EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR ASSISTED LIVING: YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO PREPARED

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NCAL Vice President of Operations
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OBJECTIVES

- Understand the core elements of an emergency preparedness plan
- Learn how to identify and be prepared for emergencies to minimize injury and loss
- Learn about tools and resources available to support you with emergency and disaster planning

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HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL?

3

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the last few years state and federal law makers, interest groups, and consumer groups have made significant comments regarding the lack of proper emergency planning in assisted living. Which has resulted in many states increasing legislation.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- What this means for you as providers:
  - The regulation can be somewhat vague, leaving lots of room for interpretation
  - Something in place is better than nothing in place – because the regulation is flexible, it seems surveyors have not ventured too far out of the lines when critiquing emergency preparedness plans
  - Surveyors want to know you met the requirement – what that looks like for your community is up to you

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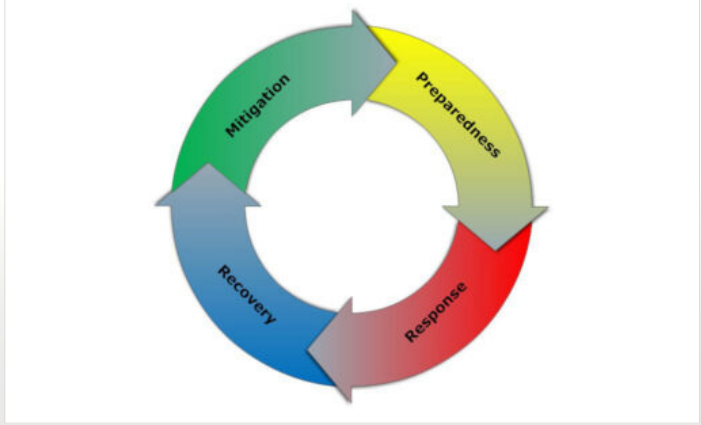
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FOUR PHASES OF PREPAREDNESS



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PHASE 1 - PREPAREDNESS

- Proactive measure to be ready for potential emergencies
  - Planning – developing a comprehensive plan that outlines procedures for different types of emergencies based on the community needs and the population you serve
  - Training – equipping staff with the knowledge and skills needed to respond
  - Community education – make sure first responders need to understand your population and what their needs are for those with functional and cognitive needs

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PHASE 1 - PREPAREDNESS

- Have available a “Chain of Command” staff list with phone & cell phone numbers
- Keep an updated a list of all tenants’ contact persons
- Have an Incident Command System (ICS) that:
  - Directs and coordinates emergencies
  - Responds appropriately to said incident
  - Helps preserve facility services
  - Aids in communication to the various publics, and
  - Helps maintain stabilization

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PHASE 1 - PREPAREDNESS

- Take steps to be able to take care of the community for at least 72 hours
- Collect and assemble a disaster kit
- Identify, in advance, where to seek shelter
- Identify, in advance, transportation options if needed
- Have a communication plan in place

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PHASE 2 - RESPONSE

- Taking immediate action during an emergency
  - Quickly notify people
    - Reach out to your local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) office
  - Manage resources
    - Know what resources you have and what you depend on others to provide
  - Ensure safety and security
    - Plan well for any event – could be 15 minutes, 6 hours, overnight, or longer…

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PHASE 3 - RECOVERY

- Restoring normalcy after an emergency
  - Assessing damage and identify need
  - Need short- and long-term plans
  - Periodic updates and review of plans, as they change
  - Coordinate with EMA and licensing agencies

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PHASE 4 - MITIGATION

- Reducing long term risk from hazards and the effort to reduce loss of property and life by lessening the impact of disaster
- For mitigation, you act now – before the next disaster – to reduce financial and human consequences later
- Basically – you’re analyzing risk, reducing risk, and insuring against risk

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MISSOURI REGULATION

Missouri assisted living regulations outline the following emergency preparedness requirements

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

1. Have a written emergency plan to meet potential emergencies or disasters and request assistance annually from a local fire unit for review of fire and evacuations plans. An up to date copy of the entire plan must be provided to the local jurisdiction's emergency management director.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #1

- Create procedures that include the characteristics of your facility
- Create a process for reviewing the plan and stick to it
- Change your procedures as your resident population needs change
- Engage staff to help identify other emergency procedures
- Talk with external stakeholders about the community's needs for power sources and or evacuation
- Identify and plan out alternative scenarios where power affects operations and resident needs
- Don't forget to update the Department with your updated plan

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

2. The plan must include, but not limited to, the following:
   - A phased response ranging from relocating of residents to an immediate area within the facility; relocation to an area of refuge; or to total building evacuation.
   - Written instructions for evacuation of each floor including evacuation to areas of refuge, if applicable, and a floor plan showing the location of exits, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, and any areas of refuge.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

2. The plan must include, but not limited to, the following (cont.):
   - Evacuating residents, if necessary, from an area of refuge to a point of safety outside the building.
   - The location of any additional water sources on the property such as cisterns, wells, lagoons, ponds, or creeks.
   - Procedures for the safety and comfort of residents evacuated.
   - Staffing assignments.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

2. The plan must include, but not limited to, the following (cont.):
   - Instructions for staff to call the fire department or other outside emergency services.
   - Instructions for staff to call alternative resource(s) for housing residents, if necessary
   - Administrative staff responsibilities
   - Designation of a staff member to be responsible for accounting for all residents' whereabouts.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #2

- When planning for evacuation, identify the modes of transportation that will work for different scenarios - Have a memo of understanding (MOU) with transportation providers so your community has priority
- Make sure the evacuation procedures cover all areas of the building (basement, garage, all floors, secure areas, etc.)
- Include in procedure when residents should evacuate and when not to – Sheltering in place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there – a.k.a. staying put
- Identify an outdoor meeting site after evacuation and temporary relocation sites like a church, school, community center, grocery store, etc.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #2 (CONT.)

- Include staff in any updates – they know the ins and outs of the building better than anyone
- Consider having an annual inspection by the local fire authorities for ongoing compliance with fire and building codes
- Create a plan for regular training for staff and residents
- Make sure education to staff matches what communication to residents is
- Thoroughly communicate elements of the plan when they have been updated or changed

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

3. The written plan needs to be accessible at all times and an evacuation diagram must be posted on each floor in a conspicuous place.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #3

- All staff and residents should know where it's located
- Emergency procedures shouldn't be in a locked office
- Make sure to check regularly emergency procedures are accessible and that the postings haven't disappeared
- Make sure any copies of old plans are replaced with new ones

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

4. A minimum of 12 fire drills must be conducted annually with:
   - At least one every three months on each shift.
   - At least four of the required fire drills must be unannounced to residents and staff, excluding staff who are assigned to evaluate staff and resident response to the fire drill.
   - The fire drills must include a resident evacuation at least once a year.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #4

- Have a regular schedule for doing drills
- Consider doing a tabletop exercise after a drill where staff can identify areas of the drill that could be improved
- Conduct some drills in conjunction with resident training
- Decide who will be the lead for each scheduled drill (shake it up and use different people)
- Although this only refers to fire drills, consider drills relevant to other emergency situations (i.e., tornado, power outage, etc.)

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

5. The facility must keep a record of all fire drills. The record must include the time, date, personnel participating, length of time to complete the fire drill, and a narrative notation of any special problems.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #5

- Be consistent with implementation of the policy
- Educate staff on how they should be involved in following the policy
- If drills don't go smoothly, look at procedures and update accordingly
- Document when these drills were done and what was accomplished
- Make sure to document all training provided
- Make sure to document all drills that were conducted

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS

6. The fire alarm must be activated during all fire drills unless the drill is conducted between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am, when a facility generated predetermined message is acceptable in lieu of the audible and visual components of the fire alarm.

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TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #6

- Educate your residents and families of the requirements for fire drills so they understand the frequency
- Make sure all staff are aware of what type of procedure may happen to indicate a fire drill, during sleeping hours

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MISSOURI REGULATION

Missouri assisted living regulations outline the following fire safety training requirements

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- Missouri assisted living regulations outline the following fire safety training requirements:
  1. Each facility must provide fire safety training to all employee
     - During employee orientation
     - At least every 6 months, and
     - When training needs are identified as a result of afire drill evaluations

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

2. The training must include, but is not limited to, the following:
    a) Prevention of fire ignition, detection of fire, and control of fire development
    b) Confinement of the effects of fire
    c) Procedures for moving residents to an area of refuge, if applicable
    d) Use of alarms
    e) Transmission of alarms to the fire department

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

2. The training must include, but is not limited to, the following (cont.):
    f) Response to alarms
    g) Isolation of fire
    h) Evacuation of immediate area and building
    i) Preparation of floors and facility for evacuation, and
    j) Use of the evacuation plan

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

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FIRE PLANNING

- Unlike skilled nursing homes, you are not subject to federal fire safety standards
- Also, regulations may be different around the state, depending on who the delegated authority is and who oversees fire prevention in the area

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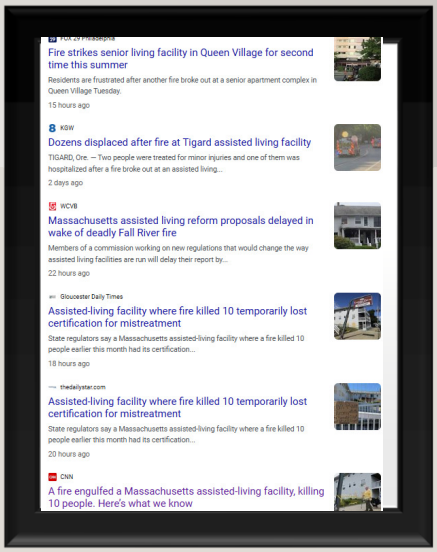
FIRES HAPPEN IN ASSISTED LIVING

Just Google it



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FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Elements of fire safety procedures include
  - Prevention – protection from happening in the first place
  - Detection – systems to detect fires early
  - Suppression – ways to quickly suppress the fire
  - Compartmentalization – building designs to help fire from spreading
  - Egress – safe evacuation

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Charging Cell Phone Fire

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FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Equipment considerations – documentation of operation:
  - Extinguishers – check annually for charge and make sure they are tagged
  - Detectors – check regularly for proper alarm & change batteries annually (great way to get a "look-see" in resident units)
  - Don't forget the kitchen equipment

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FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Don't forget
  - Kitchen's
    - Stove hoods, fire suppression systems, storage areas, etc.
  - Laundry rooms – specially dryers
    - Have a list of those centrally located and in resident units
    - Clean and maintain for lint build up
  - Garage areas
  - Elevator rooms
  - Maintenance and workshops

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FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) considerations:
  - If the building has a sprinkler system, there may be inspection, testing, and maintenance to comply with
  - If there is an alarm system, there may be fire alarm codes to comply with
- Make sure you have systems in place to meet annual testing requirements

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FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Tips:
  - Create a schedule of when all fire alarms and fire extinguishers need to be checked
  - Are you sure your local authorities and first responders know what you do?
  - Confirm you are coded as high priority

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NATURAL DISASTERS

- Severe Storms
- Tornado
- Flooding
- Winter Storms / Blizzards / Ice Storms
- Wildfires
- Drout
- Extreme Heat
- Pandemics
- Earthquakes (there is a 7-10% chance in MO)
- Etc.

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NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING

- Watches and warnings procedures
- Staffing plan
- Sheltering in place vs evacuating
- Drills (practice!)
  - Safe Locations
  - Sharp Objects
  - Closing Drapes
- NOAA Weather Alert Radio
  - A nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office

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OTHER TYPES OF EMERGENCIES

- Total loss of power
- Loss of utilities
- Gas leak
- Frozen water pipes that burst
- Boiler goes down
- Fires from man-made actions
- Communication disruptions
- Chemical spill in the area
- Bomb threat
- Arson
- Active shooter
- Structural collapses
- Transportation accidents
- Explosions
- Terrorist attacks
- Etc.

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INTERNAL SAFETY CONCERNS

- Maximum water temperature checks
  - No more than 120°F for safety and comfort
- Medical concerns
  - Chocking & Heimlich maneuver training
  - CPR, AED's, etc.
- Storage of building supplies
  - Accessible to confused residents?

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INTERNAL SAFETY CONCERNS

- Emergency generators work properly
- Shower/ tub grab bars safety checks
- Handrails are not loose
- Nonslip tub / shower floors are safe
- GFI outlets checked
- Unsafe room clutter (hoarding)

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RESIDENT BELONGINGS

DO ANY OF YOU HAVE RESTRICTIONS REGARDING WHAT A RESIDENT CAN OR CANNOT HAVE IN THEIR APARTMENT?

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RESIDENT BELONGINGS

- Have you thought about…
  - Flammable liquids, explosives, space heaters, excessive combustibles, firearms, wreaths/Christmas trees, etc.
  - Any limits on how much oxygen a resident is allowed to store in their apartment? How about measures to check?
  - Any storage method requirements (ventilated areas)?

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RESIDENT BELONGINGS

- Do you have a procedure to check the safety of:
  - Frayed electrical wires
  - Unsafe extension cords
  - Ungrounded cords
  - Overloaded circuits
  - Oven storage
  - Etc.…

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ACCESS TO APARTMENTS

- If apartments have locks, do you have a copy of each key, or a master?
- Do you have a policy prohibiting the installation of additional locks that cannot be opened from the outside?
- Who has keys?
- What notification do you give before entering apartments?

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MISSING RESIDENT PLAN

- Do you have a plan:
  - Of when to do a building search and a grounds search?
  - Of when to notify authorities?
  - Of when to notify families?
- Identify your areas of high risk – ponds, ledges, busy roads, bridges, etc.
- The plan should address residents both in a secure memory care area and those who are not

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ELEVATORS

- Do they meet the code requirements?
- Are they checked regularly?
- Do you know what the elevator does when there is an emergency?
  - i.e., power outage, fire alarm, smoke, mechanical malfunction, etc.

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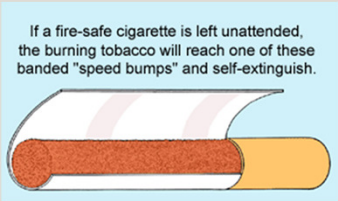
SMOKING

- If you permit smoking in, know that they became a bit safer in 2011 when only “Fire-Safe” cigarettes can be sold in Missouri
- Include in the plan your policies on:
  - Vaping
  - Smoking on the greater property
  - Smoking in cars in the parking lot



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EVACUATION

- Plans should include:
  - Routes (internal)
  - Transportation (external)
  - Alternative housing
  - Continuation of Services (medicines, medical records, etc.)
  - Cell phone for communication
  - Satellite phone – even better!

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REVISING YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

- How often do you reassess for hazards?
- Changes should trigger updates to the plan
  - Significant building changes / New construction
  - New hazard identification
  - Policy updates
  - System changes
  - Staffing changes

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GENERAL EMERGENCY PLANNING –

NOW HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

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GOOD PLANNING

Good planning will:

- Direct staff on what to do
- Instruct external stakeholders on what to do and how to help

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COMMUNICATION PLANS

- Plan for media
- Decide on a spokesperson, in advance
- Control the media, don't let them control you
- Use your Association, IHCA, as a resource
- Call Association staff to help

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DISASTER KIT

- Water – one gallon of water per person, per day for at least three days (be sure and include staff). Need water for both drinking and sanitation
- Food – three-day supply of non-perishable
- Battery powered and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries
- Flashlights and lots of batteries

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DISASTER KIT

- First Aid Kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation

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DISASTER KIT

- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Shovels for snow
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter, or solar charger

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REAL LIFE SCENARIO OF FIRE & EVACUATION

Karlstad, MN (October 12, 2012)

- 46 licensed nursing home beds
- 24 assisted living apartments
- Both fully occupied

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BEFORE THE FIRE

- September 29, 2012, staff were aware a fire was in the swamp behind them, still several miles out of town
- Winds were calm, fire under control at the time
- Numerous fire departments and DNR involved

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NOTICE TO EVACUATE

- Tuesday morning, October 2, 2012, winds started changing directions and picking up speed
- 1:05 pm the sheriff's department ordered immediate evacuation and the National Guard was called in
- All residents and medication carts were at the First Lutheran Church 3 blocks away by 1:25 pm

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WHAT THE STAFF DID WELL

- All residents were moved to safety very quickly
- Staff knew and understood the fire plan—good drills and good leaders
- Anticipated well before we knew there was danger
- Staff stayed calm
- Teamwork

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Turn off air handling system sooner – decreased smoke entering the building
- Had masks in the facility, no one thought to grab or use them (this was pre Covid.
- Had not involved family members in full evacuation planning

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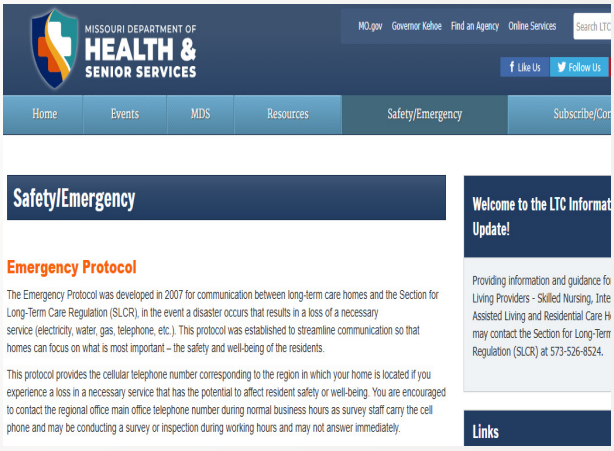
EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

Missouri Emergency Protocol for LTC Providers

https://ltc.health.mo.gov/safety-emergency



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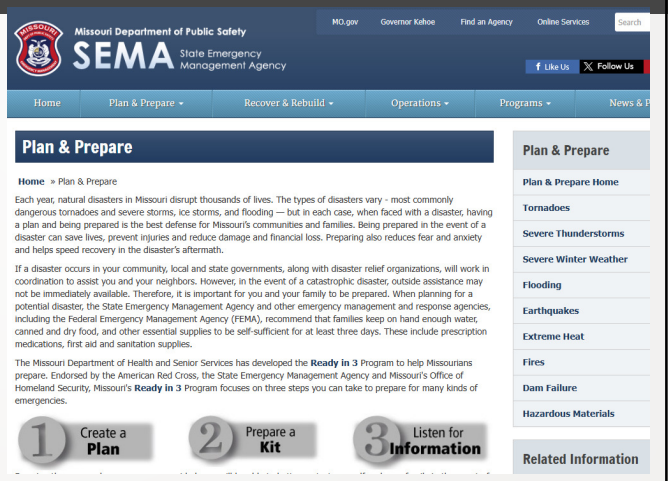
EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

Missouri State Emergency Management Agency

https://sema.dps.mo.gov/plan_and_prepare/



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EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

Missouri State Emergency Management Agency

https://sema.dps.mo.gov/

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EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

- Use other state's resources – just Google!
  - South Dakota Department of Public Safety - https://dps.sd.gov/emergency-services/emergency-management/preparedness
  - Minnesota - https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/ltc/index.html

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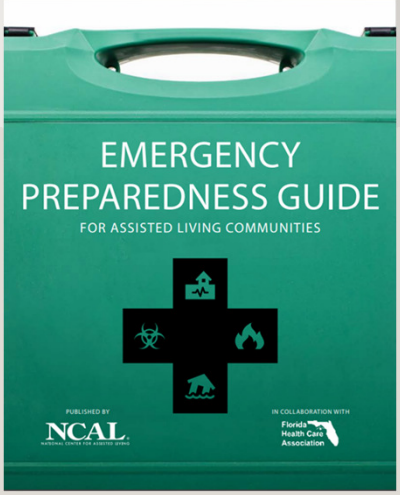
EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

AHCA/NCAL Website

www.ahcancal.org/Survey-Regulatory-Legal/Emergency-Preparedness



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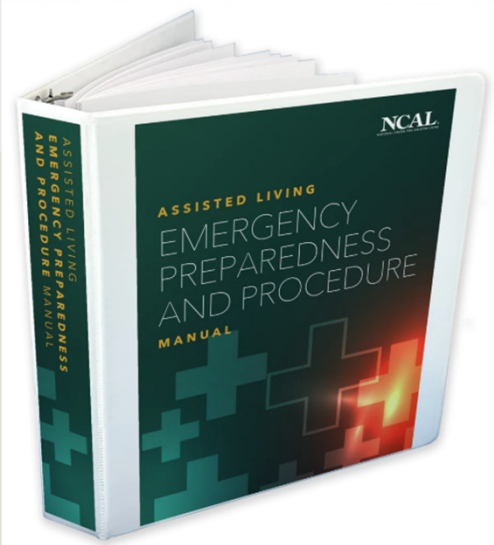
EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

AHCA/NCAL Publications (aka Bookstore)

https://ahcapublications.org/products/assisted-living-emergency-preparedness-and-procedure-manual



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HAZARD VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS (HVA)

- Examine the probability of each hazard
- Examine the risk presented
- Examine the preparedness of departmental and organization response capability
- Start planning based on likelihood and effect

PLANNING AHEAD

In order to effectively handle disasters and emergencies, it is important for centers to plan ahead and prepare in advance. Long term and post-acute care centers can use a targeted approach to addressing vulnerabilities and hazards to help them best respond to and recover from events. This site seeks to assist centers in creating a plan to address its greatest risks:

- ASPR TRACIE Hazard Vulnerability/Risk Assessment

Hazard Vulnerability Assessment

The Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) is a tool designed to assist centers in evaluating vulnerability to specific hazards. The tool uses various categories, such as probability of experiencing a hazard, human impact, property and business impact and response, to create a numeric value based on various hazards.

- HVA Worksheets
- HVA Instructions (How to use the worksheets and how to approach the assessment)

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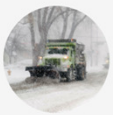
EMERGENCY PLANNING RESOURCES

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
www.fema.gov

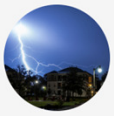
Home Fire Escape Plan

Create a home fire escape plan so everyone in your house knows what to do in case of a fire.
Make an Escape Plan



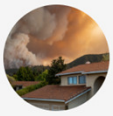
Winter Weather

Know what to do before, during and after snowstorms and extreme cold.
Get #WinterReady



Thunderstorms & Lightning

Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards.
Get Thunder and Lightning Tips

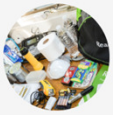


Wildfires

If there is a wildfire in the area, be ready to evacuate on short notice.
Get Wildfire Tips

Flooding

If you approach a flooded road or walkway, follow this rule: turn around, don't drown!
Prepare for Flooding Now



Build a Kit

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the right items.
Emergency Supply List

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IN SUMMARY

- Not everything needs to be done at once – start at the areas of biggest risk and involve your residents!
- We want safe buildings
- We want to minimize avoidable tragedies
- We want to be prepared for things that are predictable, even when the risk is slight
- We want to do the right thing

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IN SUMMARY

DON'T HAVE A PLAN LIKE THIS!

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Thank you!

IMPROVING LIVES *by*
DELIVERING SOLUTIONS *for*
QUALITY CARE

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