at this time, a second Officer (or a substitute hospital staff member, if Security is not available) will use a Security truck to establish a post outside of the hospital to visually observe approaching weather and to listen for alert sirens.

Should any of the sources now in place present evidence of a tornado threat to or near the hospital, Security, as delineated above, will direct switchboard staff to announce a Code Black, category "A". This directive will be issued without delay or further consultation. The Administrative Nursing Supervisor will thereafter be informed of the rationale unless exigent circumstances exist.

3. If uncertainty exists (e.g. siren activation on a clear day), Switchboard staff may consult with an Aurora 911 Operator, or, if no answer is obtained (due to call volume), the Aurora Office of Emergency Management (630-256-5800). Time is of the essence, however. If any doubt remains, a Category "A" should be chosen.

4. Upon the request of Security, switchboard staff shall immediately make one of the following announcements, three (3) consecutive times, on the hospital and POB overhead PA system:
 - “May I have your attention please. **CODE BLACK, CATEGORY “B”**. Please be alert & take modified safety precautions.”
 - OR
 - “May I have your attention please. **CODE BLACK, CATEGORY “A”**. Tornado Warning. Take immediate safety precautions.”
5. AFTER the announcement has been made, Security staff shall NOTIFY/CONFIRM, *as quickly as possible*, that the following Medical Center staff are aware that a **CODE BLACK** *has been announced*:
 - Administrative Nursing Supervisor On-Duty
 - Administrator On-Duty or On-Call
 - Emergency Preparedness Chairperson
 - Facilities Management (Maintenance) Staff
 - Physician Services Staff
 - HealthPlex Staff
 - Financial Services, Waubensee
6. Switchboard staff will initiate a Wireless Office Messenger page to the Code Black group.

B. Staff Responsibilities

1. Code Black, Category “B” – MODIFIED safety precautions are to be initiated by staff, as a tornado warning has been issued for Kane, Kendall, DuPage and/or Will counties. The following *general* recommendations may be modified by the constraints of time, personnel and patient acuity:
 - Avoid solariums, windows, skylights and glass-enclosed areas.
 - Turn on all lights.
 - Discourage visitors and discharged patients from leaving building.
 - Consider a delay in transferring patients.
 - Consider a hold on OR cases not yet begun.
 - Attempt to unite newborn babies and mothers. Consider moving mothers to nursery.
 - Evacuate lobbies and waiting rooms with glass/external exposures.
 - Avoid ambulance bay.
 - Be observant, listening carefully for any further announcements.
 - Be prepared to move/protect patients, should a Category “A” be announced.
2. Code Black, Category “A” - IMMEDIATE and MAXIMUM safety precautions are to be initiated by staff, as there is a threat to the immediate area of the Medical Center. Whenever possible, move patients & visitors as safely and quickly as practical to areas of relative strength and safety. The following *general recommendations* may be modified by the constraints of time, personnel and patient acuity:
 - Move patients out of rooms with windows and into interior hallways, as close to nurses’ stations as possible. If unable to move patients, “protect in place” by covering them with 2-3 blankets.
 - Avoid solariums, windows, skylights and glass-enclosed areas.

- Turn on all lights.
- Close all fire doors, starting with those nearest solariums or lobbies.
- Discourage visitors and discharged patients from leaving building.
- Delay transferring patients.
- Hold OR cases not yet begun.
- Attempt to unite newborn babies and mothers. Consider moving mothers to nursery.
- Evacuate lobbies and waiting rooms with glass/external exposures.
- Avoid ambulance bay.

C. Incident Commander Responsibilities (Administrative Nursing Supervisor On-Duty or Administrator On-Duty)

1. Category "B" – Consider establishment of Incident Command. Continue to closely monitor conditions and communicate with Switchboard staff.
2. Category "A" – Consider establishment of Incident Command. Communicate with Switchboard staff regarding any subsequent announcements and/or group pages. In the event of an actual tornado touchdown affecting the Medical Center, implement the Code Triage/Mass Casualty Plan as applicable.

D. All Clear

In the event that the Medical Center campus has not been affected and the tornado WARNING has expired or been canceled, Security or the Incident Commander shall instruct switchboard personnel to make the following overhead page/announcement:

- a. *"Attention All Personnel: Code Black has been canceled. Please resume normal activities."*
- b. This announcement shall be made three (3) consecutive times.
- c. A Wireless Office Messenger page, " Code Black all clear", should be dispatched.