



## Emergency Response Policy

### 1. INTENT

Cheer Nova Scotia (CNS) is committed to supporting the welfare of its members and visitors to premises in which cheerleading activities take place. The purpose of the CNS Emergency Response Plan is to ensure human safety, minimize damage to property, and assure rapid and responsive communication to all parties involved. This Plan has been created to address, in a coordinated and systematic manner, all types of emergencies affecting all CNS member programs and registrants.

This Plan will establish processes and procedures for appropriate responses to major emergencies and assign roles and responsibilities for the implementation and execution of the Plan in the event of an emergency or catastrophe. The guidelines shown in this Plan are intended to keep members of CNS prepared should CNS premises and/or facilities become unsafe due to calamity.

The majority of facilities whereby CNS events will take place will have evacuation procedures and emergency plans in place. It is **recommended** that in the event of an emergency, CNS will defer to the standardized and practiced plans enacted by the facility. In the event that the facility does not have one, the following are guidelines that should be used in the event of an emergency.

CNS **recommends** that all member gyms and practice spaces used by CNS athletes have an emergency management plan in place that is similar to the one below.

CNS **recommends** that all member programs attending CNS competitions identify a program-specific emergency Muster Station location outside of each facility/venue, and that this location be communicated to all coaches, athletes and parents.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

Fire and/or smoke – Any conflagration (fire) of combustible materials at any premises where cheerleading is taking place causing danger of burns from fire or suffocation/choking from smoke inhalation. This can also include fires nearby where there is a clear danger of the fire spreading to areas of concern or causing the air to become unbreathable due to smoke.

Natural disaster or severe weather –This is a broad term meaning any emergency caused by inclement weather conditions or tectonic activity. Natural disasters include tornados, floods, earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes, lightning strikes, avalanches, blizzards, ice storms, severe thunderstorms, and so on. In some cases, natural disasters may also include excessive periods of intensely cold weather, or excessive periods of intensely hot and/or humid weather.

Chemical, biological, or radiological incidents –This may include a release of toxic chemicals or other dangerous agents within the vicinity, including natural gas leaks; the release of harmful bacteria, viruses, or other biological dangers; release of or exposure to radioactive materials.

Structural failures –This term encompasses any damage to property or premises that causes unsafe conditions due to structural failure. Failures or pending failures include (but are not limited to) bomb threats, collapsed walls, ceilings, or foundations, burst water mains, electrical power outages, and so on.

### 3. GUIDELINES

In general, CNS members must report an emergency event immediately to the appropriate staff person (i.e. facility management, gym owner, etc.).

Once the emergency has been ascertained, response/assessment teams will be the first to respond to the incident. They will assess the severity of the emergency and communicate immediately with assigned groups as appropriate. Response/assessment teams are composed of at least one person per department to coordinate and instruct co-workers. These teams will coordinate emergency and/or evacuation efforts within their areas of responsibility.

Not all emergencies will require the same level of response. Appropriate responses will be dictated by the severity of the event and its effect on the health and safety of members, visitors, and property. Only an appointed designee (one must be declared at all CNS events) has the authority to declare a state of emergency for CNS and can activate this Plan.

For the purposes of this Plan, CNS defines "emergency" as an instance, or combination of instances, of unsafe conditions that pose a threat to people or property and include: instances of fire and/or smoke; natural disaster/severe weather; chemical, biological or radiological incidents; and structural failures.

#### **Fire and Smoke**

The primary purpose of the Fire Procedure is to provide a course of action for all personnel to follow in the event of a fire or smoke emergency.

- Rescue anyone in immediate danger (if safe to do so).

- Alert employees of the fire and its location. Activate the nearest fire alarm. Contact the local fire department by calling 911 and follow any and all instructions. Assign someone to guide the response personnel directly to the fire.
- Contain the fire if it is relatively safe to do so. Close all doors, fire doors, and windows near the fire. Shut off all fans, ventilators, and air conditioners.
- Extinguish the fire if it is small. Obtain the nearest fire extinguisher and pull out the safety pin. Aim the fire extinguisher nozzle low, at the base of the fire, depress the trigger, and move the nozzle slowly upward with a sweeping motion.
- Do not aim the nozzle at the middle or the top of the flames.
- If fire cannot be extinguished, evacuate the building immediately.
- Keep low to the floor to avoid inhaling smoke.
- Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- Report to the designated "Emergency Evacuation Area" (insert location).
- Immediately report any employee(s), customer(s), visitor(s), contractor(s) or individuals who have remained in the building or refused to leave.
- Do not return until it has been declared safe to do so by the Fire Department.

### **Natural Disaster or Severe Weather**

The primary purpose of the Natural Disaster/Severe Weather Procedure is to inform employees and visitors of any serious weather conditions that warrant their attention.

A "weather watch" means that conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.

A "weather warning" means that severe weather has been sighted in the vicinity.

- Account for all members and visitors, ensuring that everyone is inside the facility. Close all windows and close all curtains and/or blinds.
- Instruct all members and visitors to move away from windows and doorways.
- If necessary, gather members and visitors into the basement, or, if no basement is available, into bathrooms or other enclosed areas.
- Listen to all weather reports for updates. Do not leave the basement or enclosed area until the weather warning has been lifted.
- Stay calm. Encourage others to stay calm also.
- Have portable radios available, along with extra batteries.
- Be prepared for isolation at the premises. Ensure that emergency equipment and supplies are available, or can be readily obtained.

### **Emergency Survival Kits**

As a best practice, emergency survival kits should include enough supplies for athletes, coaches, visitors, to survive for 72 hours. Member gyms responsible for maintaining kits.

Important items to include in the kit are:

- Candles;

- Matches sealed in a waterproof bag;
- Fire retardant blankets;
- Flashlight(s);
- Ample batteries;
- Telephone(s) that will work in a power outage;
- A well-stocked first aid kit;
- Non-perishable food;
- Manual can opener;
- Whistle to serve as an extra communication device;
- Cases of bottled water;
- Other items can include spare clothes, personal hygiene items, pain and allergy relief pills and assistive devices such as asthma inhalers, canes and diabetic medication.

### **Chemical, Biological, or Radiological**

The purpose of the Chemical, Biological, or Radiological Procedure is to inform members and visitors of the steps that should be taken in the event that a contaminant, virus, or other harmful agent poses an immediate threat.

- Call 911 and report the situation and follow any instructions given.
- Notify managers, Office Manager, and Human Resources immediately.
- Commence evacuation procedures.

### **Structural Failure**

The purpose of this procedure is to inform employees or visitors of precautions to be taken in the event of a structural failure.

- In the event of a power outage, gather flashlights and other needed supplies. Check on all employees and visitors to ensure their safety. Ensure all backup or emergency lighting is fully operational. If the power outage is prolonged, consult with managers to consider dismissing employees for the remainder of the day.
- In the case of water, heat, or other utility disruptions, all attempts will be made to determine the cause of the disruption and the probable length of shutdown. Where required, the local utility provider shall be contacted to assess and resolve the situation. If the shutdown is prolonged, consult with management to consider dismissing employees for the day.
- If the building itself fails, evacuate from the nearest available exit if safe to do so. If no safe exit is available, find shelter under a strong table or other structure.

### **Member/Visitor Evacuation Procedure**

In the event that CNS declares that an evacuation of the premises is necessary in response to an emergency situation, employees/visitors are required to follow the steps below:

- Stop working and shut down any equipment in use.
- Proceed to posted emergency exit, following posted evacuation route(s).
- Use the staircase instead of elevators.
- Touch door knobs/door handles carefully to check for heat.
- Proceed to a designated meeting area (unless otherwise instructed).

### **Bomb Threats**

In the unlikely event of a bomb threat, it is impossible to discern valid threats from hoaxes. Therefore, all threats will be treated as real in order to protect lives and property, and the premises shall be evacuated immediately. In the event of a bomb threat, immediately call emergency services.

### **Missing Person Procedure**

The purpose of the Missing Person Procedure is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken in the event that the whereabouts of a member/athlete cannot be accounted for.

- It is recommended that at cheerleading competitions and CNS sanctioned events, a designated area be communicated to gym owners who are participating in the competition that there is a “lost child” identification/safe location on site. Staff or volunteers working this booth should be aware of the procedures in the event of a missing child. Possible locations could be the judge’s table, info booth, vendor booth, or office. Program directors will notify athletes and parents of this location at each venue/competition.
- Volunteers will be directed by the response/assessment team member to systematically search the premises, both inside and outside (if safe to do so), including rooms, bathrooms, offices, and other areas.
- Should a search of the premises prove unsuccessful, the response/assessment team member shall notify local law enforcement by calling 911. Give a description of the missing person, or a photograph (if available). The authorities will assume control of the search from this point.
- The family and/or responsible party of the missing person shall also be notified. Explain what is being done to find the missing person and that the local law enforcement has been notified as well.
- All previously contacted persons and law enforcement shall be notified if the missing person turns up due to search, or of their own accord.

### **Physical Premises (Sanctioned CNS Competition or event) Risk Management Guidelines**

The immediate space around the performance area should remain clear for a minimum of 3 feet.

- This includes the distance from the performance area to the space that the coaches sit to watch their teams perform.

- If the performance floor is elevated on a platform, a clearance space of 3 feet is required, to prevent injury in the event an athlete steps off the performance surface.
- Coaches or other spectators may not sit along the side of the performance area, except in designated areas, and the clearance must be at a minimum, 3 feet.
- There must be sufficient lighting for the First Responders or Paramedics.
- Stairways and hallways must remain clear of spectators/athletes, and equipment to prevent falls.
- No athletes shall be stunting or tumbling (even for photographic purposes) on non-designated areas.
- Potential hazards including (but not limited to) spills or electrical issues must be brought to the attention of the facility coordinators immediately for maintenance.

### **Suspicious Persons**

- If there is a reasonable suspicion that an event attendee does not belong, the suspicions should be brought to the attention of the Event Producer or facility security staff.
- If the person is unknown to be associated with a member of any attending gym, it is recommended that the event producer contact facility security staff. If necessary, the security personnel will contact the appropriate authorities.
- It is recommended that gym owners, parents, and older athletes be vigilant in being aware of the presence of these persons, and report any suspicious behaviour immediately, for escalation.

## **4. POLICY INFORMATION**

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