
HEMBC and VCH Townhall FAQ Sheet

On January 30, 2025, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Health Emergency Management BC (HEMBC) co-facilitated a Townhall to introduce HEMBC and the emergency management services now available to contracted providers. Below are answers to the questions raised during the Townhall.

For any additional questions, please contact the VCH Regional Team at luc-al-connections@vch.ca or HEMBC at vch.phc.vc.ltc@phsa.ca

Where can I find the resources and templates that HEMBC develops for contracted providers?

HEMBC provides resources and templates for contracted providers on its website at:
<http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/health-emergency-management-bc>

Health authority specific tools for VCH contracted providers can be found at:
[Long-term care and assisted living resources for operators | Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

Materials can also be requested via email at vch.phc.vc.ltc@phsa.ca.

What are colour codes/unit department plans (UDP)s?

Colour codes and UDPs are emergency response plans and procedures that the health authorities use to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency events while ensuring the continuity of health services. HEMBC follows the BC Ministry of Health standardized hospital colour codes that advise staff of an emergency situation while minimizing stress and preventing panic among visitors and residents. Examples of common code procedures include: Code Yellow – Missing Patient/Resident, Code Red – Fire, Code Green – evacuation and Code Grey – Infrastructure failure.

Does each LTC/AL home need colour codes and UDPs?

LTC/AL homes are required to have a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan as mandated by the Community Care and Assisted Living Act. While colour codes and UDPs are not mandatory components of each LTC/AL home, HEMBC highly recommends implementing them to enhance emergency preparedness. The codes can improve response efficiency and clarity during critical situations and ensure a coordinated effort across teams. For those interested, HEMBC provides easy-to-complete templates for use by providers.

Is HEMBC able to provide colour code training for contracted providers?

HEMBC provides training on **non-clinical codes** that do not warrant a clinical response (such as Code Green – evacuation and Code Grey – System Failure) and ensures that training materials are available alongside the codes. While HEMBC will prioritize online sessions for many contracted providers to attend, individual in-person session will be assessed by the VCH LTC/AL Program.

What is an emergency operation centre (EOC)? Do I need one?

An EOC is a system that is activated to respond to and coordinate actions during an emergency. It serves as a coordination space for decision-making, information sharing, and resource management. The EOC ensures that all parties involved in an emergency work in alignment and streamlines flow of information, communication and resources.

HEMBC supports providers to create and operate an effective EOC through a suite of tools, templates, and guides, that are specifically designed to be adapted and tailored for site unique needs and challenges.

Can HEMBC provide training on emergency operation centres (EOC)s and the incident command response model?

Yes. HEMBC has educational materials on EOCs and the Incident Command System. These materials can be adapted and used in training sessions for contracted providers.

In an emergency, how can contracted providers reach HEMBC?

In the event of an emergency, contracted providers should call the **VCH General Licensing Intake Line at 604-675-3800**. This line is monitored during business hours and connects to the VCH Administrator On-Call (AOC) after hours. VCH will coordinate with HEMBC as necessary.

Will HEMBC provide support for the Sunshine Coast and other remote communities for evacuation processes?

Yes. HEMBC supports evacuation planning for the Sunshine Coast and other remote communities and already has experience working with health authority-owned and operated sites. HEMBC prioritizes remote support with these communities and requests for in-person support will be assessed by the VCH Long-term Care and Assisted Living Program.