Introduction
Hospitals and health care facilities utilise a nationally recognised set of codes to prepare, plan, respond and recover from internal and external emergencies. These codes are based upon Australian Standard (AS) 4083 - 2010 Planning for emergencies – Health care facilities.

Aim
This information circular provides definitions and outlines conditions for when emergencies are activated within public hospitals and health care facilities.

Specific emergency codes
Specific codes are utilised for emergencies outlined in AS 4083 - 2010. In addition, the Western Australian Department of Health utilises Code Black Alpha as an emergency code in the event of a child or infant abduction, as outlined in Operational Directive (OD) 0384/12. A summary of emergency codes is attached.

Phases of an emergency
In some emergencies, such as a Code Blue, an immediate response is required; however, where appropriate, consideration should be given to phase the emergency in one of the following four categories:

1. **Alert**: there is a possible emergency.
2. **Standby**: the emergency is imminent.
3. **Response**: the emergency exists and a response is required.
4. **Stand down**: the emergency has abated and recovery activities can begin.

Notification of the On-Call Duty Officer
Where an emergency has the potential to seriously impact upon a hospital’s service delivery, or poses a threat to the safety of staff and/or patients, the Hospital Health Coordinator or Regional Health Disaster Coordinator should notify the On-Call Duty Officer (OCDO) of the emergency code activation. The OCDO can be notified on (08) 9328 0553.

Activation of regional / metropolitan-wide emergencies
Regional Health Disaster Coordinators have the authority to activate a regional-wide emergency. Where a regional-wide emergency has been activated, the State Health Coordinator (SHC) should be notified, via the OCDO. The authority to activate a metropolitan-wide emergency code rests solely with the SHC.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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### Summary of codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Colour</th>
<th>Code Descriptor</th>
<th>Description of Emergency</th>
<th>Authority to activate</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Red</td>
<td>Fire / smoke</td>
<td>Fire or smoke emergency.</td>
<td>Any staff member</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Blue</td>
<td>Medical emergency</td>
<td>Medical emergency, e.g. cardiac arrest.</td>
<td>Any staff member</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines and/or medical emergency policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Purple</td>
<td>Bomb threat</td>
<td>Bomb threat or suspicious item / mail.</td>
<td>Any staff member</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Yellow</td>
<td>Infrastructure and other internal emergencies</td>
<td>Any internal emergency that affects service delivery, e.g.</td>
<td>Any staff member</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines and business continuity plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Black</td>
<td>Personal threat</td>
<td>Person threatening or attempting to harm self or others. Includes Code Black Alpha for infant and child abduction.</td>
<td>Any staff member</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines and OD 0384/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Brown</td>
<td>External emergency</td>
<td>A multi-casualty incident that stretches or overwhelms the available health resources, e.g.</td>
<td>State Health Coordinator, Hospital Health Coordinator, Regional Health Disaster Coordinator</td>
<td>Refer to hospital emergency procedure guidelines, hospital code brown plans, WESTPLAN – Health and associated subplans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Orange</td>
<td>Evacuation</td>
<td>Requirement to evacuate patients, staff and visitors to a designated assembly area due to an emergency, e.g.</td>
<td>Area Warden (however titled), Emergency Coordinator, Most senior staff member present, Hospital Health Coordinator</td>
<td>Refer to emergency procedure guidelines, area evacuation plan and area warden (however titled)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes:

1. Hospital Health Coordinators and Regional Health Disaster Coordinators have the authority to activate a Code Brown and may do so:
   a) On the request of the SHC, or nominated delegate;
   b) When large numbers of casualties present to the hospital unannounced; or
   c) On receipt of information relating to mass casualties from a credible source.

   In the event of b) or c), the Hospital Health Coordinators and/or Regional Health Disaster Coordinators shall notify the OCDO of the Code Brown activation.

2. The decision to stand down a single or multiple health service(s) from an external emergency shall be made by the SHC.

3. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) or WA Police may advise on the evacuation of an area, floor or building.

This information is available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.