

“Prepare Now and Prosper”.



Recommendations for Developing Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plans

Presented by: Margaret Leoni, VP of Regulatory Affairs,
MA Senior Care Association - April 20, 2010





Disaster - What is it?

A disaster is an occurrence such as an ice storm, hurricane, tornado, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, volcanic eruption, building collapse, transportation wreck or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance.*

***American Red Cross**



BASIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER



Ensure that all key personnel have regular access to cellular or satellite phones, walkie-talkies or other devices and that there is availability to recharge these devices regularly





Develop a “phone-tree” that includes all staff (as well as physicians) including their primary and alternate phone numbers and be sure to update at least monthly. Conduct periodic unannounced drills at varying hours to test process. Remember it is fine if people are not readily available, a disaster has no time table

Identify personal contacts for all residents and staff, including phone numbers or other contact information for same. Be sure this information is accessible to key individuals, assuring privacy is protected

Provide a regularly updated listing of local and state official contact information in the event of emergencies to all staff [permanent and temporary]. *Consider a laminated neck or wallet card.*

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Develop a line of authority and leadership to command in the event of an emergency situation. Identify someone (or a position) for each shift. DO NOT, identify the Administrator or Director of Nursing as your primary point person for all times. Remember a disaster is unpredictable...

Assign one or more individuals to track events provide a “diary” and become the record keeper and “historian” of the event. This will help in reviewing lessons learned for future situations. Consider if possible video taping the situation.





Develop a management team to address key recovery areas such as, Information Technology, Finance, Building recovery, Insurance, Fund Raising, etc.

RESIDENT PREPAREDNESS



Be sure that at any point in time you can easily retrieve your resident roster. This should include being able to identify each individual's specific needs, i.e., date & time of last medications, diabetic, dialysis, ventilation dependent etc.

Develop a system that would track residents and staff in the event of an evacuation.



If using a computer be sure that there is access to a printer and that paper supplies and if necessary fax capabilities are available.

Have a system that allows residents, staff and family to routinely communicate to an organized “command central”.



BUILDING OPERATIONS



Assure that you have a functioning and reliable emergency power system and test it on a regular but random schedule. Be sure it controls such things as, alarm systems, elevators, exit route illumination, including exit signs and emergency communication systems and medical equipment and other electrically powered life-support equipment.

Evaluate the current location of your generator(s), electrical switches or boxes, sump pumps, etc., and consider relocating to higher ground particularly if you are in a flood zone area. If you are in a flood zone and there is threat of a flood check to be sure your elevators are moved off of the lower floors.



Utilities/Power/Phone/Water

In an emergency that affects a large part of a community, workers from another part of the State or even another State might come in to assist with restoration of utilities. Since they will be unfamiliar with your facility, if it is not evident in your name that you are a “Nursing Home” you should contact these companies to add “Nursing Home” to the name on your account. Then when the company triages its restoration operations, your facility will be recognized as a healthcare organization. Also, once you have called to report a utility problem, DO NOT keep calling back, you only continue to put your number at the bottom of the response list!

Evaluate your current procedures and locations for storage of all supplies, i.e., paper files, records, food, etc., determine whether they should be relocated to higher ground or moved into water proof containers.



FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



Protect historical records, i.e., tax returns, financial statements, general ledgers, fixed assets/depreciation schedules

Maintain accurate accounting for all resident trust funds – in the event of an evacuation a copy of the resident's balance with enclosed cash or check ensures the resident has funds available

Increase cash on hand – remember if power is out ATM's may not be accessible

Ensure adequate check supplies

Designate extra authorized check signers

Expand ATM and credit card access

INFORMATION SYSTEMS/COMPUTER CONSIDERATIONS



Maintain an up to date listing of all software applications and their licenses, include contact name, address and telephone information with the licensing agreement.

Keep copies of your software in a safe location both on and off the premises should your system need to be restored or reconfigured.

Since sensitive files should have password protection, be sure that several key personnel have knowledge of these passwords.

Back Up Your Data!

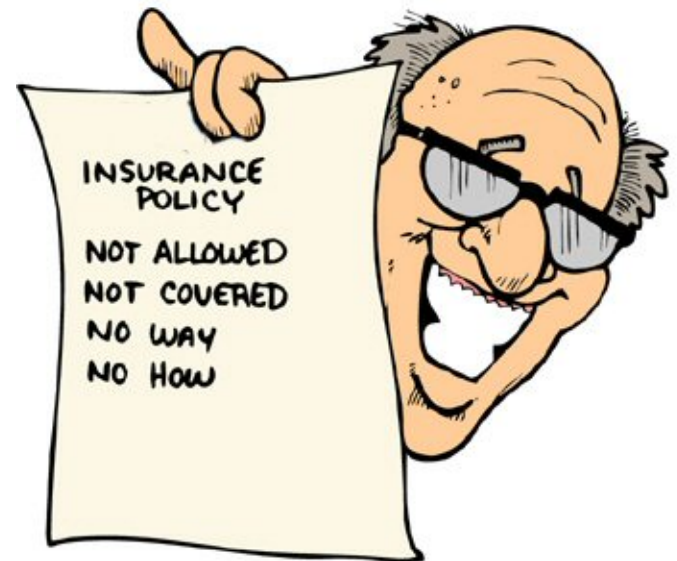
Back up data should be maintained in several secure offsite locations. Test backup procedures periodically to ensure that all necessary system and program files are being duplicated as expected.

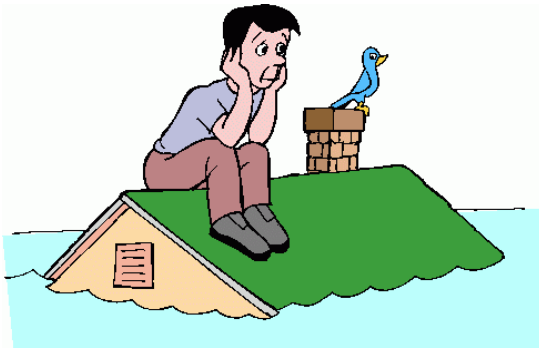
INSURANCE and LIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Routinely conduct a “gap” analysis of your existing policy and coverage with your insurance agent/broker;

Identify the potential risks and exposures to your facility and organization;

Know and understand all of the exclusions listed as part of your policy/coverage;





Special coverage is required for flood insurance, do you need this?

Have you considered getting flood insurance coverage through the United States Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) ?

Does your policy/coverage include “content” insurance? Yes, we mean the contents of your building. Be sure to check this with your agent;

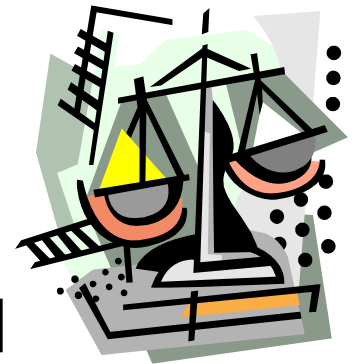


Be sure to have multiple copies of your insurance policies available at various secure locations. List every policy, including insurance carrier name, policy number and policy period;

Compile a list of all policies including, agent contact information with cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses, how to contact insurers directly if agent is unavailable, and keep a copy of this list both on and off the facility premises.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Documentation is critical in any crisis situation as staff is fragmented and routines may not be followed. While your assigned “historian” will be responsible for pulling all of the information together once things get back to normal, be sure that each staff person, including volunteers carry a notepad to record relevant information, i.e., something that appears out of the ordinary, medications and/or treatments provided to residents, etc.



Advance Directives etc.

Advance directives are very important, especially in an emergency situation. Be sure that you have the relevant paperwork for each resident and that staff caring for them knows the residents' advanced wishes.

Residents who usually make their own medical decisions may become confused during the emergency. Be sure to have a copy of the residents' surrogate or proxy and relevant contact information and a back up contact in the event the primary cannot be reached.