



Emergency Response Plan (AODA Compliant) – Ontario

Intent

Thrive Counselling is committed to supporting the welfare of its employees and visitors to the premises. The purpose of this emergency response plan is to ensure human safety, minimize damage to property, and assure rapid and responsive communication to all parties involved. This plan has been created to address in a coordinated and systematic manner all types of emergencies affecting Thrive Counselling.

This plan establishes processes and procedures for appropriate responses to major emergencies, and assign roles and responsibilities for the implementation and execution of the plan in the event of an emergency or catastrophe. The guidelines shown in this plan are intended to keep Thrive Counselling employees prepared if premises or facilities become unsafe due to calamity.

**This policy is in compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), [Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards](#).*

Definitions

Emergency: For the purposes of this plan, an instance or combination of instances of unsafe conditions that pose a threat to people or property, and include instances of fire or smoke; natural disaster or severe weather; chemical, biological or radiological incidents; and structural failures.

Fire or smoke: Any blaze (fire) of combustible materials causing danger of burns from fire or suffocation or choking from smoke inhalation. This can also include fires nearby where there is a clear danger of the fire spreading to or causing the air to become un-breathable due to smoke.

Natural disaster or severe weather: Any emergency caused by inclement weather conditions or tectonic activity. Natural disasters include tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes, lightning strikes, avalanches, blizzards, ice storms, severe thunderstorms, and so on. In some cases, natural disaster may also include excessive periods of intensely cold weather, or excessive periods of intensely hot or humid weather.

Chemical, biological, or radiological incidents: This may include a release of toxic chemicals or other dangerous agents within the vicinity, including natural gas leaks; the release of

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harmful bacteria, viruses, or other biological dangers; release of or exposure to ionizing radiation.

Structural failures: Any damage to property or premises that causes unsafe conditions due to structural failure. Failures or pending failures include but are not limited to bomb threats; collapsed walls, ceilings, or foundations; burst water mains; electrical power outages; and so on.

Guidelines

In general, employees must report an emergency event immediately to a member of management or other appropriate authority.

Once the emergency has been ascertained, response or assessment teams will be the first to respond to the incident. They will assess the severity of the emergency and communicate immediately with assigned groups as appropriate. Response or assessment teams are composed of at least one person per department to coordinate and instruct co-workers. These teams will coordinate emergency or evacuation efforts within their areas of responsibility.

Not all emergencies will require the same level of response. Appropriate responses will be dictated by the severity of the event and its effect on the health and safety of employees, visitors, and property. Only the Executive Director or their designate has the authority to declare a state of emergency for and can activate this plan.

**Responsibilities in an emergency are delegated among various response or assessment team members, as indicated in the emergency response or assessment teams checklist.*

Fire or Smoke

- Rescue anyone in immediate danger.
- Alert employees of the fire and its location. Activate the nearest fire alarm. Contact the local fire department by dialing 911 and follow any and all instructions. Assign someone to guide the response personnel directly to the fire.
- Contain the fire if it is relatively safe to do so. Close all doors, fire doors, and windows near the fire. Shut off all fans, ventilators, and air conditioners.
- Extinguish the fire if it is small. Obtain the nearest fire extinguisher and pull out the safety pin. Aim the fire extinguisher nozzle low at the base of the fire, depress the trigger, and move nozzle slowly upward with a sweeping motion. Do not aim nozzle at the middle or the top of the flames.
- If fire cannot be extinguished, evacuate the building immediately using the nearest and safest exit. Keep low to the floor to avoid inhaling smoke. Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- Report to the designated emergency evacuation area, as indicated on the back of all office doors in each location. Immediately report any employees, customers, visitors, contractors, or individuals who have remained in the building or refused to leave.
- Do not return until it has been declared safe to do so by the fire department.

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If you cannot leave your work station, or have returned to it due to fire or heavy smoke:

- Close all doors to prevent the entry of smoke and fire;
- Dial 911 to notify the authorities and inform them of who and where you are;
- Signal to the firefighters by any means possible to draw attention to yourself;
- If possible, seal all cracks where smoke can get in;
- Crouch low to the floor if smoke begins to enter your area;
- Move to the nearest protected location in the room or area;
- Wait to be rescued and remain calm;
- Do not leave the area;
- Do not panic or jump; and
- Listen for instructions or information which may be given by authorized personnel.

Natural Disaster or Severe Weather

- Account for all employees and visitors, ensuring that everyone is inside the facility.
- Close all windows, curtains, and blinds and instruct all employees and visitors to move away from windows.
- If necessary, gather employees and visitors into the basement or, if no basement is available, into bathrooms or another enclosed area.
- Listen to all weather reports for updates. Do not leave the basement or enclosed area until the weather warning has been lifted.
- Stay calm. Encourage others to stay calm also.
- Have portable radios available, along with extra batteries.
- Be prepared for isolation at the premises. Ensure that emergency equipment and supplies are available, or can be readily obtained.

Emergency Survival Kits

As a best practice, emergency survival kits should include enough supplies for employees, volunteers, visitors, customers, and guests to survive for 72 hours.

Important items to include in the kit are:

- Candles;
- Matches sealed in a water proof bag;
- Fire retardant blankets;
- Flashlights;
- Ample batteries;
- Telephones that will work in a power outage;
- A well-stocked first aid kit;
- Non-perishable food;
- Manual can opener;
- Whistle to serve as an extra communication device; and
- Cases of bottled of water.

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Other items can include spare clothes, personal hygiene items, pain and allergy relief pills, and assistive devices such as asthma inhalers, canes, and diabetic medication.

Chemical, Biological, or Radiological

- Call 911 and report the situation and follow any instructions given.
- Notify managers and human resources immediately.
- Start evacuation procedures.

Structural Failure

The purpose of this procedure is to inform employees or visitors of precautions to be taken in the event of a structural failure.

- In the event of a power outage:
 - Gather flashlights and other needed supplies;
 - Check on all employees and visitors to ensure their safety;
 - Ensure all backup or emergency lighting is fully operational; and
 - If the power outage is prolonged, consult with managers to consider dismissing employees for the remainder of the day.
- In the case of water, heat, or other utility disruptions:
 - All attempts will be made to determine the cause of the disruption and the probable length of shutdown;
 - Where required, the local utility provider will be contacted to assess and resolve the situation; and
 - If the shutdown is prolonged, consult with management to consider dismissing employees for the day.
- If ceilings, walls, or the foundation collapse:
 - Exit the building immediately following your evacuation procedures;
 - If exits are sealed:
 - Find a sturdy piece of furniture such as a desk or sofa and get under it, or directly beside with your body lower than the height of the object;
 - If you cannot fit, lean up against an interior wall;
 - Cover your head and mouth to prevent dust inhalation; and
 - Avoid exterior walls and reduce movement around the room; and
 - If trapped:
 - Remain calm, orient yourself, and signal for help;
 - Depending on the situation, signaling will include tapping on walls or pipes to carry sound, calling out, or dialing for help using a cellular phone; and
 - If possible, move extremities slowly for circulation until help can find you.

Employee and Visitor Evacuation Procedure

If an evacuation of the premises is necessary in response to an emergency situation, employees and visitors must follow the steps below:

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- Stop working and shut down any equipment in use;
- Proceed to posted emergency exit, following posted evacuation routes;
- Use stairwells instead of elevators;
- Touch doorknobs and door handles carefully to check for heat; and
- Proceed to designated meeting area (unless otherwise instructed).

Bomb Threats

In the unlikely event of a bomb threat, it is impossible to distinguish valid threats from hoaxes. Therefore, all threats will be treated as real in order to protect lives and property, and the premises will be evacuated immediately.

Missing Employee or Visitor Procedure

- Employees will be directed by the response or assessment team member to systematically search the premises, both inside and outside (if safe to do so), including rooms, bathrooms, offices, and other areas.
- If a search of the premises proves unsuccessful, the response or assessment team member shall notify local law enforcement by calling 911. Give a description of the missing person or a photograph (if available). The authorities will assume control of the search from this point.
- The family or responsible party of the missing person shall also be notified. Explain what is being done to find the missing person and that the local law enforcement has been notified as well.
- All previously contacted persons and law enforcement shall be notified if the missing person turns up due to search, or of their own accord.

Alternative Formats

Thrive Counselling is dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of all our employees, volunteers, visitors, customers, and guests. As such, we will provide our emergency response plan in a format that takes into consideration individual needs.

It is critical that all of our employees, volunteers, visitors, customers, and guests know and understand our emergency response plan, if the information provided to you is unclear or is in a format that prevents you from fully knowing and understanding our process, please contact the following person as soon as possible:

Health and Safety Committee
905 637-5256
info@thrivecounselling.org

The administration team will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs. Alternative options include, but are not limited to:

- Enlarged text;
- Braille format;

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- Communication support either in person or over the phone; and
- Documents provided by e-mail.

If requested, and upon approval by the individual, the individual emergency response and fire evacuation plan shall be shared with the person designated to provide assistance to the individual.