

West Neighbourhood House	
Policy Title:	Emergency Response Policy
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	January 2004 as Unpredictable Events Policy
Revision dates:	December 2010 / March 2013 / March 2014 / April 2017 / March 2021 / February 2026

Policy Statement

West Neighbourhood House is committed to minimizing risk and protecting the health and safety of staff, participants, and community members during an emergency. This policy aims to balance risk with the service needs of the community, especially essential services.

In the event of an emergency, West Neighbourhood House commits to:

- Make every reasonable effort to maintain provision of essential services even when West Neighbourhood House locations need to be closed temporarily.
- Keep programs and services available and open during regular scheduled hours as appropriate to the circumstance.
- Provide service availability status updates to the community and program participants.
- Respond to a community crisis as appropriate and reasonably practicable; and
- On a case-by-case basis, determine the closure of West Neighbourhood House locations and/or services.

Declaring an Emergency

The Executive Director or designate in consultation with the Management Team has the sole authority to declare an Emergency. The President of the Board will be informed as soon as possible after an emergency is declared. Once an emergency is declared, the Emergency Response Plan will be activated.

The Emergency Response Plan

The West Neighbourhood House Emergency Response Plan (ERP) outlines West Neighbourhood House’s procedures for organizing, coordinating and directing available resources toward the mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in the event of an emergency. West Neighbourhood House will monitor and evaluate the ERP within defined review cycles to ensure that the ERP remains effective.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, West Neighbourhood House may prepare an emergency-specific plan to complement this policy and/or the ERP.

Applicability

- Staff
- Program Participants
- Volunteers
- Placement Students
- Community groups/Tenants who utilize West Neighbourhood House space for events
- Contractors

Definitions

Emergency: an event, condition or circumstance that creates a risk of serious harm to people or substantial damage to property.

Essential Services

All West Neighbourhood House programs are important services; however, some programs are deemed “essential services”. These are:

- Home Support Services
- Home at Last
- Meals-on-Wheels
- Payroll
- Supportive Housing/Assisted Living
- The Meeting Place
- Violence Against Women (Women’s Empowerment)

Other services and programs may be deemed essential on a permanent or temporary basis by the Executive Director or designate.

During times of emergencies, any available employees may be re-deployed to provide assistance in order to keep these programs operational.