

STRATHMERE LODGE

Emergency Management Program

GAS LEAK EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Original Date: June 19, 2017

Reviewed/Revised Date: August 24, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Scope**
- 3. Definition and Guiding Principles**
- 4. Recognition of a Suspected Gas Leak**
- 5. Plan Activation and Incident Command**
- 6. Immediate Response – Internal Gas Leak**
- 7. External Gas Leak**
- 8. Evacuation and Resident Protection**
- 9. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 10. Communications and Notifications**
- 11. Re-Entry and Recovery**
- 12. Documentation and Reporting**
- 13. Training, Testing and Review**

- Appendix A – Gas Leak Quick Response Guide**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to establish a safe, rapid and coordinated response to an actual or suspected gas leak affecting Strathmere Lodge.

The Plan is intended to:

- protect residents, staff, visitors and others from fire, explosion and exposure hazards;
 - ensure immediate notification of emergency responders;
 - prevent actions that could ignite escaping gas;
 - provide for safe evacuation, relocation or shelter-in-place as appropriate;
 - maintain essential resident care during the emergency; and
 - support safe recovery and restoration of operations.
-

2. SCOPE

This Plan applies to an actual or suspected release of natural gas or another combustible gas:

- within Strathmere Lodge;
- within building mechanical or service areas;
- immediately outside the building;
- involving the gas service supplying the Home; or
- originating elsewhere in the community where the release may affect Strathmere Lodge.

Chemical or hazardous material releases other than combustible gas shall be managed under the applicable **Chemical Spills Emergency Response Plan**.

Loss of natural gas service without evidence of a leak shall be managed under the **Loss of Essential Services Emergency Response Plan**.

3. DEFINITION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Gas Leak

For the purpose of this Plan, a gas leak is an actual or suspected uncontrolled release of natural gas or another combustible gas that may create a fire, explosion, asphyxiation or other health and safety hazard.

3.2 Guiding Principles

Treat suspected gas seriously.

Staff do not need to confirm the presence of gas before initiating protective action.

Do not investigate.

Staff shall not search for the source of a suspected significant gas leak.

Avoid potential ignition sources.

In or near the suspected affected area, staff shall not intentionally:

- turn electrical switches on or off;
- plug in or unplug electrical equipment;
- operate equipment that could create a spark;
- light matches, lighters or other flames;
- smoke or permit smoking; or
- undertake repairs.

Call 911 from a safe location.

Emergency response shall not be delayed while attempting to contact management or determine the cause.

Protect residents first.

Resident relocation or evacuation shall be based on the location and severity of the suspected leak and direction from emergency responders (e.g., Fire Department).

4. RECOGNITION OF A SUSPECTED GAS LEAK

Indicators may include:

- characteristic natural gas/rotten egg odour;
- hissing or unusual sounds near gas equipment or piping;
- damaged gas piping or equipment;
- activation of applicable detection equipment;
- information from the gas utility, Fire Services, municipality or other emergency authority;
- unexplained symptoms among multiple persons in an affected area; or
- other circumstances suggesting a gas release.

Any staff member detecting or suspecting a gas leak shall **immediately report the concern and initiate protective action.**

Staff shall not attempt to confirm the leak by deliberately approaching or searching the suspected area.

5. PLAN ACTIVATION AND INCIDENT COMMAND

5.1 Activation

Upon notification of a suspected gas leak, the Charge Nurse (RN) shall initiate the emergency response.

911 shall be called immediately where a gas leak is suspected within the building, immediately adjacent to the building, or otherwise presents an immediate threat.

Administrative authorization is not required before calling 911.

5.2 Incident Command

The Charge Nurse (RN) shall assume initial Incident Command until relieved by the Administrator or designate.

The Incident Commander shall:

- ensure 911 has been contacted;
- identify the known or suspected affected area without unnecessarily entering it;
- initiate protective actions;
- coordinate temporary resident relocation or evacuation;
- ensure resident accountability;
- maintain essential resident care;
- notify appropriate leadership;
- coordinate with Fire Services and other responding agencies;

- ensure staff do not re-enter unsafe areas; and
 - coordinate recovery (normalized operations) when the hazard has been cleared.
-

6. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE – INTERNAL GAS LEAK

Any person detecting or suspecting gas inside the Home shall:

1. WARN

Immediately warn persons in the immediate area.

2. LEAVE THE AFFECTED AREA

Move away from the suspected leak.

Assist residents to leave the immediate affected area where this can be done safely.

3. AVOID IGNITION SOURCES

Do not:

- operate electrical switches;
- use equipment that may produce a spark;
- use an open flame;
- attempt to operate or shut down gas equipment unless specifically trained, authorized and it is safe to do so.

4. CALL 911

Call from a safe location.

Provide:

- Strathmere Lodge's name and address;
- location of the suspected leak;
- what was observed or smelled;
- whether residents are being relocated or evacuated;
- known injuries or symptoms.

5. NOTIFY

Notify the Charge Nurse as soon as safely possible.

6. RESTRICT ACCESS

Prevent persons from unnecessarily entering the affected area.

7. FOLLOW FIRE SERVICES DIRECTION

Fire Services shall determine appropriate hazard control measures and whether further evacuation is required.

7. EXTERNAL GAS LEAK

A gas leak may originate outside Strathmere Lodge as a result of:

- damaged underground gas infrastructure;
- construction activity;
- vehicle impact;
- nearby building or utility emergency; or
- another community incident (e.g., train derailment).

Where Strathmere Lodge is notified of an external gas leak, the Incident Commander shall determine protective actions in consultation with Fire Services, the gas utility, police or other appropriate emergency authorities.

Depending on the circumstances, protective actions may include:

- remaining inside the Home;
- closing exterior doors and windows;
- restricting access to affected exterior areas;
- modifying ventilation where specifically directed and technically appropriate;
- relocating residents away from the affected side of the building;
- avoiding the affected exterior area;
- preparing for evacuation; or
- evacuating the Home.

Staff shall not automatically evacuate residents toward an external gas hazard.

The location of the release, wind direction, emergency responder instructions and resident safety shall inform the response.

8. EVACUATION AND RESIDENT PROTECTION

8.1 Immediate Area

Residents in the immediate affected area shall be moved away from the suspected hazard where safe to do so.

8.2 Partial Evacuation

Where the suspected leak is confined to a particular area, residents may be relocated to a safe area of the building as directed by the Incident Commander or Fire Services.

8.3 Building Evacuation

Where Fire Services determines that continued occupancy is unsafe, activate the **Evacuation Emergency Response Plan**.

Resident evacuation shall:

- prioritize immediate life safety;
- account for resident mobility and clinical needs;
- maintain Resident Home Area groupings where practical;
- ensure resident accountability;
- maintain medications and essential clinical supports where circumstances permit.

8.4 Assembly Location

The normal external assembly location shall **not automatically be used** where it is within or potentially downwind of the gas hazard.

The Incident Commander and Fire Services shall determine a safe assembly location appropriate to the circumstances.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Charge Nurse / Incident Commander

- Ensure 911 notification.
- Establish Incident Command.
- Determine immediate protective actions.
- Coordinate resident relocation.
- Maintain resident accountability.
- Notify Administrator/Director of Resident Care (DRC).

- Liaise with Fire Services.
- Activate related emergency plans where required.

9.2 Registered Staff

- Maintain resident care.
- Identify residents requiring priority assistance.
- Assist with relocation/evacuation.
- Monitor residents for symptoms.
- Maintain access to essential medications and clinical supplies where safely possible.

9.3 Personal Support Workers

- Assist residents away from the affected area.
- Provide reassurance.
- Maintain resident supervision.
- Report resident symptoms or safety concerns immediately.
- Assist with resident accountability.

9.4 Environmental Services / Maintenance

- Provide building and utility information to Fire Services.
- Identify gas service and mechanical system information when requested.
- Assist emergency responders with access to appropriate areas.
- Coordinate with qualified contractors and the gas utility.
- **Do not attempt repairs or enter an unsafe area.**

9.5 Reception/Ward Clerk

When staffed:

- direct responding emergency personnel to the Incident Commander;
- restrict visitors from entering affected areas;
- assist with communications as directed.

9.6 All Staff

- Follow emergency instructions.
 - Do not enter or re-enter restricted areas.
 - Avoid ignition sources.
 - Maintain resident safety.
 - Report changes in conditions immediately.
-

10. COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS

The Incident Commander shall ensure appropriate notification of:

- 911 / Fire Services;
- Administrator;
- Director of Resident Care;
- Environmental Services Manager;
- gas utility or qualified service provider, normally in coordination with Fire Services;
- other external agencies as required.

Where residents are significantly affected or relocated, appropriate communication shall be provided to residents and Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs)/families.

Communication shall be factual and based on confirmed information.

Where the incident affects the surrounding community, Strathmere Lodge shall monitor and follow instructions from municipal and provincial emergency authorities.

11. RE-ENTRY AND RECOVERY

Residents and staff shall **not return to an evacuated or restricted area until the appropriate authority confirms that it is safe to do so.**

Depending on the circumstances, clearance may involve:

- Fire Services;
- the gas utility;
- qualified technicians/contractors; and
- Strathmere Lodge Environmental Services.

Before normal operations resume:

- confirm the affected area is safe;
- confirm gas equipment/service is safe to operate;
- assess other building systems;
- identify any damage;
- restore resident care and services;
- return relocated residents when appropriate;
- replenish emergency supplies;
- communicate the all-clear.

Where gas service remains unavailable, activate the **Loss of Essential Services Response Plan** as necessary.

12. DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

The Incident Commander shall ensure documentation of:

- date and time the suspected leak was identified;
- location;
- circumstances/observations;
- 911 notification;
- protective actions;
- areas evacuated or relocated;
- resident accountability;
- emergency responder direction;
- injuries or adverse resident effects;
- leadership and family/SDM notifications where applicable;
- re-entry authorization;
- recovery activities.

Resident-specific clinical effects and interventions shall be documented in the resident's health record.

An incident report shall be completed as required.

The Administrator/DRC shall determine whether Ministry of Long-Term Care or other external reporting requirements apply based on the circumstances and impact of the incident.

13. TRAINING, TESTING AND REVIEW

Staff, volunteers and students shall receive education regarding their responsibilities under this Plan appropriate to their responsibilities and before performing those responsibilities, and at least annually thereafter.

Education shall emphasize:

- recognition of a suspected gas leak;
- immediate notification;

- avoidance of ignition sources;
- not investigating the source;
- resident relocation;
- evacuation;
- 911/Fire Services involvement.

The Gas Leak Response Plan shall be tested in accordance with applicable legislative requirements and the Home's Emergency Exercise Schedule.

Testing may use a scenario such as:

“Natural gas odour detected in a Resident Home Area during the evening shift requiring immediate relocation and Fire Services response.”

The exercise should assess:

- recognition;
- notification;
- Incident Command;
- resident relocation;
- resident accountability;
- Fire Services access;
- communication; and
- coordination with related emergency plans.

The Plan shall be evaluated following an activation or exercise and revised where required.

APPENDIX A

GAS LEAK – QUICK RESPONSE GUIDE

SUSPECT OR SMELL GAS?

1. WARN & MOVE

Leave the affected area.

Assist residents away from the immediate hazard where safe.

2. DO NOT

- Investigate the source.
- Operate electrical switches.
- Plug/unplug equipment.
- Use flames.
- Smoke.
- Attempt repairs.

3. CALL 911

From a safe location.

Administrative authorization is not required to call 911.

4. NOTIFY

Charge Nurse

Charge Nurse assumes initial Incident Command.

5. PROTECT RESIDENTS

As appropriate:

Relocate → Partially Evacuate → Evacuate

Follow Fire Services direction.

6. ACCOUNT

Account for residents who have been relocated or evacuated.

7. DO NOT RE-ENTER

Wait for authorization from Fire Services/appropriate authorities.

8. RECOVER

- Assess residents.
- Restore services.
- Notify affected SDMs/families as appropriate.
- Document.
- Review the incident.

EXTERNAL GAS LEAK

Do not automatically evacuate outside.

Follow emergency authority direction regarding:

Shelter-in-place / ventilation / relocation / evacuation.