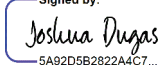




Emergency Response Codes Policy

Effective Date 08/24/2026
Revised 08/24/2026

Signed by:

Joshua Dugas, MBA, REHS, Acting Director

Policy It is the policy of the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to respond immediately and appropriately to emergency situations involving or affecting DBH workforce members, clients, and/or DBH locations.

Purpose To provide a uniform procedure for Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) workforce members to follow when responding to emergency situations that may occur at DBH locations.

Definitions **Active Shooter:** One or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area utilizing projectile weapons.

Acts of Violence: Any direct, indirect, implied, potential, or actual act, threat, or circumstance involving violent behavior from any person directed toward another person, that occurs at a DBH facility or in connection with the conduct of DBH business, regardless of location.

Assault: The act of threatening or attempting to cause physical harm. Assault may include verbal threats, menacing gestures, or attempt to physically harm and does not result in physical contact.

Building Emergency Coordinator: The highest-ranking official assigned at their DBH location. They lead the overall emergency response and make the final decisions for all the occupants within their DBH facility, may deactivate an Emergency Response Code (ERC) when the emergency has concluded.

Code Amber – Missing Person: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates a person has gone missing and a soft lockdown will be enacted, and a search for the missing person will take place.

Code Blue – Medical Emergency: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates a person needs immediate medical attention.

Code Grey – Threatening Person: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates a person is creating a hostile situation that may lead to an act of violence or committing battery.

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Emergency Response Codes Policy, Continued

Definitions, continued

Code Red – Evacuation: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates the facility is unsafe and all occupants must evacuate the building.

Code Silver – Person with a Weapon: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates a person is armed with a weapon (projectile, blunt, or sharp) and is using the weapon to cause harm to another or with intention to kill.

Code White – Lockdown: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates the building will need to have all entry and exit ways locked to prevent entry into the building due to a threat to life outside of the building or around the surrounding area.

Code Yellow – Bomb Threat: A part of the emergency response codes. When announced, indicates a bomb threat has been received and that all building occupants shall refrain from using cell phones or radios.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP): A document required by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) that outlines procedures for responding to emergencies at all DBH sites, including how to activate ERCs, what the procedure is for each ERC, reporting methods, site-specific evacuation routes, critical operations, and workforce members responsibilities.

Emergency Response Codes (ERCs): Standardized method for communicating types of emergencies by utilizing color-coded alerts throughout DBH facilities.

Location Safety Coordinator (LSC): Appointed or volunteer DBH workforce members who primarily lead their sites safety team by selecting safety positions, training workforce members on their assigned safety position responsibilities, conducting safety drills, providing support during emergencies, and overseeing safety issues at their site.

Safe Haven Room: A room without windows and locks on all doors. It is designated for use when sheltering in place is necessary to protect workforce members, clients, and members of the public from an immediate threat.

Security Assessment: A comprehensive evaluation of the existing security measures and vulnerabilities at a specific location.

Threat: A willful act in which a person expresses an intention to cause death or inflict serious bodily injury upon another person or group of persons. A threat may be communicated verbally, in writing, electronically, or by any other means.

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Emergency Response Codes Policy, Continued

Definitions, continued

Violence: Physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm, often resulting in physical and/or psychological damage.

Workplace Violence: Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite.

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan: A plan developed by Risk Management and implemented by DBH that supports a work environment in which violent or potentially violent situations are effectively addressed, with a focus on prevention by increasing employee understanding of the nature of workplace violence, how to respond to it, and how to prevent it.

San Bernardino County Zero Tolerance Policy

The County of San Bernardino has a zero-tolerance policy regarding violence in the workplace which states, in part, the following:

- Threats, assault, and any acts of violence, implied, actual, direct, or indirect, will be reported in accordance with the law, which states victims have the right to file legal charges against perpetrators of violence or threats of violence.
 - Clients who violate this zero-tolerance policy are at risk of termination of services.
 - Workforce members who violate this zero-tolerance policy are at risk of disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, as specified in referenced County policy.
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Emergency Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a Cal/Osha requirement for which a written plan is developed as part of the Office of Disaster and Safety program to prepare, react, and respond to emergencies at DBH facilities. Each site's EAP will be available to all workforce members to ensure everyone has knowledge on emergency procedures.

The EAP contains the following information to assist workforce members when responding to emergencies:

- List of names and contacts that are involved in emergency situations including but not limited to Building Emergency Coordinator, Location Safety Coordinator, Building Manager, Door Monitors, Stair Monitors, Medical Assistance Team, Zone Coordinator, Runner, ADA Assistance workforce members, Crisis Response Team, Traffic Control, Supervisors, DBH workforce members, DBH guests, and DBH clients.
 - Descriptions of each safety position and their corresponding responsibilities during different types of emergencies activated through DBH Emergency Response Codes.
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Emergency Response Codes Policy, Continued

Emergency Action Plan, continued

- Emergency evacuation routes and designated assembly area maps specific to each DBH facility.
- Procedures for DBH workforce members, guests, clients, and individuals assigned safety positions to follow during and after emergencies activated in accordance with the specific Emergency Response Code;
- Procedures for DBH workforce members to follow when emergency situations occur including, missing person, medical emergency, threatening person, evacuations, person with a weapon, lock down, and bomb threat emergencies.
- Procedures to account for all workforce members during and after emergencies.
- Procedures for the after-action reporting process.

Note: The list of names of workforce members assigned to each safety position mentioned above are maintained in the annexed EAP form titled *On-Site Safety Team*. The form will be updated regularly by the Location Safety Coordinator (LSC) and Building Emergency Coordinator (BEC) whenever staffing changes occur to ensure the accuracy of on-site workforce members assignments and to ensure that all necessary safety positions remain filled.

Emergency Response Codes (ERC)

The Emergency Response Codes (ERC) system provides DBH workforce members with a consistent approach to notification of potential and/or actual emergencies occurring in/at DBH buildings. The ERC system is utilized to effectively communicate an emergency occurring in the workplace to prompt an appropriate response from workforce members. The ERC system utilizes color codes associated with specific types of emergencies. (See definition block).

Note: Additional detailed information on the ERCs activation, procedures, and each safety positions roles in that code can be found in the **Emergency Response Codes Guidelines** located on the Disaster and Safety website and the Manuals and Forms section of the DBH internal website.

Note: No other alerts or code phrases are to be used in DBH facilities for the conditions/incidents listed above.

Co-Located Clinics – Emergency Response Codes

DBH workforce members assigned to DBH clinics located within facilities co-located with other County department clinics will become familiar with the additional emergency codes used by those departments, including, but not limited to, ARMC Alerts and Public Health Alerts.

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Emergency Response Codes Policy, Continued

Workforce Members Assigned to and Located at Other Departments

DBH workforce members assigned to other department or agency locations will follow the alert system for their respective locations.

Emergency Response Training

The Office of Disaster and Safety will oversee creating and providing trainings to all DBH workforce members on the ERCs. Additionally, each DBH Supervisor/Manager, Building Emergency Coordinator, Location Safety Coordinator (LSC), or designee are responsible for coordinating and training employees on the ERCs and their site's EAP.

The Location Safety Coordinator Chairperson will ensure the following:

- Location Safety Coordinators receive regular trainings related to their duties;
 - The LSC(s) provide training to individuals assigned to safety positions regarding their roles and responsibilities.
 - The trained LSC(s), with the support of their site's Building Emergency Coordinator, conduct regular meetings with their on-site safety team to ensure they understand their roles, duties, and how to appropriately respond to each ERC.
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Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training

The Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training is provided to DBH workforce members to assist them in dealing with assaultive behavior situations. Enrollment may be completed through Learning Essentials. The training is intended to ensure workforce members are able to:

- Respond effectively to warning signs that someone is beginning to lose control or escalate;
 - Avoid and take control of an out-of-control situations;
 - Remain calm and confident, instead of fearful and confused, and
 - Promote everyone's safety, welfare, care and security at all times.
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Reporting Incidents

For procedures involving Workplace Violence including how to report and the follow-up process to an incident, refer to DBH's **Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Policy (SFT7015)**, and **Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Procedure (SFT7015-1)**.

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Emergency Response Codes Policy, Continued

Related Policy or Procedure

San Bernardino County Policy Manual

- Violence and Threats in the Workplace - Zero Tolerance Policy (No. 13-07)

DBH Standard Practice Manual and Departmental Forms:

- Bomb Threat Checklist (SFT050)
- Duty to Protect Policy (CLP0819)
- Duty to Protect Procedure (CLP0819-1)
- Root Cause Analysis Policy (MDS2034)
- Possession of a Weapon Policy (SFT7010)
- Possession of a Weapon Procedure (SFT7010-1)
- Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Policy (SFT7015)
- Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Procedure (SFT7015-1)
- Occupational Injury or Illness Reporting Procedure (SFT7020)

References

- Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2004, *Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care & Social Services Workers*.
- California Labor Code, § 6332
- Emergency Response Guidelines