



Team Name: Critical Care and Medicine Team Lead: Regional Director - Acute Care Approved by: Executive Director - Mid	Reference Number: CLI.4510.PL.002 Program Area: Across Hospital Units Policy Section: General
Issue Date: December 7, 2016 Review Date: Revision Date: August 13, 2018	Subject: Code Blue

POLICY SUBJECT:

Code Blue

PURPOSE:

To provide a consistent, optimal resuscitation response to individuals in cardiac or respiratory arrest OR experiencing an acute crisis that may lead to an arrest.

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE:

Executive Limitation (EL-02) Treatment of Clients
 Executive Limitation (EL-01) Global Executive Restraint and Risk Management

POLICY:

All Southern Health-Santé Sud acute care sites use codes as the means to a standardized communication strategy to elicit prompt and effective responses during emergent/urgent situations. This mechanism decreases variability and uncertainty that maximizes positive patient outcomes.

DEFINITIONS:

Code Blue: this code identifies events where persons are pulseless and/or breathless, or are at high risk of having a cardiac and/or respiratory arrest.

Code Blue Cart: a code blue cart contains a bi-phasic defibrillator and resuscitation medications, supplies, and equipment.

Code Blue Team:

- A team who responds and brings expertise to the patient.

- Code Blue team provides assessment, required interventions, and recommendations regarding patient care.
- Team members are identified and assigned by respective acute care sites, minimally comprising of a Medical Physician and one nurse with congruent skills/competencies (e.g., Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Neonatal Resuscitation Program(NRP)).
- Designated code blue roles include: team leader, compressor, recorder and someone assigned to airway, medication and monitor/defibrillator. These roles may be combined based on the number of staff present.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Be aware of patient’s Health Care Directive and/or Advanced Care Planning (ACP) status, if known. ACP – Resuscitation is the default practice. ACP – Medical and ACP – Comfort status are equivalent to “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR). To respect patient wishes, **NO** Code Blue is called on patients who have a DNR order.
- Code blue is called when:
 - Patient is unresponsive;
 - No respiratory effort or only agonal gasping is noted;
 - Absent Pulse (or no pulse felt within 5 to 10 seconds);
 - Cardiopulmonary arrest seems evident or
 - If ever unsure about patient status.
- A team debriefing (“Take 5”) is conducted following every code blue, irrespective of the outcome. This process focuses on guided reflection to bridge the gap between experiencing an event and making sense of it.

PROCEDURE:

1. Assess the patient and determine if immediate emergent response is required.
2. Immediately activate Code Blue as required.
 - 2.1. Call for help and have another staff member on the unit call a Code Blue via the intercom system, by announcing “Code Blue” **3 times** with the specific location (e.g., medicine, surgical unit).
 - The emergent/urgent event may be occurring off the unit (e.g., cafeteria). Thus, announcing the location applies to all sites.
 - 2.2. Notify the physician if the physician is out of the paging area.
3. Begin Basic Life Support (BLS) until help arrives, including using the automated external defibrillator (AED) if available.
4. Staff members direct the Code Blue Team to the right location on the unit.
5. Once the **Code Blue Cart** arrives, follow ACLS guidelines.
6. Document patient status, vital signs, cardiac rhythm, medication(s) administered, any shocks with the defibrillator and other life-saving interventions.
 - 6.1. Ensure documenting occurs in real time and completed on the *Resuscitation Record* (CLI.4510.PL.002.FORM.01).
7. Notify family of patient’s status, provide emotional support and informational updates.
8. Conduct a team debriefing following Code Blue irrespective of the outcome (“Take 5”).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

[CLI.4510.PL.002.FORM.01](#) Resuscitation Record

REFERENCES:

American Heart Association. (2011). *BLS for healthcare providers: Student manual*. Dallas, TX: Author.

American Heart Association. (2016). *Advanced cardiovascular life support provider manual*. Dallas, TX: Author.

Canadian Nurses Protective Society. (2012, July). Emergency room closures. *Info Law*, 20(3), 1-2. Retrieved from <http://www.cnps.ca>

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. (2013). Code blue team: Resuscitation in acute care. Winnipeg, MB: Author.