

STRATHMERE LODGE

MISSING RESIDENT EMEGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

CODE YELLOW

Original Date: Jan. 22, 2008

Reviewed/Revised: Aug. 21, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Scope**
- 3. Definitions and Response Principles**
- 4. Plan Activation and Incident Command**
- 5. Immediate Verification and Initial Response**
- 6. Code Yellow – Internal Search**
- 7. External Search and Police Notification**
- 8. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 9. Communications and Notifications**
- 10. When the Resident is Located**
- 11. Documentation and Regulatory Reporting**
- 12. Recovery and Follow-Up**
- 13. Training, Testing and Review**

- Appendix A – Code Yellow Quick Response Guide**
- Appendix B – Missing Resident Information Form**
- Appendix C – Missing Resident Search Checklist**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to establish a rapid, coordinated and organized response when a resident of Strathmere Lodge is missing or cannot be accounted for.

The Plan is intended to:

- locate the resident as quickly as possible;
 - protect the missing resident from harm;
 - establish clear lines of authority;
 - ensure an immediate and organized search;
 - ensure timely involvement of police and other external agencies;
 - maintain the safety and care of residents remaining in the Home;
 - provide appropriate communication with the resident's Substitute Decision Maker (SDM)/family and others; and
 - ensure appropriate assessment, documentation, reporting and follow-up after the resident is located.
-

2. SCOPE

This Plan applies whenever a resident cannot be located and their whereabouts cannot reasonably be explained.

A resident may be missing:

- within Strathmere Lodge;
- on the grounds;
- after leaving the building without staff knowledge;
- during an organized activity or outing;
- during an appointment or authorized leave; or
- after failing to return when reasonably expected.

The response shall reflect the individual resident's vulnerability and the circumstances surrounding the absence.

3. DEFINITIONS AND RESPONSE PRINCIPLES

3.1 Missing Resident

A resident whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be reasonably established.

A resident shall not be considered missing merely because they are temporarily somewhere other than their expected location if their whereabouts can reasonably and promptly be established.

3.2 Code Yellow

Code Yellow is Strathmere Lodge's emergency code for a missing resident. It is to be used for public address (PA) system announcements concerning a missing resident (to activate the Missing Resident Emergency Response Plan, and deactivate the plan)

3.3 High-Risk Missing Resident

A resident shall be considered **high risk** where their circumstances create an increased likelihood of serious harm.

Factors may include:

- cognitive impairment or dementia;
- inability to recognize hazards;
- inability to communicate effectively;
- significant mobility limitations;
- risk of falls;
- urgent medication or treatment needs;
- significant medical conditions;
- inadequate clothing for weather conditions;
- extreme heat or cold;
- darkness;
- traffic or environmental hazards;
- previous exit-seeking or wandering behaviour;
- emotional or behavioural distress;
- potential risk of harm to self or others; or
- any other circumstance suggesting that delay could place the resident at risk.

When in doubt, staff shall treat the resident as high risk.

3.4 Guiding Principle

The search begins immediately.

Staff shall not wait for certainty that a resident has left the building before initiating appropriate search actions.

Police notification shall not be delayed where circumstances indicate that the resident may have left the property or may be at significant risk.

4. PLAN ACTIVATION AND INCIDENT COMMAND

4.1 Activation

Any employee who becomes aware that a resident cannot be located shall immediately notify the Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse responsible for the Resident Home Area.

The registered staff member shall immediately initiate verification of the resident's whereabouts.

Where the resident cannot promptly be accounted for, the Charge Nurse (RN) shall activate **Code Yellow**.

4.2 Incident Command

The Charge Nurse (RN) shall assume initial Incident Command.

During regular business hours, the Administrator, Director of Resident Care (DRC), or designate may assume Incident Command as appropriate.

Only one person shall function as Incident Commander at a time.

4.3 Incident Commander Responsibilities

The Incident Commander shall:

- confirm activation of Code Yellow;
- determine the resident's risk level;
- coordinate the search;
- assign search areas;
- ensure adequate staff remain on Resident Home Areas;
- determine when police notification is required;
- coordinate internal and external communications;
- ensure search areas are documented;
- ensure the resident is appropriately assessed when located; and
- terminate Code Yellow.

5. IMMEDIATE VERIFICATION AND INITIAL RESPONSE

When a resident cannot be located, staff shall immediately establish:

- when the resident was last seen;
- where the resident was last seen;
- who last saw the resident;
- what the resident was doing;
- what the resident was wearing;
- whether the resident was accompanied by anyone; and
- whether there is a reasonable explanation for the resident's absence.

Quickly verify whether the resident may be:

- with family or friends;
- signed out of the Home;
- attending a medical or other appointment;
- participating in Recreation programming;
- at the hairdresser;
- in the Chapel;
- visiting another resident;
- in another Resident Home Area; or
- elsewhere within the Home for an expected purpose.

This verification shall be brief and shall not delay activation of Code Yellow where the resident cannot promptly be accounted for.

6. CODE YELLOW – INTERNAL SEARCH

6.1 Announcement

The Incident Commander shall arrange for the following announcement:

“Code Yellow – [Resident Home Area].”

The announcement may include additional information appropriate to assist staff while protecting the resident's privacy.

6.2 Search Organization

The Incident Commander shall assign staff to specific search areas.

Searches shall be systematic rather than random.

Staff shall report completion of their assigned area to the Incident Commander or designate.

Areas shall be marked as searched on the **Missing Resident Search Checklist** (Appendix C).

6.3 Resident Home Area Search

The resident's own Resident Home Area shall receive an immediate detailed search.

Staff shall check:

- resident bedrooms;
- bathrooms;
- tub/shower rooms;
- closets;
- behind doors;
- under beds where physically possible;
- lounges;
- dining areas;
- utility and storage areas accessible to residents;
- garden/balcony areas;
- stairwells;
- elevators;
- activity spaces; and
- other locations where a resident could reasonably be located.

6.4 Whole-Home Search

If the resident is not immediately located, the search shall expand throughout the Home.

Search areas shall include, as applicable:

- all Resident Home Areas;
- common areas;
- Chapel;
- Rose Room;
- Recreation areas;

- hair salon;
- offices accessible to residents;
- stairwells;
- elevators;
- basement/support service areas where access is possible;
- exterior vestibules and exits.

6.5 Search Principles

Staff shall:

- physically inspect assigned areas;
- open doors and look inside spaces where the resident could reasonably be located;
- avoid assuming another employee has searched an area;
- report completion of the assigned area;
- report anything unusual.

Adequate staff shall remain on every Resident Home Area to maintain resident care and safety.

7. EXTERNAL SEARCH AND POLICE NOTIFICATION

7.1 Immediate Police Notification

Call 911 immediately where:

- the resident is known or reasonably believed to have left the building or property;
- the resident is high risk;
- there is an immediate threat to the resident's safety;
- weather or environmental conditions create increased risk;
- the resident may be near traffic or another significant hazard; or
- the Incident Commander determines police assistance is warranted.

Administrative approval is **not required** before calling 911.

7.2 External Search

Where safe and appropriate, limited staff may search:

- Strathmere Lodge grounds;
- parking areas;
- immediate sidewalks;

- immediately adjacent areas.

Staff shall:

- carry a communication device;
- remain in communication with the Home;
- work in pairs where practical;
- avoid placing themselves at risk;
- follow police direction once police assume coordination of the external search.

Staff shall **not** conduct extensive off-site searches that compromise resident care within the Home.

7.3 Information for Police

The Home shall provide police with available information including:

- resident's legal name;
- preferred name;
- recent photograph;
- age/date of birth;
- physical description;
- clothing;
- mobility;
- cognition;
- communication abilities;
- medical concerns;
- medications presenting an urgent time-sensitive concern;
- behaviour or exit-seeking history;
- time and location last seen;
- likely destinations;
- family information;
- languages spoken;
- previous missing resident incidents.

Use **Appendix B – Missing Resident Information Form**.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Incident Commander / Charge Nurse

- Activate Code Yellow (paging via The Lodge public address system).
- Determine risk.
- Organize and coordinate the search.
- Assign search areas.
- Ensure 911 is called when required.
- Notify leadership.
- Maintain communication with police.
- Ensure resident care continues.
- Maintain incident documentation.
- Terminate Code Yellow (paging via The Lodge public address system).

8.2 Registered Staff

- Participate in immediate verification.
- Provide resident-specific clinical information.
- Search assigned areas.
- Maintain care of other residents.
- Assess the resident when located.
- Complete clinical documentation.

8.3 Personal Support Workers

- Search assigned areas.
- Provide information regarding when and where the resident was last seen.
- Maintain supervision and care of residents.
- immediately report search findings.

8.4 Reception/Ward Clerk

When staffed:

- monitor the main entrance;
- provide information regarding visitors or resident departures;
- assist with communications;
- direct responding police to the Incident Commander;
- prevent unnecessary disruption at the entrance.

8.5 Recreation

- Check activity areas and scheduled programs.
- Confirm whether the resident participated in activities or outings.
- Search assigned areas.
- provide information regarding the resident's routines and preferred destinations.

8.6 Environmental Services / Maintenance

- Search assigned service and building areas.
- check exterior areas as directed;
- assist with access to secured or restricted areas;
- provide building information to police;
- review applicable security systems when directed and available.

8.7 Administrator / DRC

- provide leadership support;
 - assist with police and external agency coordination;
 - ensure regulatory (e.g., Ministry of Long-Term Care) reporting;
 - support communication with the SDM/family;
 - coordinate follow-up and corrective actions.
-

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS

9.1 Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) / Family

The resident's SDM/family shall be notified promptly once Code Yellow is activated.

Ask whether they know:

- where the resident may go;
- places important to the resident;
- former addresses;
- previous workplaces;
- preferred stores, churches or community locations;
- people the resident may attempt to visit;
- other information that could assist the search.

9.2 Leadership

Notify:

- Administrator; and
- Director of Resident Care or designate.

Leadership notification shall **not delay police notification**.

9.3 Ongoing Communication

Ongoing communication shall be provided to affected residents, SDMs, staff and other required parties at:

- activation;
- significant changes in status; and
- conclusion of the emergency.

Information shall be factual and protect resident privacy.

10. WHEN THE RESIDENT IS LOCATED

10.1 Confirm Identity

Confirm that the person located is the missing resident.

10.2 Immediate Safety Assessment

Determine whether emergency medical assistance is required.

Call 911 where warranted.

10.3 Return to the Home

When the resident returns to Strathmere Lodge, registered staff shall complete an appropriate assessment including, as clinically indicated:

- vital signs;
- physical assessment;
- injury assessment;
- pain;
- hydration;
- exposure to heat or cold;
- mental status/cognition;
- emotional state;
- falls or possible trauma;
- need for physician/Nurse Practitioner (NP) assessment;

- need for increased observation.

10.4 Hospital Transfer

Where the resident requires hospital assessment:

- provide appropriate clinical information;
- transfer required documentation;
- notify the SDM/family;
- notify the physician/NP as appropriate;
- document the transfer and resident status.

10.5 Code Yellow All Clear

When the resident has been safely located and the Incident Commander determines the search may end, announce:

“Code Yellow – All Clear.....Code Yellow – All Clear.”

Notify:

- police;
 - SDM/family;
 - Administrator/DRC;
 - other external organizations contacted during the search.
-

11. DOCUMENTATION AND REGULATORY REPORTING

The Incident Commander and registered staff shall ensure appropriate documentation of:

- time resident identified as missing;
- time and location last seen;
- Code Yellow activation;
- search activities;
- staff involved;
- police notification;
- SDM/family notification;
- leadership notification;
- time and location resident found;
- resident condition;
- assessment and treatment;
- hospital transfer, where applicable;

- termination of Code Yellow.

An incident report shall be completed.

Required Ministry of Long-Term Care reporting shall be completed in accordance with current legislative and regulatory requirements.

At minimum:

- a resident missing for **three hours or more** requires immediate notification to the Ministry;
- a missing resident who returns with **an injury or adverse change in condition**, regardless of how long they were missing, requires immediate Ministry notification; and
- a resident missing for **less than three hours who returns without injury or adverse change in condition** is reportable to the Ministry no later than one business day after the occurrence.

Where immediate reporting is required after normal business hours, the Ministry's prescribed after-hours reporting process shall be followed.

12. RECOVERY AND FOLLOW-UP

Following a Code Yellow, the Home shall:

- ensure the resident is clinically stable;
- provide reassurance and emotional support;
- communicate with the SDM/family;
- restore normal operations;
- debrief affected residents, SDMs, staff, volunteers and students as applicable;
- provide support to persons experiencing distress;
- review the circumstances contributing to the incident;
- determine whether additional preventative measures are required.

12.1 Resident-Specific Review

The interdisciplinary team shall review the resident's plan of care following the incident.

Consider:

- exit-seeking behaviour;
- wandering patterns;
- triggers;

- cognition;
- communication;
- mobility;
- supervision requirements;
- environmental strategies;
- meaningful activities;
- technology or alerting systems;
- family/SDM input;
- effectiveness of existing interventions.

Changes to the plan of care shall be communicated to relevant staff.

12.2 Operational Review

Review:

- how quickly the absence was identified;
- Code Yellow activation;
- effectiveness of the search;
- staff deployment;
- police notification;
- communication;
- security systems;
- documentation;
- opportunities for improvement.

Corrective actions shall be assigned and tracked to completion.

13. TRAINING, TESTING AND REVIEW

Staff, volunteers and students shall receive education regarding the Missing Resident Response Plan appropriate to their responsibilities:

- before performing their responsibilities; and
- at least annually thereafter.

The Missing Resident Response Plan shall be **tested at least annually**.

Exercises may test:

- identification of a missing resident;

- activation of Code Yellow;
- Incident Command;
- systematic searching;
- staff accountability for assigned search areas;
- police notification;
- communications;
- resident recovery and assessment.

A written record shall be maintained of testing and improvements made to the Plan.

The Plan shall be evaluated and updated:

- at least annually; and
- within 30 days following an activation of the emergency plan.

APPENDIX A

CODE YELLOW – QUICK RESPONSE GUIDE

RESIDENT CANNOT BE LOCATED

1. VERIFY – QUICKLY

- Last seen where/when?
- Signed out?
- Appointment?
- Recreation?
- Hairdresser?
- Chapel?
- Visiting another resident?

Do not allow verification to delay the search.

2. ACTIVATE

CODE YELLOW

Charge Nurse assumes Incident Command.

3. SEARCH

Resident Home Area → Whole Home → Grounds/immediate exterior

Assign specific areas.

Record areas searched.

Maintain adequate staff for resident care.

4. CALL 911

Immediately if:

- resident likely left the Home/property;
- resident is high risk;
- immediate danger exists;
- weather/environment increases risk; or
- police assistance is otherwise warranted.

Do not wait for administrative authorization to call 911.

5. NOTIFY

- SDM/family
- Administrator
- DRC

6. WHEN FOUND

- Confirm identity.
- Assess resident.
- Treat/transfer if required.
- Notify police and SDM/family.
- Announce **Code Yellow – All Clear**.
- Complete documentation/reporting.
- Review plan of care.

APPENDIX B

MISSING RESIDENT INFORMATION FORM

Resident Name: _____

Preferred Name / Responds To: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Resident Home Area: _____

Recent Photograph Attached/Available: Yes / No

Physical Description

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Hair: _____

Eyes: _____

Clothing when last seen:

Mobility / Assistive Device:

Communication

Primary Language: _____

Other Languages: _____

Communication Considerations:

Clinical / Safety Information

Cognitive Status:

Urgent Medical Concerns:

Time-Sensitive Medication/Treatment:

Known Wandering / Exit-Seeking Behaviour:

Missing Resident Information

Date: _____

Time Last Seen: _____

Location Last Seen: _____

Last Seen By: _____

Possible Destination(s):

Previous Missing Resident Locations:

Contact

SDM / Family: _____

Telephone: _____

Police Incident Number: _____

APPENDIX C

MISSING RESIDENT SEARCH CHECKLIST

Resident: _____

Code Yellow Activated: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Incident Commander: _____

Immediate Verification

- Sign-out/leave information checked
- Appointments checked
- Recreation/activity schedule checked
- Hairdresser checked
- Chapel checked
- Other Resident Home Areas contacted

Internal Search

Search assignments shall be adapted to the areas of the Home and staffing available at the time.

At minimum, confirm search of:

- Resident's bedroom and bathroom
- Resident's own Resident Home Area
- Other Resident Home Areas
- Common areas
- Chapel
- Rose Room
- Recreation areas
- Hair salon
- Garden/balcony areas
- Stairwells
- Elevators
- Accessible offices/service areas
- Basement/support areas where applicable
- Vestibules and exits

Exterior

- Immediate grounds
- Staff parking area
- Visitor parking area
- Building perimeter
- Immediate sidewalks/adjacent areas

Notifications

911: Time _____

SDM/Family: Time _____

Administrator: Time _____

DRC: Time _____

Ministry: Time _____ / N/A

Resident Located

Time: _____

Location: _____

Condition: _____

Assessment Completed By: _____

Code Yellow All Clear: Time _____

Incident Report Completed: Yes / No

Plan of Care Review Initiated: Yes / No