

OVERVIEW

This process outlines the steps necessary for a staff member to initiate a Code Brown.

Code Brown is activated under the following circumstances:

1. Staff have not been trained in spill cleanup procedures (regardless of spill volume)
2. The spill is of an unknown substances
3. The spill involves any amount of mercury
4. There is a release/leak of a hazardous gas
5. The spill has seeped into inaccessible areas (e.g. elevator shaft or hoist way)
6. Trained spill clean-up responder determines that the chemical/hazardous substance spill exceeds the defined volume as per the [applicable guidelines](#) or appropriate PPE and cleanup supplies are not available

Note: The Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team is required for spills that meet any of the above circumstances. Site staff must not assist in the actual clean-up of the spill.

Workplace Health has developed comprehensive chemical spill procedures located at:

- VCH Intranet: [My Health & Safety at Work - Chemical Safety & Spills](#)

As in all emergencies, consider your safety first.

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

All Staff

- Ensure your own safety and that of others – avoid skin, eye, and respiratory exposure to the substance
- Remove persons from immediate danger
- Notify the First Aid Attendant, if required
- Notify your Supervisor/Department Lead/Designate

Supervisor/Department Lead/Designate

After determining that the situation requires a Code Brown response:

- Call the Emergency Line **0000** – state “Code Brown [name of substance if known] in [exact location – site, building, room]”
 - Answer questions as prompted by Switchboard
 - If you smell rotten eggs and believe there may be a natural gas leak, request switchboard call Facilities Maintenance & Operations (FMO) – if FMO is not on-site, call **911**
- If safe, consider the following:
 - Close doors and open windows to ventilate the area to the exterior
 - Attempt to control the source of the spill/gas leak
 - Extinguish all ignition sources if the spill material is flammable
- Notify Department Manager/Designate
- Upon request, provide information to:
 - Facilities Maintenance & Operations
 - Security Contractor
 - Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team
- When appropriate, call the Emergency Line **0000** to request “Code Brown – All Clear” announcement

Switchboard

- When a Code Brown is reported record the following information:
 - Caller’s name and time of call
 - Type of chemical(s) spilled/gas leaking
 - Amount/volume of chemical(s) spilled
 - Time of the spill/leak
 - Department name/area where spill/leak occurred
 - Department or designated contact person and telephone number
- Announce overhead three times “Code Brown [location]”
- Notify:
 - Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team (not required if gas leak)
 - Security Contractor
 - Facilities, Maintenance and Operations
 - Administrator In-Charge/Designate
 - Housekeeping Manager/Designate
 - Health Emergency Management BC
- When directed, announce overhead three times “Code Brown All Clear”

Department Manager/Designate

- Provide guidance and support as required
- Notify and provide updates to the Administrator-On-Call/Designate

Facilities Maintenance and Operations

- Ensure your own safety and that of others – avoid skin, eye, and respiratory exposure to the substance
- If a natural gas leak is suspected contact FortisBC
- Respond to the area to determine any facility system impacts, and assess fire risk, etc.
- Consider whether changes to the area's ventilation system are needed in consultation with the Department Manager/Designate, the Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team and other subject matter experts (e.g. Fire Department)
- Assist the Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team by providing information, as needed
- Do not assist in the actual clean-up of the spill

Security Contractor

- Ensure your own safety and that of others – avoid skin, eye, and respiratory exposure to the substance
- Secure the area using caution/barrier tape
- Provide access control, as required
- Meet and escort the Contracted Chemical Spill Response Team and the Fire Department (if necessary) to the affected area

POST INCIDENT ACTIONS

- Manager/Designate initiate incident investigation using the Incident Investigation Tool (webIIT)
- Notify Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre at **1-866-922-9464** to report an injury/exposure or to report incident as a near miss
- Document Spill/Leak via Patient Safety Learning System (PSLS) as a Hazard Report if event impacted patients