

## ***Emergency Fan out Notification System***

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| <b>Reviewed Date</b> |  | <b>Number</b>        | <i>GEN0108</i>         |
| <b>Revised Date</b>  |  | <b>Approved Date</b> | <i>January 9, 2013</i> |

### ***Introduction***

The mandate of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is to promote and protect the health of the public and prevent disease and injury. Occasionally, an incident or an emergency occurs which threatens the health, safety and welfare of a community and requires a controlled and coordinated response by a number of agencies including the health unit. The Health Protection and Promotion Act provides legal authority for boards of health to respond to a public health emergency that has been determined to be a health hazard or as the result of a communicable disease. The Ontario Public Health Standards require that the board of health develop, implement, and document 24/7 notification protocols for communications with board of health staff, community partners, and governmental bodies. The board of health is also required to exercise, in whole or in part, 24/7 notification procedures in accordance with the *Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008*.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this policy is to outline staff notification procedures that are to be followed when contacting staff in response to an incident and or emergency where a controlled and coordinated public health response is required.

The Emergency Fan out Notification System is utilized in the initial preparatory stages of response for the notification and deployment of health unit staff during non-business hours as outlined in policy GEN0107: Emergency Response

The staff notification procedure can also be utilized for testing the agency's emergency fan out notification system.

### ***Legislative Authority***

Health Protection and Promotion Act  
Ontario Public Health Standards  
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol

### ***Policy Definitions and Interpretation***

***Alternates*** : At the MOH/Directors level, alternates are designated individuals selected by the MOH Office and Executive to carry out their functions and are identified within the agency's emergency response manual in the event of their absence or their unavailability. Alternates at the manager or supervisory level are typically other managers or supervisors within the same service area assigned to carry out communications on behalf of the primary representative.

***Available***: Available to respond immediately.

**Contact:** Defined as “direct contact.” Voicemail, email, text messages or messages left with others does not constitute direct contact.

**Incident:** An event or emergency situation which requires controlled response and coordination of agency resources between multiple program teams or service areas in order to respond to the situation, based on Medical Officer of Health (MOH) assessment and interpretation.

**Primary Representative:** Lead representative assigned to carry out staff notification functions; typically, a director, program manager or supervisor. Staff being contacted routinely reports to or receives direction from this individual.

**Response Mode:** Identified when incident is imminent or occurring. Direction for response is being provided and staff are being deployed to carry out assigned responsibilities in response to the incident.

**Staff:** Defined as both permanent part-time and full-time, casual and seasonal staff. The definition of staff is based on the concept of “who is available to help” in order to acquire maximum response capacity. Staff on vacation will be included as an individual to be contacted. Staff on medical leave will not be contacted.

**Exceptions: During a Test Exercise, only permanent full time and part time staff will be contacted. Temporary or casual staff, along with students, will not be included in a test fan out procedure.**

**Stand-by Mode:** Identified when staff are being alerted regarding an incident. Response is anticipated but action is not yet required.

**Test Mode:** Identified when staff fan out notification system is being tested

## **Policy**

In accordance with the agency’s mandate to be able to respond 24/7 to an incident or emergency, the Medical Officer of Health is responsible for activating the agency’s Emergency Fan Out Notification System when there is an incident or emergency requiring a controlled and coordinated public health response. The Medical Officer of Health will assess the situation and determine if emergency fan out notification is required.

The Emergency Fan Out Notification System will be utilized as a means to communicate with staff in the event of an incident or emergency.

The Medical Officer of Health will activate the Emergency Fan Out Notification System to test the agency’s emergency communications. The notification system must be tested in whole or in part on an annual basis in order to ensure that the health unit can respond effectively and to ensure that staff are familiar with the agency’s Emergency Fan Out Notification System.

Each respective service area management team is responsible for orientating their staff to the emergency fan out notification procedure to ensure familiarity and readiness to respond.

### **System Activation in Response to an Incident:**

1. In the event of an incident, contact will be made through the public health switchboard at 705-721-7520. All calls will be processed and forwarded in accordance to the *Daytime Emergency Call Processing Procedure Policy D4.901*.
2. For emergency notifications reported **after hours and on weekends and holidays**, calls will be received through our message centre at 1-888-225-7851 and forwarded directly to

the MOH On-call as per procedures outlined within the After-Hours On-Call Communication Procedures D4 900.

## **Procedures**

### **Emergency Fan-out Notification Procedures**

1. The MOH will **contact** Directors and the office of the MOH staff. The MOH will provide critical information, response expectations and indicate if we are in **TEST, STAND-BY or RESPONSE mode**.
2. Directors will **contact** their Program Managers/Supervisors to relay critical information, communicate Service/Program Area expectations and re-iterate **TEST, STAND-BY or RESPONSE MODE**.
3. If direct **contact** is unsuccessful at the MOH, Director or Management level, then the **alternates** will be notified and instructed to carry out the fan out emergency notification procedures on behalf of the **primary representative**.
4. Management/alternates will **contact** their assigned staff and communicate critical information and indicate if we are in **TEST, STAND-BY or RESPONSE mode**. Staff will be alerted or deployed based on the event and the health unit response required.
5. **Staff Fan Out Notification Forms** must be completed to track fan out notification communications. MOH/AMOH's, Directors, Managers and Supervisors will complete all sections of the staff fan out notification forms.
6. Upon conclusion of the fanout notification, a copy of all logs must be submitted by the MOH/AMOH's, Directors and Management to the Emergency Management Team. These forms will be collated by the Emergency Management Team and retained on file. Information contained within these documents will be used to assess and evaluate our notification system.
7. The Emergency Management Team will conduct an evaluation of the notification process in consultation with agency's evaluation specialist.
8. Information will be compiled and reviewed during a post-exercise or incident debriefing. The debriefing will be held at a mutually agreeable location and time. Participants may provide general comments on the effectiveness of the notification or incident response.
9. During a fan-out TEST exercise, the MOH/AMOH, Directors and Management will use the prescribed communications outlined within the **Test Fan Out Notification Script** (Appendix A).
10. For Fan Out TEST notifications a pre-determined timeframe will be specified by the MOH to identify the expected duration of the fan out test exercise.
11. Unless otherwise stated, the typical timeline for a test exercise would be as follows:

Attempts to contact each staff member will be made every 15 minutes until direct contact has been made. During a test exercise a total of 5 attempts will be made to contact staff over a total maximum period of 2 hours.

### **Considerations:**

1. The responsibility for follow-up communications back to the primary representative rests with the "Alternate" carrying out functions on behalf of the director/manager or supervisor. The primary contact must be notified by the alternate that notification functions are being carried out on their behalf. Communication between primary representative and their alternate is necessary for non-duplication of calls. Note: A message may initially be left for primary recipients, however direct contact must be made with the alternate.
2. Service Area Directors and the MOH Office may independently delegate other representatives other than their established designate, as outlined in the agency's emergency response plan, to carry out fan out communications on their behalf. These assigned representatives must be pre-designated to allow for the facilitation of training and orientation to the agency's emergency response plan and the emergency fan out notification system by the Emergency Management Team (EMT).
3. All representatives initiating calls must ensure that a secondary communication system such as a cell phone or land line is in place to allow call back to that representative.
4. Either a landline or agency cell phone can be utilized to initiate the emergency fan out notification procedures. If long distance calls are anticipated during notification, then use of the agency cell phone is recommended. If the agency cell phone is not available for use, then long distance charges can be recovered by providing a copy of the phone bill highlighting costs incurred, to the agency's Finance Department.
5. Agency representatives responsible for carrying out emergency fan-out notification functions have been provided with a copy of the Emergency Response Manual and are responsible to ensure that Staff Fan-out Notification Forms are maintained and are readily available.
6. All staff are expected to identify when contacted if they are unfit to respond by virtue of illness, impairment or influence of medication, drugs or alcohol as per policy HR0108: Alcohol and Drug Use Policy.

### **Testing and Evaluation of the Emergency Fan Out Notification System**

The emergency fan out notification system with its outlined fan out procedures is to be tested on an annual basis in the format of an exercise.

Fan out test exercises are essential for the assessment and evaluation of the emergency notification system.

#### **Fan out test exercises will:**

1. Test the Emergency Fan Out Notification System
2. Orientate staff and increase agency preparedness
3. Determine if notification messages are received accurately and in a timely manner.
4. Determine the availability and accessibility of staff (percentages of those who could be reached vs. those who could not be contacted) and

5. Assess the accuracy of staff contact information (Fan out contact lists are complete and up-to-date to reflect current program representation and accurate personal contact information).

The Emergency Fan Out Notification System is maintained by the Emergency Management Team and respective changes to the system will be made in conjunction with service area Directors and appropriate communication will be initiated.

Section 5 of the Emergency Response Plan provides emergency fan out notification staff contact information for the MOH office and each Service Area. The Emergency Management Coordinators ensure that this contact information is updated within the plan bi-annually.

Service Area Directors, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for developing and identifying current staffing complement for their program areas. **Staff Fan Out Notification Forms** can be electronically modified to reflect current staffing complements, assignments and reporting structures within each service area. The assistance of the Service Area Administrative Coordinator can be elicited to maintain pre-filled electronic forms for the respective service area.

Agency staff is responsible for ensuring that Human Resources' is immediately advised of any changes with respect to personal contact information or change of address.

#### ***Related Policies***

GEN0107: Emergency Response  
D.4.901: Daytime Emergency Call Processing Procedure  
D.4.900: After-Hours On-Call Communication Procedures

#### ***Related Forms***

GEN0108 (F1) Staff Fan Out Notification Forms

***Final Approval Signature:*** \_\_\_\_\_

Review/Revision History:  
January 2013 - Approved

## **Appendix A - Test Fan Out Notification Script**

When the Emergency Fan Out Notification System is being tested, the following communications/directives will be provided:

### **Communications:**

MOH/AMOH will contact Service Area Directors/Alternates, Emergency Management Coordinators ( EMC's) and necessary support staff and complete the Staff Fan Out Notification Form

### **MOH will communicate to all Service area directors:**

We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency fan out notification system. You are advised to contact your assigned program managers and supervisors and instruct them to carry out fan out notification procedures. Please document information using the Staff Fan-Out Notification Forms. Re-iterate **this is a test exercise ONLY** the duration of the test exercise will be total 2 hours (or at MOH discretion).

### **MOH will communicate to EMC's and Support Staff:**

We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency notification system. No action or response is required at this time. **This is a test exercise ONLY.** Should this have been a real event, would you be **available to respond immediately?**

### **Directors will communicate to their Management Team and Support Staff:**

**This is a test exercise only.** We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency notification system. Should this have been a real event, would you be **available to respond immediately?**

Please contact your assigned staff and document information using the Staff Fan-Out Notification Forms.

Please use the following messaging to Staff:

We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency notification system. No action or response is required at this time. **This is a test exercise ONLY.** Should this have been a real event, would you be **available to respond immediately?**

### **Directors to communicate to Support Staff:**

We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency notification system. No action or response is required at this time. **This is a test exercise ONLY.** Should this have been a real event, would you be **available to respond immediately?**

### **Managers to their Staff:**

We are currently conducting a test of our agency's emergency notification system. No action or response is required at this time. **This is a test exercise ONLY.** Should this have been a real event, would you be **available to respond immediately?**