



# CODE BLUE

## Sample Procedures for Life Threatening Medical Emergency Response

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## **General Emergency Drill Guidelines**

Regular and unannounced emergency drills are useful practices in maintaining a high level of emergency readiness throughout the YMCA and in each department. Drills should be planned by the Executive Director or designee to test a different department's response each month. The fewer people that know about a planned drill, the more effective the drill will be. These drills should be conducted to compliment each department's monthly in-service training. Drills should be executed at different times of the day and week. High usage times should not be avoided. All drills should be documented by an observer to record results and for later review. After the drill is run, the procedures should be reviewed and analyzed to determine effectiveness and modified if necessary.

Staff actions in emergency situations are critical and time is of the essence. Water emergencies are among the most critical emergency situations in YMCA programs as suffocation by drowning compounds all other causes and conditions. While YMCAs tend to focus efforts only on aquatic emergency preparedness, statistics show that cardiac arrests occur more often in fitness centers. Every department must have a comprehensive site-specific emergency action plan that clearly defines roles for each staff member. As each department develops and modifies its own site-specific emergency action plan, consideration must be given to keeping all emergency action plans as similar as possible. This facilitates a coordinated training design that is easier for all to learn and remember. Various scenarios should be utilized for rehearsals of the emergency action plan.

Emergency action plans should be included in all New Staff Orientations and in-service trainings. A record of participation should be maintained in each staff member's personnel file. Local emergency personnel should review the emergency action plan to ensure effectiveness and compliance with local protocols. It is important to follow as much of the emergency action plan as possible during a drill to ensure that all components are effective.

### **Code Blue**

Every YMCA should have a well rehearsed life threatening emergency response plan that works anytime, anywhere in the facility.

Code Blue is drawn from a medical model. An example would be a hospital patient "Coding" – no breathing, no pulse. The patient's skin would become blue or ashen – hence Code Blue. Code Blue and the room number would be announced over the hospital public address system. Appropriate staff and Doctors would immediately drop what they are doing and would respond with the Crash Cart to the coding patient.

Many YMCAs have implemented a life threatening emergency response systems designed for aquatic emergencies. Few YMCAs have a life threatening emergency response system designed to get immediate trained help and rescue equipment to a victim anywhere in the facility in a timely manner; swimming pool, child-care, fitness center, aerobics center, courts, locker rooms, spa facilities, outdoor playgrounds and camps etc.

Code Blue in a YMCA setting is designed to quickly summon all available staff and emergency equipment to a victim, anywhere within the facility, whose condition is believed to be life threatening. Code Blue is not designed to replace the current emergency action plans within specific facilities or programs. i.e.: Fitness Center. It is designed to better manage the process of effective activation of the branch-wide emergency action plan, including calling 911 and getting trained help and emergency equipment to the site of the emergency in a timely manner.

### **Critical elements for effective Code Blue procedures:**

Minimum staff requirements: *varies by location*

- Member service desk (MSD) representative – Stays at the MSD at all times, manages the 911 call, the PA system and communications.
- Custodian/Maintenance - Meets and directs EMS to the emergency site. Unlocks doors and provides access.
- Life guard - Handles pool emergencies and assists in other emergencies once the pool is secured.
- Fitness Staff - Handles fitness emergencies and responds immediately to all other life threatening emergencies.

Communication system:

- An alarm activation system in each section of the facility; pool, gym, courts, child-care with an enunciator at the service desk indicating the source area of the alarm.
- Although a phone or a radio can work there are too many variables that can result in system failure. Not recommended.
- A Public Address System that can be heard anywhere in the building used to summon trained help with equipment to the site of the emergency. Announcement: “Code Blue, Gym”, “Code Blue, Pool”, “Code Blue, Child Care”, etc.

Equipment:

A Code Blue “Crash Bag” containing all necessary emergency medical equipment that can be accessed at the service desk by emergency response staff and taken directly to the site of the emergency.

- AED, Oxygen with masks, suction and BVM
- Basic First Aid equipment including gauze pads, razor and sheers
- Communications; 2 way radio, cell phone
- Blanket and towels
- Sterile gloves, face mask

Training:

Each and every department of the YMCA must have key staff from every shift trained in medical emergency response and certified in CPR, AED and Oxygen administration. Current certification must be a condition of employment after a 30 to 90 day grace period. YMCA should offer regular CPR training, free to staff.

Branch specific emergency training equipment should be available and owned by the YMCA; CPR manikin, AED trainer, Oxygen and suction to be used to simulate real conditions during the drill. This equipment is also necessary for certification training and ongoing new staff orientation and in-service training.

### **General Code Blue Guidelines:**

The key to a successful Code Blue is the recognition that there is nothing more important in a YMCA than saving a life. To this end there must be key staff from every shift in each department trained and drilled in the branch medical emergency response system. These staff must hold current CPR for the professional rescuer for the duration of their employment. Many YMCAs train and certify only aquatics, fitness and some child care staff in an attempt to stay consistent with local health codes. This departmentalized thinking meets codes but does not provide the support necessarily to save lives.

When Code Blue is announced all staff should respond immediately. All staff – not trained staff only. Specific staff and departments as outlined above, have specific duties; communications, meeting and guiding EMS, getting the Crash Bag to the scene. Either a trained rescuer or the trained department staff member will manage or lead the rescue. All direction should be taken from the lead rescuer. The Crash Bag must be taken to the site of the emergency by the first staff member passing the service desk on their way to the site of the emergency. Unless staff is guarding swimmers in the pool or has young children in their charge they should go directly to the site of the emergency and offer what ever help they can.

Responding staff will need to assist with these tasks:

- Clearing bystanders from the scene
- Helping to move a victim to safety
- Verifying that 911 has been called
- Providing first-aid or resuscitation if certified
- Helping set up the AED and Oxygen for use
- Making the victim comfortable
- Calming the other members
- Notifying the Executive Director or CEO
- Collecting vital information about the victim