

Emergency Preparedness Blueprint

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Food for Thought: Equipping Senior Centers for the Next Emergency

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An aerial photograph showing a vast expanse of flooded land. The water is a deep blue-grey color, covering most of the landscape. In the foreground, there are some dark, muddy areas and debris, possibly from a destroyed structure. A road is visible on the left side, partially submerged. The background shows a flat, open landscape under a clear sky.

“Accelerating changes in demographic trends and technology are making the effects of disasters more complex to manage. One future trend affecting emergency needs is continued population shifts into vulnerable areas.”

FEMA

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Introduction

EMERGENCIES HAPPEN. Those two simple words encapsulate the premise of this document. We have all been “victims” of emergencies and sometimes even of disasters. We know that we are never immune from or far from the next one. It’s how we prepare for them and how we respond to them that we will be focusing on in this document. Prepare and Respond. That will be the focus of our work. We are going to look into all different kinds of emergencies that could befall your senior center – or your own home. Our focus is on senior centers because, quite frankly, you have a responsibility to those who enjoy the services provided at your center and for the hours that those seniors spend in your facility. They and your staff look to you for their wellbeing and safety. Emergencies of all kinds, in all communities, can and will happen. Senior centers, as all institutions and facilities, must be prepared in advance for any situation and then must be knowledgeable about how to respond to them.

There is no question that the effects of emergencies and disasters have become more frequent, more serious and oftentimes more devastating to more people than ever before. The health and safety of those affected by emergencies will be challenged.

We have relied heavily upon the guidance of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) in the preparation and coordination of our work to help us understand and present the risks associated with emergencies.

According to FEMA: “Accelerating changes in demographic trends and technology are making the effects of disasters more complex to manage. One future trend affecting emergency needs is continued population shifts into vulnerable areas. Other demographic changes will affect disaster management activities, such as a growing population of people with disabilities living in communities instead of institutions, as well as people living with chronic conditions. Also, communities are facing a growing senior population entering this demographic group.”

Because of this trend in a growing senior population and because you are charged with their safety when they are at your facility, it is incumbent on your organization to think in terms of broadening the approach to emergency management and to become familiar with and then begin the process of incorporating the concept of a Whole Community Approach to emergency management.

We will be using the FEMA model for this emergency management approach. As a concept, Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests. By doing so, a more effective path to your community’s security and resilience is built. In this sense, Whole Community is a philosophical approach on how to think about conducting emergency preparedness and response.

Whole Community Principles:

Numerous factors will contribute to efficient and effective emergency preparedness and response outcomes. There are three principles that represent the foundation for establishing a Whole Community approach for your community. What is significant here for you to remember is that your senior center is a vital part of the larger community. One might even argue that it is one of the most vital parts of the community. The health and safety of some of your community’s most vulnerable citizens are the very people you serve on a daily basis. During

times of emergencies, your attendees are particularly vulnerable as they are older and oftentimes people with disabilities. Let's look at the three principles with your senior center in mind.

Understanding and meeting the actual needs of the whole community

Community engagement can lead to a deeper understanding of the unique and diverse needs of your seniors. It is important to take into consideration your unique demographics, your values, norms, community structures, networks, and community relationships.

Engaging and empowering all parts of the community

Engaging the whole community and empowering local action will better position stakeholders to plan for and meet the actual needs of a community and strengthen the local capacity to deal with the consequences of all threats and hazards. This requires that you work with and join forces with other members of your community to be part of a larger emergency management team. The team could be comprised of a rich diversity of community members, social and community service groups and institutions, faith-based organizations, groups representing people with disabilities, private and other nonprofit organizations and others in your community. When the community is engaged in an authentic dialogue, it becomes empowered to identify its needs and the existing resources that may be used to address them. Your senior center must be viewed by the whole community as a vital part of that community.

Strengthening what works well in communities

By working with and becoming an integral part of community relationships before an incident occurs your senior center can be leveraged and empowered to act effectively during and after an emergency strikes.

Now that we've got an overview of the Whole Community approach, we need to think about the broad questions about implementing this approach to emergency preparedness and response. Some of those questions are:

- How can we better understand the actual needs of the seniors in the community we serve?
- What partnerships might we need in order to develop an understanding of the broader community's needs?
- How can we better understand just what those needs are?
- How can they better understand what the needs of our clients are?
- How do we effectively engage with the whole community in emergency management to be a part of the larger emergency preparedness community?
- How do we generate public interest in disaster preparedness in order to be an integral part of the community?
- How can we tap into what our community is interested in to engage in discussions about increasing the resilience of our senior center?
- What activities can we change or create with respect to emergency preparedness to create or help strengthen what already work well?
- How can we support other community organizations in these efforts?

Building community resilience means you are building your senior center's resilience. By working together with others in your community, you add extra layers of safety.

The Whole Community approach allows organizations like yours to work with other organizations in times of crisis when some extra hands might be necessary.



Defining our terms

Now that you understand the importance of the Whole Community concept, it is time to step back and define just exactly what we mean by “emergency.” That word has been bandied about for a long time and understanding just exactly what it means will help you to understand how to prepare for it and to respond to it.

FEMA, the federal agency charged with the responsibility of a nationwide response to emergencies, defines an emergency as “Any occasion or instance—such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, fire, explosion, nuclear accident, or any other natural or man-made catastrophe—that warrants actions to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety.” Your location may prohibit some of these types of emergencies, however, there is not one location that is immune to every emergency on this list. In other words, emergencies happen and will continue to do so.

Every part of our country is ripe for at least one of those emergencies – on a yearly basis. Because you are dealing with an older, vulnerable population that is oftentimes more frail or not even ambulatory, your responsibilities may be much greater than those in other jobs. In fact, you might even be dealing with life and death situations that require a keen focus and understanding of just exactly what lies ahead and what your responsibilities will be.

Oftentimes, you will hear the word “disaster” when someone speaks about an emergency. Again we look to FEMA to define that. They define disaster as “An occurrence of a natural catastrophe, technological accident, or human-caused event that has resulted in severe property damage, deaths, and/or multiple injuries.”

So, now that we have established the definitions of what we might be dealing with, the next thing we must do is PREPARE. And the first step in emergency preparedness for your senior center is to design an emergency plan.

Designing the plan

The policy of your senior center will always be to continue to provide services, even in the case of an emergency. Your site exists to provide those vital services for the seniors in your community who are your clients. In order to serve your clients and the community at large and to continue to provide those necessary services your organization must prepare and maintain an emergency plan.

Remember, the plan is only as good as it is useful and understood by all who will play a role in implementing it in case there is an emergency. The best way to put together your plan is to get input from experts in your community, such as first responders. You can also get input from staff, volunteers, and even the seniors themselves. When your plan is completed and signed off on, share it with staff and volunteers and make sure that everyone understands just how important it is to know how they are an integral part of its implementation during an emergency.

Putting the plan together

Prepare lists: Lists are extremely important prior to and during emergencies. In other words, you must **prepare** these lists prior to an emergency and understand everyone's **response** during the emergency. Simple things like knowing whom to contact (prior to and during) is vital when initiating emergency preparedness and subsequent emergency response.

- There needs to be an updated **Contact list** of all of your clients. You need to have their addresses, phone numbers, and, if they have cell phones and email addresses, they need to be updated too. You need a list of emergency contacts for your clients. In case an emergency occurs at your center you need to know whom to alert about your clients and their status. They should give you their emergency contact numbers that they would wish to alert in case of emergency.
- **Contact lists** need to be kept and updated for all vendors, suppliers, and local organizations that provide services to your site.
- **Contact lists** of staff and volunteers must be maintained and updated that include addresses, phone numbers, cell phone numbers and email addresses.

Internal Checklists and Procedures

There are certain items that are for internal use only. For example, there needs to be a Contact List for staff and volunteers that is easily accessible to the entire staff. The list should contain phone numbers, addresses, email addresses and cell phone numbers. These should not be accessible to the clients. There also needs to be an organization chart with names, titles and other pertinent informa-

tion of staff at the Area Agency on Aging. There needs to be updated charts to illustrate who is responsible before, during and after emergency operations. The charts need to include who is responsible for key activities, such as dealing with local governments and vendors and any other emergency personnel in the community.

There also needs to be some sort of diagram or, at the very least, a listing of where the utility shut-offs are located. For example, where are the water supply valves and fire protection systems – sprinklers and fire extinguishers?

Procedures need to be developed to perform emergency training for all new employees and volunteers. These procedures and the training that goes with it should be made mandatory for all employees – new and those already in place. Procedures must be developed so that all employees know what to do in case of an emergency.

Remember, these plans are only as good as the understanding of those responsible for carrying them out. Every organization should have a policy in place to guide those that work there about emergency preparedness and response. In addition, there may be state or local regulations that your center must comply with prior to and during an emergency. You must be aware of those and perhaps incorporate them into your trainings.

Your center's management team must be aware of and understand state-directed procedures. In addition to complying with state regulations, most senior centers are subject to federal regulations that are always monitored by your Area Agency on Aging. It is a best practice to ensure that your emergency plans comply with the regulations being monitored by the AAA. The best place to look in order to receive those requirements is to directly work with your Area Agency on Aging. It is also prudent, once your plan is developed, to have it approved by the AAA.



Checklist for Senior Center Emergency Preparedness

Annual Review:

- Emergency plan complies with regulatory requirements
- Emergency plan complies with AAA policies
- Key staff training on Emergency Preparedness is scheduled and performed
- Plan for an opportunity for employees to demonstrate familiarity with plans and procedures
- Procedures are updated to reflect organizational changes
- Emergency Preparedness plan is disseminated in hard copy to key staff members
- Copies of plan are available on computer
- Training on the Emergency Preparedness plan at orientation for new staff
- An annual refresher training is put into place as a refresher training for all employees
- Specialized training for staff responsible for safety during an emergency
- Invite Red Cross to present CPR and first aid training
- Check or refresh stored flashlights, battery-powered radios, blankets, shelf-stable food, water and first aid supplies
- Establish evacuation procedures and practice evacuation drills
- Train and drill staff on shut-down procedures
- Put in place Memorandum of Understanding agreements with other local organizations defining how they will assist one another during major emergencies
- Designate an internal Crisis Communications Team to coordinate information and dissemination prior, during and at the conclusion of the emergency
- Designate a Senior Center emergency situation spokesperson
- Put into place a Continuity of Operations Plan to ensure procedures for operating essential services when the Center cannot be used
- Make sure procedures are in place to ensure foodservice operations can continue in any emergency by:
 - Pre-emergency planning with vendors
 - Have steps in place that must be taken as a soon as an emergency situation is imminent
 - Have a list on hand of potential community partners to provide resources to your clients during an emergency

Client Preparedness Checklist

The following covers some basic points to consider when putting together an Emergency Preparedness and Response Client Preparedness checklist for your senior center. This checklist will cover the contact lists that your center should have in place prior to an emergency. Use this list to ensure that you are prepared prior to an emergency. It would be a good practice to be able to check 100% of the boxes.

Prior to an emergency your center needs these updated lists

- Staff contact lists
 - Telephone numbers of key personnel
 - Names, addresses, telephone numbers
- Client contact lists
 - Name, address, phone, cell phone, email address
- Vendor contact list
 - Name, address, phone, cell phone, email
- Utility companies
 - Emergency phone number to use and non-emergency numbers
- Community partners
- Government/regulators, including Area Agency on Aging
- Media, including local radio, television and newspapers
- Other stakeholders
- Prepare a simple organizational chart with the names, titles and telephone numbers of your key personnel and those of emergency personnel. These will be useful before and during emergency operations.

Client Preparedness Procedures

During an emergency it is imperative to be able to reach your clients quickly to keep them up-to-date with necessary information about the procedures and operations of the senior center.

It is important to regularly prepare a report of all your registered clients. These lists should be updated as often as possible. The report (both an electronic and a hard copy to ensure access to the list in any kind of emergency) should contain the primary and alternate contact numbers for clients in addition to emergency contact numbers for family members. This updated information should be accessed quickly and by multiple staff members in case of an emergency.

Client Preparedness Worksheet

The following are procedures you can use for your senior center in order to ensure client preparedness prior to an emergency.

The Executive Director (or the person responsible for the everyday management of the center) should prepare (or assign to a designated staff person) the contact information for each registered client. This list should be updated every three to six months.

Staff should be assigned to call clients as soon as possible after an emergency. Staff members will first be briefed by the responsible person (Executive Director, for example) on the following elements to share with the clients and/or family members:

- type of emergency
- safety status of the center
- estimated time and severity of impact
- expected disruptions or changes to service(s)
- what the facility management has done and is doing to lessen the negative outcomes
- when to expect updated status reports
- what clients and/or family members can do to help

When determining the content of calls to your clients, keep the following in mind:

- Keep the information short and concise.
- Only the pertinent facts should be given.
- If a person is unavailable at the primary number, a secondary number should be tried. If not available at either number, try to contact a family member or emergency contact. If all attempts are unsuccessful, leave a message at the primary number.

Call Tree

A simple way of reaching out to your clients during an emergency is by implementing a Call Tree. Again, by assigning names and phone numbers to your staff (or volunteers) of your clients during an emergency all of your registered clients can be reached promptly during an emergency. It is important to remember that the message to be transmitted during the call tree needs to be consistent with all the messages being delivered during the emergency. Also, the following items should always be taken into consideration when initiating the call tree:

Call Tree Checklist

- Keep the message short and concise. Only the facts should be given.
- If the person is unavailable at the primary number, try the secondary number. If not available at either number, leave a message and continue down the call tree. Continue attempting to contact unavailable person after everyone else has been contacted.
- Limit the number of people each person must call.
- Update the call tree at least annually to ensure accurate phone numbers and inclusion of all staff.
- Make sure each person making calls is instructed about their responsibility.
- Consider having the last person on the call tree report back to a designated person to signal the end of the calling process.

Vendor Contact List Checklist

Vendors provide the goods and services that are necessary for the operation of the senior center. In an emergency, you may need to replace damaged goods or modify the services you get from your vendors. You need a vendor checklist prior to an emergency. This checklist is a simple one but very important for running your center in an orderly and efficient manner during and after an emergency.

Checklist for Vendor Contacts

- List of company providing the product or service to the center.
- List vendor contact person, phone number, email address.
- Describe in as much detail as possible the products and/or services provided by the vendor (including, if possible, account numbers, hardware or software requirements, etc.).



Client Contact Procedures

Purpose:

It is important to be able to reach your clients quickly in the case of an emergency. It is always best to have multiple ways of reaching them. This procedure helps focus on how to keep the information up-to-date and how to access it when needed.

You should be able to regularly prepare a hard copy (printed) report of your registered clients. The report should contain primary and alternate contact numbers for clients in addition to emergency contact numbers for family members. Keep that information up-to-date and prepare a listing that can be accessed quickly by multiple staff members in the event of an emergency.

Worksheet Instructions:

The template has several spaces to customize it to your organization. Replace each bracketed item [] with your own information. Add/change/or remove information as needed.

Client Contact Procedures

The [position title] will prepare report [description of report] regularly each [week/month/quarter] that includes contact information for each registered client. [Describe how to access the report].

Staff will be assigned to call clients as soon as possible after an emergency. Staff members will be briefed to the following elements to share with clients and/or family members:

- Type of threat/emergency
- Safety status of the center
- Estimated time and severity of impact
- Expected disruptions or changes to service(s)
- What the facility management has done and is doing to lessen the negative outcomes
- When to expect updated status reports
- What clients and/or family members can do to help

When determining the content of calls to clients, keep the following in mind:

- Keep the information short and concise.
- Only the facts should be given and each caller should avoid speculation.
- If a person is unavailable at the primary number, try the secondary number. If not available at either number, try to contact an emergency contact/family member. Leave a message at the primary number if all other attempts are unsuccessful.

Crisis Communications

When an emergency occurs, the need to communicate is immediate. If your congregate nutrition/senior center services are disrupted, your clients will want to know how they will be impacted. If the emergency occurs at your center, members of the community at large may also need to be notified. Your local government officials may need to be notified; employees and their families will be concerned and want information. Neighbors living near your center may need information – especially if they have relatives who may be participants at the center or if, in fact, they might be impacted by the center’s emergency. All of these “audiences” will want information before the center has a chance to begin communicating.

An important component of any emergency preparedness program is crisis communications. Your senior center needs to have a Crisis Communications Team. And, it doesn’t have to be large or complicated. They should be several staff and/or volunteers who will be responsible for the overall handling of communicating with various parties about how the emergency will be handled by your organization. The Crisis Communications Team should be responsible for putting together a Crisis Communication Plan. The senior center/nutrition program must be able to respond promptly, accurately and confidently during an emergency and in the hours and days that follow. Many different audiences must be reached with information specific to their interests and needs. The very image of your senior center can be either positively or negatively impacted by public perceptions of the handling of the emergency.

Your senior center must develop a **Crisis Communications Plan**. And the first thing that goes into designing the Crisis Communications Plan is to understand the potential audiences that you are going to reach through that plan. Each different audience you are going to reach out to will want to know: “How does this emergency affect me?”

Crisis Communications Team

The crisis communications team should be comprised of those employees and/or volunteers with direct responsibility for the administration of your organization. Your director, your volunteer coordinator, your financial team, etc. should be included in your crisis communications team. This team will be the ones responsible for getting the word out to all of your audiences once an emergency unfolds.

Audiences

Understanding the various audiences that you may need to reach during an emergency is one of the first steps in the development of a crisis communications plan. There are many potential audiences that will want information during and following an incident and each has its own needs for information. The challenge is to identify potential audiences, determine their need for information and then identify who within your organization is best able to communicate with that audience.

Potential audiences:

- Your senior clients
- Their family members
- Your staff and their families
- The news media
- The community – especially neighbors living near your facility
- Your vendors and suppliers
- Government elected officials and others in positions of authority
- Your Board of Directors

Your senior center should have contact information for each audience that has been compiled and updated and is immediately accessible during an emergency.

Clients

Your clients are the lifeblood of your organization. They are why you have the organization and they, therefore, are the top priority for notification of an emergency. A crisis communication continuity plan is essential in order to alert first and foremost your clients. The plan should include action to redirect incoming telephone calls to a voice message indicating that your center is experiencing a temporary problem. The message should inform the caller of the information they need in order to understand what will happen next.

The Community

If there are hazards at your center or facility that could impact the surrounding community, then the community becomes an important audience. If so, community outreach should be part of your crisis communications plan. The plan should include coordination with public safety officials to develop protocols and procedures for advising the public of any hazards and the most appropriate protective action that should be taken if warranted.

News Media

Sometimes, during an emergency the news media will be on the scene or calling to obtain details about the emergency that may have occurred at your site. There may be numerous requests for information from local, regional or maybe even national media, depending on the type or scope of the emergency. This was particularly true during the Covid emergency.

The challenge of managing large numbers of requests for information, interviews and public statements can be overwhelming. Prioritization of requests for information and development of press releases and talking points can assist with the need to communicate quickly and effectively.

As part of your Crisis Communications Plan you should have a policy that only authorized spokespersons are permitted to speak to the news media. Communicate the policy to all employees and volunteers and explain that it is best to speak with one informed voice.

Determine in advance who will speak to the news media and prepare that spokesperson with talking points, so they can speak clearly and effectively in terms that can be easily understood.

Messages

During and following an emergency each audience will seek information that is specific to them. “How does the incident affect my meals, job safety, community, etc.?” These questions need to be answered when communicating with each audience.

After identifying the audiences and the spokesperson assigned to communicate with each audience, the next step is to script messages. Writing messages during an emergency can be challenging due to pressure caused by having too much to do in a short period of time. Therefore, it is best to script message templates in advance, if at all possible.

Pre-scripted messages may seem like a strange and daunting challenge. However, the need for communication is paramount to your organization. And thinking about and planning for future emergencies will make it easier than having to do so in the midst of an emergency. There are various messages that make sense to have on hand. The queries probably will look like these:

For Clients: “When will I receive my meal?” “When can I expect my meal to be delivered?”

For Staff and Volunteers: “When should I report to work?” “Will I still have a job when this emergency is over?” “Is it safe to come back to work?”

For Government and Elected Officials: “What is the impact on the community?” “How many seniors will be impacted by the emergency?” “When will you be back up and running?”

Vendors and Suppliers: “When should we resume deliveries?” “Will the orders be for the same amounts?”

Board Members: “What happened?” “When did it happen?” “Was anyone injured?” “How long will operations be shut down?” “Could this emergency have been anticipated or prevented?”

Community: “What are you going to do to prevent this from happening again?”

News Media: “What happened?” “Who was injured?” “What is the estimated loss?” “What caused the emergency?” “What are you going to do to prevent it from happening again?” “Who is responsible?”

Messages can be pre-scripted as templates with blanks to be filled in when necessary. Pre-scripted messages can be developed and approved by the management team.

Another important element of the Crisis Communications Plan is the need to coordinate the release of information. When there is an emergency or a major impact on your organization, there may be limited information about the emergency or its potential impacts. The “story” may change many times as new information becomes available.

One of the aims of the Crisis Communication Plan is to ensure consistency of message. If you tell one audience one story and another audience a different story, it will raise questions of competency and credibility. Protocols need to be established to ensure that the core of each message is consistent while addressing the specific questions from each audience.

Another important goal of the Crisis Communications Plan is to move from reacting to the emergency, to managing a strategy to overcome the incident.

Management needs to develop the strategy and the crisis communications team needs to implement that strategy by allaying the concerns of each audience and positioning the organization to emerge from the incident with its reputation intact.

Evacuation

There is an emergency at your center. There is an emergency in your community that has an impact on your center while your clients are in attendance. You must evacuate. There are a number of reasons that an organization can be forced to move as much of its workforce off-site as possible. During an emergency there may also be a reason to move your clients at the center to a safer environment. It can happen. It may happen. You must be prepared.

There are key components to consider when putting together your checklist of what to do in case you need to evacuate your senior center. Having a plan to get everyone out of the building can save lives. Your checklist needs to address the following:

- How will we notify staff and clients that the building must be evacuated?
- Where will the staff and clients go when they leave the building?
- How will we help the staff and/or clients with physical limitations to leave as quickly as possible?
- How will we know everyone got out safely?
- What will we do if everyone does not get out safely?

These questions must be answered ahead of an emergency. You will need to assign people to the various roles that are needed during an evacuation. Assigning tasks to members of your Emergency Preparedness Team will help to ensure that everyone will get out of the building safely and with the least stress. Because you are dealing with an older population that may be frail, the stress level during an emergency becomes heightened. Being calm in the face of potential emergency procedures is a much more effective way to efficiently and effectively handle the situation. That is why practicing well in advance of any emergency that may come your way is so important.

The expression goes that we shouldn't "reinvent the wheel." Well, that's true in many instances. The other expression that is vital to running any organization is that we need to look at best practices at other like-minded organizations and perhaps apply them to our own. We have looked at all fifty state plans and have seen some excellent guidelines and practices for emergency preparedness.

For example, the Georgia Division of Aging Services has explicit guidelines in their plan about evacuations. This might be an excellent template for all senior centers to incorporate and to implement.

- "Each site shall develop a plan of operation, to include evacuation, in the event of fire, inclement weather or other emergency."
- "If the site has individuals (either staff and/or participants) with hearing or visual impairments, the evacuation plan must address how such individuals will be assisted."
- "Staff must assess participants' ability to react and respond appropriately in emergencies, and identify those persons who would require assistance. Center management is responsible for training participants, staff and volunteers on what to do in the event of an emergency."

Evacuation Plan Worksheet

This is an Action Plan for evacuation of a senior center.

Action

An Evacuation Team Leader will be selected in advance by the center's management. Once a decision is made that the center will be evacuated, the Evacuation Team Leader is assigned to that specific task during an emergency. Staff and clients are warned by the Team Leader that the building will be evacuated.

Description

Describe how staff and clients will be notified that the building will be evacuated. Is there a PA system in the building, an alarm system, or will it be by word of mouth?

Action

All staff and clients should assemble in a pre-designated meeting area.

Description

Describe where the meeting area is. It should be far enough away from the building so as not to interfere with emergency vehicles should the emergency require them.

Action

Prior to any emergency, center management should put together an Emergency Preparedness Building Monitor task force. These can be staff members or able-bodied volunteers from the center. Those Emergency Preparedness Building Monitors are given the task of ensuring the safe exit of everyone in the building during an emergency procedure.

Description

The members assigned to the task of Emergency Preparedness Building Monitors will assure that everyone leaves the building and knows how to get to the area designated as the assembly area. These Monitors will make sure that those who require assistance will be aided in their departure. The Building Monitors will be the last ones out of the building.

Action

Prior to an emergency, center management will assign staff and able-bodied volunteers as Emergency Preparedness Assembly Area Monitors. During an emergency procedure the Emergency Preparedness Assembly Area Monitors are responsible for accounting for all evacuees after they have left the building.

Description

Assembly Area Monitors will bring the employee roster and client sign-in sheets to the evacuation assembly area. This will help to account for everyone who was present at the center on that day. The Monitors will take attendance to account for all evacuees. They will inform the Evacuation Team Leader if anyone is missing or injured.

In Summary

An Evacuation Team is critical to the coordinated management of an emergency situation at the senior center. It is hoped that this team will never be called upon to perform those duties, but the center should never assume that those functions will not be needed. In other words, prepare now so that there are no questions at the time of an emergency about what to do. One final thing to remember – have a Go Kit.

Evacuation Team Members:

- Evacuation Team Leader
- Alternate Team Leader (in case the Team Leader happens not to be at the center that day)
- Building Monitors
- Assistants for those who are physically challenged
- Assembly Area Monitors

If you have a small center and you do not have staff to perform all of those duties, that doesn't mean you cannot perform those duties. Volunteers and client volunteers can and should help. In fact, those clients may be the best monitors because they understand their fellow attendees and may know best how to communicate with them. They need to be part of this team and should understand what is expected of them in an emergency situation. Practice, practice, practice.

Go Kits

What is a Go Kit? A Go Kit during an emergency procedure is a kit that contains items that are vital to the performance of your senior center. For example, a Kit may be as simple as a portable electronic storage device (flash drive) with all the manuals, forms, contacts, and links necessary to perform the function of running the center, even if this data is on a duplicate server or cloud service. The kit may also be a physical box or bag with manuals, supplies, equipment, etc. that are necessary to perform the functions of running the center. When deciding what goes in a Kit, you should be prepared for the loss of electricity and technology. Some of the items contained in electronic files could be the life-blood of running your center. Therefore, it is important that you can take them with you should you have to evacuate the center for any length of time. The contents of the Kit should be kept up to date so that should you need the information after evacuating, it is correct.

Go Kit Worksheet

Purpose:

Each essential function should have a Go Kit in the event the function must relocate quickly. These kits contain items that are vital to the performance of the function. A kit may be as simple as a portable electronic storage device (flash drive) with all the manuals, forms, contacts, and links necessary to perform the function, even if this data is on a duplicate server or cloud service. The kit may also be a physical box or bag with manuals, supplies, equipment, etc. that are necessary to perform the function. When deciding what goes in a kit, you should be prepared for the loss of electricity and technology, planning for manual workarounds. You should consider keeping a kit at an alternative location in case you can't access your building. It is very important to keep the information contained in the kit up to date.

Definitions:

Essential functions are those functions and activities that the organization identified in the Essential Services Listing.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. Each essential function should have a Go Kit in the event the function must relocate quickly. Create a separate section on the worksheet for each essential function identified in the Essential Services Listing.
2. In the first column, list the types of items that should be included in the kit.
3. In the second column, include a description or listing of the specific items necessary to the essential function.
4. In the third column, record the last time the contents were reviewed and/or updated. All items should be reviewed and/or updated at least once per year.

The information in the sample worksheet is for illustration purposes only. Replace that information with the information for your own organization.

Essential Function: Congregate Meals

Location of Kit: Kitchen dry goods store room

Date Reviewed: April 30, 202x

| Type of Content | Specific Items | Last Update/ Review |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Flash Drive | Procedure manual, Recipes, forms | January 202x |
| Client list (monthly update) | Printout from computer system | March 202x |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Essential Function: Client Transportation

Location of Kit: Senior Center store room

Date Reviewed: April 30, 202x

| Type of Content | Specific Items | Last Update/ Review |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Flash Drive | Procedure manual, forms | January 202x |
| Client list (monthly update) | Printout from computer system | March 202x |
| Keys | Spare keys for each vehicle | December 202x |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Shelter -In-Place

We've just seen what to do when the center must be evacuated. But there are other emergencies that can happen that require just the opposite response. There are emergencies that will require you to stay right where you are. These are emergencies and disasters that are serious enough that you may find yourselves in a position to have to shelter-in-place your staff, volunteers and all those who are attending your site on that day. Shelter-in-place means finding a safe location indoors and staying there until you are given an "all clear" or told to evacuate. You may be asked to shelter-in-place because of an active shooter, tornado, chemical, radiological, or other hazard. Having a plan to get everyone to shelter in the event of an emergency can save lives.

Active Shooter:

An active shooter is an individual engaged in attempting to kill people in a confined space or populated area. Active shooters typically use firearms and have no pattern to their selection of victims.

What to do:

If you see suspicious activity, let an authority know right away. When everyone is safely sheltered, call 911.

Chemical Hazard:

Chemical agents are poisonous vapors, aerosols, liquids and solids that have toxic effects on people, animals or plants.

What to do:

- Turn off all fans, heater or air conditioning.
- If available, tape plastic over windows in the internal rooms in which you are sheltering.
- Use duct tape around the windows and doors and make an unbroken seal. Tape over vents and seal any electrical outlets.
- Do not drink water from the tap. Stored water will be safer.
- Listen for current emergency information and instructions from authorities.

Earthquake:

Earthquakes are the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of underground rock. Earthquakes can collapse buildings and cause heavy items to fall, resulting in injuries and property damage.

What to do:

- Drop, cover and hold on.
- Drop to your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops.
- Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris.
- Do not run outside. If you are already outside, stay outside.

Flooding/Flash Flooding:

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States. Floods may develop slowly or quickly without warning. Flash flood is due to an extreme volume of water in a short period caused by heavy rainfall, a levee or dam failure, or a sudden release of water by a debris or ice jam.

What to do:

- If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building.
- Listen for current emergency information and instructions.

Hurricane (High Wind, Flood and Storm Surge):

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over warm ocean waters and move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include powerful winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, tornadoes, and landslides.

What to do:

- As in any flooding emergency, go to the highest level of the building.
- For high wind, go to a small interior, windowless room at the lowest level of the building.

Nuclear/Radiological Event:

Nuclear explosions can cause significant damage and casualties. Exposure to dangerous radiation falling to the ground can cause severe illness. Radioactive fallout generally begins to collect about 10 minutes after the explosion. This gives you time to find adequate shelter.

What to do:

- Go to the lowest level of your building.
- Stay away from outer walls, windows and roofs.
- The safest structures are either brick or concrete. If you are not in one of these, shelter in the middle of your structure.
- Listen for instructions from authorities before leaving the building.

Pandemic:

This is one that, unfortunately, the world knows about all too well. It never hurts, however, to always remember what to do. Social distancing, hand washing, wearing face masks and getting vaccinated to stop the spread of any respiratory virus.

Thunderstorm:

Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. Thunderstorms are dangerous storms that include lightning, hail, strong winds, and flying debris.

What to do:

- When thunder roars, go indoors.
- A sturdy building is the safest place to be during a thunderstorm.
- Avoid running water or using a landline phone as electricity can travel through plumbing and phone lines.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of thunderstorms.

Tornado:

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground. Tornadoes can destroy buildings, flip cars, and create deadly flying debris.

What to do:

- Take cover by shielding your head and neck with your arms and putting things such as furniture around you.
- If you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust.
- Try to send a text message, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.
- If there is no basement in your building, go to the lowest level of the structure.
- Go to a small, interior, windowless room in the lowest level of your structure.

Winter Storm:

Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning and heart attacks from overexertion.

What to do:

- Limit your time outside.
- If power goes out in your center, keep refrigerators and freezers closed.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment or electronics to avoid spikes that can cause damage.
- Do NOT use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery indoors.
- Never heat your center with a gas stovetop or oven.

Shelter-In-Place Procedures

Purpose:

Having a plan to keep everyone in the building in the event of an emergency can save lives. This worksheet will help you decide the answers to key questions such as:

- How will we notify staff and clients that the building must seek shelter inside?
- Where will the staff and clients go when they seek shelter in the building?
- How will we help the staff and/or clients with physical limitations to get to the shelter quickly?
- How will we know everyone got to the shelter safely?
- What will we do if everyone does not get to the shelter safely?
- How will you know when it is safe to leave the shelter?
- What will we do if we have to stay in the shelter for an extended length of time?

Definitions:

Area/Floor Monitors are responsible for assuring everyone can get to the shelter and that no one is left behind. They should be assigned in advance and receive separate training to assure they know who to notify if anyone needs assistance.

Assistants to Physically Challenged will assist those who may need help in getting to the shelter. This may include people with visual, hearing or physical impairments (walkers, wheelchairs, etc). They should be assigned in advance and receive separate training to assure they know who to report to if there is someone they are unable to assist.

Assembly Area Monitors will account for everyone in the Shelter Area. They will take attendance and inform the Shelter-in-Place Team Leader if anyone is missing or injured. They should be assigned in advance and receive separate training to assure they know who to report to.

Shelter Area is the place in the building designated as the shelter. It should be far enough inside the building to provide protection from extreme winds and other outside dangers.



Worksheet Instructions:

Each step in the template should be addressed. Go through each one and determine the proper response for your organization. Remove the sample text and replace it with the response for your organization. Fill in the team member assignments and make sure each team member knows their assignment. Review all emergency procedures with your local emergency responders annually (especially police, fire, ambulance) to get their feedback.

Shelter-In-Place Procedures

| Action | Description |
|---|---|
| People will be warned to seek shelter inside the building using the following system: | <i>Instructions: Describe how the PA system, alarm systems, etc. will be activated in an emergency.</i> |
| Everyone should go to the following location: | <i>Instructions: Describe where the shelter is. It should be as far away as possible from exterior windows and doors.</i> |
| Assistant(s) to Physically Challenged will help those who need it. | <i>Sample: Area/Floor Monitor(s) will assure that everyone gets to the shelter area.</i> |
| Area/Floor Monitors will be the last out of the building. | <i>Sample: Area/Floor Monitor(s) will assure that everyone in the building knows how to get to the shelter area. If anyone is needs assistance, they will get help from an Assistant to Physically Challenged .</i> |
| Assembly Area Monitor(s) will account for all building occupants. | <i>Sample: Assembly Area Monitor(s) will bring the employee roster and client sign-in sheets to the shelter area. They will take attendance to account for everyone in the building. They will inform the Shelter-in-Place Team Leader if anyone is missing or injured.</i> |
| People will know it is safe to leave the shelter by using the following system: | <i>Sample: Shelter Area will have a battery-operated AM/FM radio that can be tuned to ____ station for weather updates. A land line phone is in the shelter area to contact emergency responders directly.</i> |
| In case an extended stay in the shelter is required, the shelter will contain the following supplies. NOTE: The Shelter-In-Place Team Leader is responsible for assuring the supplies are up to date. | <i>Sample: Shelter Area will have the following supplies: _ bottles of water, _ snack bars, _ blankets, _ chairs, _ cots, _ pillows. A copy of the most recent Quick Reference (listing all emergency phone numbers).</i> |

Instructions: Include a map showing the shelter location(s) in the plan. Also post the map in a conspicuous place for all employees and clients to see.

Shelter-In-Place Team Assignments

| Role | Name(s) | Title/Location |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Shelter-in-Place Leader | Jane Smith | Site Manager |
| Alternate Leader | Joann Jones | Activities Director |
| Area/Floor Monitor(s) | | |
| Assistant(s) to Physically Challenged | | |
| Assembly Area Monitor(s) | | |

Instructions:

Having a plan to get everyone into a shelter in the event of an emergency can save lives. Key questions to ask when developing shelter-in-place procedures:

- How will we notify staff and clients that everyone must seek shelter inside the building?
- Where will the staff and clients go when they take shelter in the building?
- How will we help the staff and/or clients with physical limitations get to the shelter quickly?
- How will we know everyone got to the shelter safely?
- What will we do if everyone does not get to the shelter safely?
- How will you know when it is safe to leave the shelter?
- What will we do if we have to stay in the shelter for an extended length of time?

Answering these questions ahead of an emergency will enable you to assign people to the various roles that are needed during a shelter-in-place situation. Use the answers to those questions to document the plan in the template. All staff should know their role during a shelter-in-place emergency by having a training or exercise at least once per year.

Flood Preparedness

The following Checklists are just another reminder to have on hand that we thought would be useful and were prepared by the U.S. Small Business Administration (with our edits to reflect certain center characteristics)

Checklist for Flood Preparedness

Before the Flood

- Review Emergency Plan with management and Area Agency on Aging
- Take necessary steps to prevent release of dangerous chemicals that may be stored on the property.
- Locate main gas and electrical shut-offs.
- Postpone any receipt of goods, deliveries, couriers, etc.
- Contact insurance agent, discuss policy.
- Establish emergency communication methods (phone tree, etc.)
- Identify meeting place and time for all key employees.
- Create outgoing voicemail message for when evacuated or out of office.
- Update Go Kits.
- Stay tuned to local media & community messaging

During the Flood

- Life safety is paramount.
- Begin business continuity plan.
- Stay tuned to local media and evacuate when required.
- Take cell phones, charger, and Go Kits with you.

After the Flood

- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage – water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.

- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded, roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Clean and disinfect everything in the center that might have gotten wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.

Driving Flood Facts:

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including sport utility vehicles (SUVs).



Hurricane Preparedness

Hurricanes generate a series of threats to lives and property. The most obvious is the threat posed to buildings, equipment, and people by the high winds that characterize such storms.

The following checklist (SBA-provided) will help you and your center prepare for a hurricane's effect by highlighting activities that should be undertaken before, during and following the event.

Checklist for Hurricane Preparedness

Before the Storm

- Stay up-to-date on the storm's progress via radio and/or TV.
- Determine safe evacuation routes.
- Review your Shelter-in-Place plan, making sure your Go Kit is included and that you have fresh batteries and supplies.
- Ensure that your communications plan is in place prior to the storm, evacuation, or threat.
- Turn off all non-critical devices such as a server and other non-essential electrical equipment.
- Ensure that any staff who volunteer to stay on site have proper supplies and equipment (drinkable water, nonperishable food, medical, flashlights, etc.). If an official evacuation order is in place, however, no staff should remain behind.

During the Storm

- Patrol the property continuously and watch for roof leaks, pipe breakage, fire or structural damage. During the height of a windstorm, personnel should remain in a place that has been identified as safe from wind and flood.
- Monitor any equipment that must remain on line.
- During power failure, turn off electrical switches to prevent reactivation before necessary checks are completed.

After the Storm

- Keep listening to radio or TV to make sure the storm has passed.
- Wait until an area is declared safe before entering to secure the site and survey damage.
- Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, turn around and don't drown.
- Survey for safety hazards such as live wires, leaking gas or flammable liquids, poisonous gases.
- If damage occurred, call in key personnel and begin the process of notifying contractors about repair work that needs to be initiated. Take pictures to document damage prior to notifying contractors.
- Have all staff, vendors and client information on hand for notification purposes.
- If evacuation is necessary, have a central point of contact for all staff and ensure you know where they are located.
- Following the storm, notify all critical people of next steps – based on damage.

Hurricane Facts:

In flat areas, storm surges may rush many miles inland. Hurricanes often generate heavy rainfall, which can cause severe flooding over wide areas. Hurricanes also may spawn deadly tornadoes. Flooding and tornadoes may affect areas well inland. You should also prepare for these potential interruptions.

The National Weather Service rates hurricanes by their intensity, using a scale of one to five. The scale categorizes storms according to their sustained winds, the storm surges produced, and expected damage.

Know the Terms:

Tropical Depression: An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less. Sustained winds are defined as one-minute average wind measured at about 33 feet above the surface.

Tropical Storm: An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39-73 mph.

Hurricane: An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 mph or higher.

Storm Surge: A dome of water pushed onshore by hurricane and tropical storm winds. Storm surges can reach 25 feet high and be 50-1000 miles wide. Storm surge is by far the greatest threat to life and property along the immediate coast.

Storm Tide: A combination of a storm surge and the normal tide.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch: Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area of the warning, usually within 36 hours of the onset of tropical storm force winds. Complete storm preparations and immediately leave the threatened area, if directed by local officials.

Extreme Wind Warning: Extreme sustained winds of a major hurricane (115 mph or greater), usually associated with the eye wall, are expected to begin within an hour. Take immediate shelter in the interior portion of a well-built structure.

Short Term Watches and Warnings: These warnings provide detailed information about specific hurricane threats, such as flash floods and tornadoes.



Tornado Preparedness

A tornado is arguably one of the most destructive types of storms imaginable. Unlike a hurricane or tropical storm, a tornado may develop almost without warning, appearing within minutes and leaving little time to react accordingly. Winds can get up to and exceed 200 mph causing enormous damage in its path. Therefore, the importance of being prepared beforehand cannot be conveyed strongly enough.

Checklist for Tornado Preparedness

Before the Tornado

- Have a weather alert radio in the center.
- Have a plan to provide emergency notification (warning system) to all staff, clients, and vendors in an emergency.
- Put your emergency preparedness plan in writing and make sure all new staff are briefed on it and update all employees on it, as well.
- Conduct training regularly to prepare for emergencies. Watch the videos that have been provided to your center as part of this emergency preparedness series.
- When you establish your timeline for center preparation and closure, consider that staff will need to prepare their families and take care of personal matters as well. Allow enough time for them to execute their personal preparedness plans.
- Develop a plan. To allow your payroll, benefits, and HR functions to operate during a disaster, after a disaster, or during any period in which access to your center is restricted.
- If staff will be required to return to the center to assist in the recovery process before all services are restored, obtain an adequate supply of water, nonperishable food, first-aid supplies, cleaning supplies, batteries, flashlights, and other necessities.
- Update your staff contact information regularly and at the beginning of any season during which natural disasters are more likely to occur.
- Look for the following danger signs: dark, often greenish sky, large hail, dark, low-lying clouds, and/or loud roar (similar to a freight train.)

During the Tornado

- Move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor. If possible, get under a heavy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement or the lowest building level. If there is no basement at your senior center, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.

After the Tornado

- Ensure the center is safe for re-entry. A third-party inspector may be necessary to achieve proper safety protocol.
- Communication following a disaster is critical. In advance, establish a communication plan that will work regardless of the nature of the disaster.
- Ensure that you have all staff, vendor and client contact that is updated on hand.
- During evacuation, have a central point of contact for all employees, and ensure you know where your staff are located.
- Following the tornado, notify all critical people of next steps, based on damage.

Tornado facts: Tornadoes are classified using the “Fujita Scale.”

- ➔ A category F0 will have wind speeds of less than 73 mph. The intensity is: Gale
- ➔ A category F1 will have wind speeds of 73-112. The intensity is: Moderate
- ➔ A category F2 will have wind speeds of 113-157. The intensity is: Significant
- ➔ A category F3 will have wind speeds of 158-206. The intensity is: Severe
- ➔ A category F4 will have wind speeds of 207-260. The intensity is: Devastating
- ➔ A category F5 will have wind speeds of 261-318. The intensity is: Incredible

Wildfire Preparedness

Impacts of wildfire include direct property damage, cost of suppression and damage to personal property and natural resources. The severity of effects is directly related to the intensity and extent of the wildfire.

Checklist for Wildfire Preparedness

Before a Wildfire

- Keep an adequate number of fire extinguishers in strategic locations in the center and maintain them properly.
- Train staff on how to use extinguishers correctly.
- If your center is located in an area subject to freezing temperatures, be sure that water outlets at the center are protected.
- If you can, have appropriate tools, such as rakes, saws, buckets and shovels available to help control SMALL fires while waiting for emergency personnel to arrive.

During a Wildfire

- Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level of the facility. Keep away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows. Evacuation orders will often be swift and accurate for affected areas. However, if unable to evacuate, stay inside and away from outside walls. Close doors, but leave them unlocked in case firefighters require quick access into your area.
- If possible, have a battery-operated radio at your center in order to get the latest emergency information.
- Mark your position clearly with anything that may signal rescue workers to your presence inside the center. This could be articles of clothing or bright-colored material attached to the outside of your location.
- Close windows, vents, doors, blinds etc. Shut off gas meters, pilot lights and propane tanks, should your center have these.
- Turn on all lights in the building to increase visibility in heavy smoke.

After a Wildfire

- Have someone check the roof in order to put out any fires, sparks or embers.

- If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. Fires may cause breakers to trip. If the breakers are on and power is still not available, the utility company should be contacted.
- ALWAYS contact 911 if any danger is perceived upon re-entry and contact local experts before finally moving back in.
- Train staff in general fire safety.
- Teach staff about the importance of good housekeeping and grounds maintenance in preventing and controlling fires.
- Have an adequate number of appropriate fire extinguishers and maintain them properly.
- Train key staff in when and how to use fire extinguishers.
- Consider when and how to evacuate staff and clients if a wildfire threatens.
- Establish an evacuation plan and keep it up to date.
- Hold evacuation drills regularly so all staff will know who is in charge and so that they will become familiar with evacuation procedures.
- Make sure all staff and clients get out of the building, find shelter and communicate with a responsible person.
- Plan primary and secondary exits from the center.
- Keep appropriate emergency supplies on hand, including flashlights and first-aid kit.
- If you are located in a wildfire area, consider advising staff to keep personal disaster supplies and copies of important documents at work in case they need to evacuate the center without being able to get home.

Wildfire facts:

A wildfire, or forest fire, is an uncontrolled fire that occurs where natural vegetation is the predominant ground cover. Though wildfires usually occur in less developed, rural areas, they can threaten urban environments if they are not brought under control, and they are geographically widespread.



Winter Weather Preparedness

Winter weather brings concerns about heat and maximizing its retention, frozen pipes, and access to the center. It is a good idea to have a plan of action for your center and your staff in order to be ready for this type of emergency.

Checklist for Winter Weather Preparedness

Before Winter Weather

- Check the insurance coverage for protection against winter hazards
- Develop a procedure for restoring electrical services on an item-by-item basis
- Develop a procedure for relocating salvageable and undamaged stock and supplies
- Add the following supplies to your disaster supplies kit: rock salt (to melt ice on entryway and driveway), sand (to improve traction), and snow shovels
- Determine the greatest risk potential to the center: loss of heat, frozen pipes, and/or loss of access to the center due to snow/ice
- Identify who is responsible for keeping heating equipment in good working order
- Identify who is responsible for snow/ice removal
- Determine what equipment (if any) needs to be protected from freeze-up
- Should the center be equipped with portable heaters
- Seal all openings with caulking and insulation where cold air can enter
- Repair walls and roofs to prevent drafts, if appropriate
- If appropriate, make sure storm windows are effective
- If not your responsibility, arrange for snow removal from driveways, doorways, walkways, and roofs
- Maintain automatic sprinkler protection (if applicable) in idle buildings; promptly handle sprinkler system impairments; notify local fire department
- Monitor building temperature

During Winter Weather

- Heaters, snow blowers, generators, and cold-weather equipment should be located where it is most likely to be used
- Keep driveways, walkways, and doorways clear of snow and ice

- Open water faucets slightly to let them drip in order to keep water flowing through the pipes that are vulnerable to freezing. Ice may still form, but the open faucet helps prevent the pipe from bursting by allowing relief for any built-up pressure
- Make sure that someone is assigned the job of checking the indoor temperature of the center should the center be closed for any length of time

Winter Storm Facts:

Winter storms may range from a moderate snow in a short amount of time to a blizzard lasting days. Some storms are regional and may affect several states, while others are more localized, depending on geography and terrain. Common characteristics of winter storms are dangerously low temperatures, strong winds, ice, sleet, and freezing rain.

Terms:

- **Winter storm watch** - be alert, a storm is likely
- **Winter storm warning** - take action, the storm is in or entering the area
- **Blizzard warning** - snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chills. Seek refuge immediately
- **Winter weather advisory** - winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists
- **Frost/freeze warning** - below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees



Earthquake Preparedness

Checklist for Earthquake Preparedness

Most people would associate the risk of earthquakes with well-publicized and seismically active areas like California, parts of Washington State, and some areas of Nevada and Utah. However, the risk of earthquakes covers a much larger area of the United States.

These are some basic points to consider in preparing for an earthquake.

Before the Earthquake

- Be aware of your risk level. Add a map to your Emergency Preparedness Plan and make sure everyone is aware of the earthquake risk level in your region.
- Think about communications, since the phone company and cell towers may go down. Your emergency response team will need to be in immediate contact with one another to ensure that your plan is activated and moving forward as quickly as possible.
- Develop a plan around communication, and deliver it to your team. Be sure to clearly identify each individual's roles and responsibility prior to (in this case) the earthquake.
- Implement structural and non-structural hazard mitigation actions: bolting furniture to walls, ensure hardware and technology are secure, safety latches for cabinet doors, install fire sprinklers.
- If appropriate, discuss coverage with your insurance provider. Understand your extra expense and business interruption policies before interruptions occur.
- Put together building site maps and floor plans identifying exits, fire escapes, stairways, utility valves and shutoffs, fire extinguishers, hydrants, hazardous materials, and locked or restricted areas. All of these should be included in your plan.
- Prepare your building for an extensive power outage and look at power options such as generator requirements.

During the Earthquake

- If you are indoors, duck or drop down to the floor. Take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture. Hold on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move. Stay clear of windows, heavy furniture or appliances that may fall over. Stay inside to avoid being injured by falling glass or building parts. If you are in a crowded area, take cover where you are. Stay calm and encourage your clients to do likewise. Remember, they may be frail and frightened.
- If you are outside, get into the open, away from buildings and power lines.

If you are driving, stop if it is safe, but stay inside your car. Stay away from bridges, overpasses and tunnels. Move your car as far out of the normal traffic pattern as possible. If possible, avoid stopping under trees, light posts, power lines, or signs.

If you are in a mountainous area, or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rock and other debris that could be loosened by the earthquake.

After the Earthquake

Staff should immediately check for injuries among clients and fellow workers and render first aid. Seriously injured persons should not be moved unless they are in danger of further injury.

Check for fire hazards, gas leaks, or damaged electrical wiring. Make sure main valves are turned off.

Use flashlights (in your emergency supply kit, or Go Kit).

Be prepared for aftershocks – these can come for several days after the main quake and can frequently topple previously weakened structures.

Bring all vital records with you to a recovery site; data, staff lists, vendor lists, etc.

Consider relocation during recovery, depending upon damage to structure.



Foodservice Preparedness

Many senior centers are called congregate dining centers for that is a primary reason that seniors in a particular community utilize the facility. A congregate dining center can have a self-operating kitchen or oftentimes the center utilizes the services of an off-site caterer. Regardless of how the service is handled, preparing and serving those meals is vital to the well-being of the center and its clients. Keeping it operating during or after an emergency may be the center's top priority. The following checklists should be front and center and utilized before and during major emergencies.

Foodservice Preparedness Checklist

Pre-Emergency Planning

- Determine storage needs for frozen, refrigerated and dry food for at least one week.
- Establish a core supply list for food in the event that transportation becomes difficult.
- Establish a menu of shelf-stable meals to be used as back-ups to regular food service (non-emergency)
- Use weekly menus in order to create order guides
- Develop staffing plans based on high levels of absenteeism.
- Invite primary vendors to participate in planning for limited deliveries.
- Secure agreements with vendors for use of storage equipment, such as semi-tractor trailers or refrigerated trucks.
- Work on backup transportation plan with food vendors to improve dependability.
- Secure agreements with local service providers for supplies needed to accomplish your mission.
- Consider the use of disposable plates and utensils to reduce staffing needs and risk of infection spread
- Consider agreements with local service providers to clean and sanitize dining rooms in the event of an outbreak in the center
- Establish service protocols based upon various scenarios
 - Recommendations for social distancing
 - High employee absences
 - Loss of various utilities
- Consider a plan to use grab-and-go meals in the event that social distancing is deemed necessary.

- Consider back-up plans with other vendors and/or community organizations to provide secondary sources of food and supplies in case primary vendors experience supply chain interruptions.

Escalate Preparation When an Emergency is Imminent

- Ask vendors for verification of product levels to fill orders.
- Put vendors on notice about the need for additional truck storage.
- Alert service providers that the need for their services is imminent.
- Determine if food delivery is needed for ill, sequestered or isolated clients.
- Begin sourcing shelf-stable meals for future use.
- Stock up on disposable plates and utensils.

Prepare to Suspend Non-Essential Functions

- Activate Continuity of Operations Plan.
- Need to assure that utilities are not affected so that hot meals can be prepared.
- Begin service plan based on scenario plans developed pre-emergency.
- Assure shelf-stable meals are accessible for use if power is compromised.
- Develop/revise menus based on product availability.
- Continue to support remaining clients and community partners as able.

Directory of Planning Partners

List the contact information for the planning partners

Meal Provider/Caterer

Food service coordinator

Dietitian

Eating Establishments

Cafeterias (schools, universities, etc.)

Coffee shops

Fast-food outlets

Restaurants

Equipment and Supplies

Cleaning agencies

Cold storage plants

Ice outlets

Mobile Facilities

Field kitchens

Meals on wheels

Mobile canteens

Mobile kitchens

Suppliers

Bottled water suppliers

Fresh fruit and vegetable suppliers

Water suppliers

Secondary food suppliers

Bakeries

Dairies

Food processors

Food retailers and wholesalers

Grocery stores and supermarkets

Meat producers

Soft drink distributors

Volunteer Organizations

Red Cross

Religious-affiliated groups

Service clubs

Risk Assessments

Now that we've looked closely at various emergencies and disasters that could have an impact on your senior center, it's time to look at which services will matter the most to your clients and what you will need to have in order to provide those services.

The two biggest mistakes many organizations make are (1) failing to identify a potential risk, and (2) underestimating the severity of a potential risk. We have included a Risk Assessment Worksheet for you to use to help you determine the greatest threats to your organization.

In preparation for an emergency (which is why an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is vital to your organization), you will be making plans to reduce the impact of these risks to your senior center. You will be making plans for what to do when one of these situations arise.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. Identify your risks: Use the worksheet to determine the risks that are likely to affect your senior center. Start with the list in the worksheet that we are providing. Add any additional risks your center may be exposed to that are not already listed. Please note that this may be a good opportunity to reach out to your local emergency management office to get a copy of your community's hazards vulnerability analysis. It contains a list of possible natural and man-made hazards that could affect your area.
2. Rank the probability of each risk: How likely is it to happen? Assign a rank of 0 to 5 in the column marked "Probability," with 5 being the most likely to happen and 0 being no chance of happening.
3. Rank the severity of each risk: What is the potential impact of each risk? How much damage is the risk capable of causing? Think about how long an event could disrupt your services. Also, consider the risk's potential reach (for example: part or all of your building, an entire neighborhood, the entire region). After assessing all of these factors, assign a rank of 0 to 5 in the column marked "Severity," with 5 being the most damaging and 0 being no damage at all.
4. Multiply the "Probability" and "Severity" scores and once you have ranked each risk, multiply the values and record the result in the "Total" column.

The highest-ranking threats (17-25) are those you will need to include in your Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. You should also consider including other high-probability and/or high-severity risks in your plans (those with scores of 4 or higher in either category.)

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Purpose:

From previous worksheets, you know which services matter most to your clients and what you need to have in order to provide those services. This worksheet helps you figure out what might stop you from providing those services.

The two biggest mistakes many organizations make are (1) failing to identify a potential risk, and (2) underestimating the severity of a potential risk. After completing the risk assessment worksheet, you will be able to determine the greatest threats to your organization.

In the Emergency Preparedness section of your plan, you will be making plans to reduce the impact of these risks to your senior center. In the Emergency Response section, you will be making plans for what to do when one of these situations arise.

| Risk | Probability (0-5) | Severity (0-5) | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|
| Naturally Occurring Events | | | |
| Earthquake | | | |
| Epidemic/Pandemic | | | |
| Flood | | | |
| Hurricane | | | |
| Severe Heat | | | |
| Severe Cold/ Winter Weather | | | |
| Tornadoes | | | |
| Wildfire | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Man-Made Events | | | |
| Active Shooter/Workplace Violence | | | |
| Bomb Threat/Explosion | | | |
| Fire Emergency | | | |
| Hazard Material Release/ Spill | | | |
| Information Systems Failure | | | |
| Loss of key staff | | | |
| Structural Damage | | | |
| Utility Outage | | | |
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The Importance of Having a Memorandum of Understanding Prior to an Emergency

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reminds us that memoranda of understanding can effectively assist state and local governments, the aging network, state and local public health, and emergency response officials in sharing information, data, supplies, resources, equipment, or even personnel for the purpose of protecting vulnerable older adults in emergencies.

Prior to any emergency happening in your community, it is a good idea to have community partners to rely on during and after the emergency. In order to formalize the various relationships with the partners, it is a good idea to have in place mutual agreements as to what is expected of each partner. An agreed-upon, written Memorandum of Understanding is an excellent idea so that all parties understand and agree to what they are to do in the event of a community emergency. It is particularly important to the workings of a senior center because of the vulnerabilities of those seniors who attend your center.

Using the template from the CDC as a guide, your center might want to consider initiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with your community partners.

Partners

Determine which entities are involved in addressing the needs of older adults in your community during an emergency.

- Invite entities to create an MOU that addresses the needs of vulnerable older adults.
- Determine which parties will be the signatories to the MOU

All parties to consider being at the table to develop an MOU including:

- Area Agency on Aging
- Local and state public health departments
- Local and state mental health departments
- Local emergency management
- State Unit on Aging
- Home healthcare providers
- Tribal entities
- Other community-based organizations that your center has dealt with or should.
- Consider inviting seniors who are a part of your center and include their participation in the MOU planning.

Definitions

- Inform the partners of the types of physical, mental, and resource impairments that may make your clients vulnerable for the purposes of this MOU.
- Agree upon the types of emergencies or disasters covered under the MOU, or consider an all-hazards emergency approach.
- Determine the ways in which different hazards affect vulnerable older adults differently than the general population.
- Determine specific services that must be maintained in order to protect older adults.
- Agree upon the specific needs of older adults that must be addressed.
- Agree upon the roles of the partners.

Communication and Messaging

Include plans to develop communication strategies and messages for your clients.

- Determine who will develop communications and media messages tailored to older adults in the community.
- Establish agreements with community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to target older adults in the community with messaging.
- Collaborate to develop and provide radio and TV spots aimed at the older adult population in the community.
- Create agreements between the public health sector and your senior center to facilitate vaccination programs and other public health services for your clients.

Relationship Between the Parties

Define and agree upon specific parameters of the relationships between the parties and the MOU.

- Determine and agree upon information flow during pre-event and response.
- Create a plan of who contacts whom; who initiates the process; and focus this plan on specific positions as opposed to certain individuals.
- Agree upon what information will be shared and whether there are jurisdiction-specific restrictions.
- Discuss HIPAA compliance and state confidentiality laws. Determine applicability, and set up procedures for sharing information in times of need, such as obtaining consent from individuals before an event occurs.
- Agree upon and create simple operating procedures as a one-page addendum. Include “the who, the when, and the how,” so that during the response this document can be easily accessed, understood, and implemented.

All parties to a Memorandum of Understanding should agree to meet and review the MOU on a yearly basis, and to update information to all parties, as needed throughout the year.

If possible, agree upon specific requests for assistance prior to an event (what you need, where you need it). Also, agree upon response time for requests for assistance.

Include a provision about testing the Memorandum of Understanding as part of regular exercises.

There is no question that this is not a one-size-fits-all document. You do not need to include every aspect of this MOU for your center. At the very least, however, you should consider implementing an MOU – but one that works best for your center in your community. Having partners before, during and after emergencies will help enormously. The more helping hands during times of crisis, the better. For an MOU, just put down in writing what each of those helping hands can do to minimize the effects of emergencies and disasters.



Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)

When your Emergency Plans are in place, the next step is to incorporate them into your Continuity of Operations Planning, or COOP. This is a federal initiative to encourage people and organizations to plan to address how critical operations will continue under a broad range of circumstances. COOP is important as a best practice and it fosters recovery and survival in and after emergency situations.

The plan could be activated in response to a wide range of events or situations – from a fire in the building; to a natural disaster; to the threat or occurrence of a terrorist attack. Any event that makes it impossible for your staff to work in a senior center or for those who attend your center to be unable to do so could result in the activation of the Continuity of Operations Plan.

The Continuity Plan is the roadmap for implementing your plans and procedures. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's outline for continuity requirements for all organizations is a good reminder of what to do and should be included in any Emergency Preparedness and Response plan. A good COOP plan will have these spelled out and filled in on your checklists.

Essential Functions – These are the critical activities that must be performed by your organization, especially after a disruption of normal activities.

Orders of Succession – These are the provisions for the assumption of staff, particularly executive staff, during an emergency in the event that any of those executive staff members are unavailable to execute their duties.

Delegations of Authority – Identification of position of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at your center or at the Area Agency on Aging level, and all other organizational locations. Generally, pre-determined delegations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction have been disrupted and will lapse when these channels have been reestablished.

Continuity Facilities – Continuity facilities are locations other than your primary facility that can be used to carry out essential functions. Another name for continuity facilities is alternative facilities. This refers to not only other locations, but also nontraditional options such as working from home, etc.

Crisis Communications – These are communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other entities, under all conditions.

Vital Records Management – The identification, protection, and ready availability of electronic and hard copy documents, references, records, information systems, data management – during a continuity situation.

Human Capital – People are essential elements in emergency planning and preparation. In this context, human capital refers to those employees and others who are activated by your organization to perform assigned response duties. These assigned duties should be spelled out on your checklist so that in the event of an emergency everyone knows what he or she is responsible for during and at the conclusion of the emergency.

Tests, Training, and Exercises – Organizations must take measures to ensure that your continuity plan is capable of supporting the continued execution of your organization’s essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.

Reconstitution – This is the process by which personnel resume normal organization operations from either the original or a replacement primary operating facility.

Continuity of Operations Plan Staff Assignments

You know what services or functions you need to perform for your clients. But who will do them? How will you make sure you have enough staff for all of the services or functions that must be performed? And, how can we make sure that no one is being asked to do too much?

The following worksheet will help you answer those questions. Your Emergency Preparedness plan will help you make the best use of the people you have and will need during an emergency.

Purpose:

You know what services (functions) you need to do for your clients. But who will do them? How will you make sure you have enough staff for all of the services? And how can we make sure no one is being asked to do too much?

This worksheet helps you answer those questions. Your emergency plans help you make sure your plan makes the best use of the people you have.

Definitions:

Essential functions are those functions and activities that the organization identified in the Essential Services Listing.

Non-essential services are the “nice to have” functions and activities that the organization identified in the Essential Services Listing.

Worksheet Instructions:

From the Essential Functions - Resource Needed list, take each person’s assignment and list it on this form. This will serve two purposes: (1) make sure everyone an assignment during emergency mode and no one has conflicting duties to do at the same time and (2) serves as a guide to assure each staff member receives the appropriate training for the role(s) they would have to perform in emergency mode. Training should take place at least once per year.

Continuity of Operations Plan Staff Assignments

| Name | Title | Essential Functions | Non-Essential Functions |
|-------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Jane Smith | Site Manager | Congregate meals, Home-delivered meals, Client Transportation | |
| Joann Jones | Kitchen Manager | Congregate meals, Home-delivered meals | |
| Sally Brown | Activities Director | Client Check-in | Client Trips, Client Activities |
| Ted Darling | Volunteer Coordinator | Home-delivered meals | |
| Bob White | Cook | Congregate meals, Home-delivered meals | |
| Volunteers | Drivers | Home-delivered meals, Client Transportation | |
| Volunteers | Activities | Client Check-in | Client Trips, Client Activities |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Alternate Locations

An emergency or a disaster can often cause damage to a building. This can make all or part of the building unusable. In that case, some or all operations may have to move temporarily to different locations. This could happen to your senior center. It is, therefore, important to have arrangements in place in advance of an emergency – just in case it happens.

The following is a very simple worksheet to have prepared well in advance of that eventuality.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. The center may have arrangements to use different alternate locations for different purposes. In the first column, specify the purpose or the function of each alternate location. Also, specify the address of the location. This is very important for anyone who may be responsible on the day of an emergency to know just where the alternate site is located.
2. In the “Contact” column, indicate the person’s name and/or title, primary and alternate phone number(s) and email.
3. Include any “Special Instructions” for accessing the building, such as specific doors to use, access codes, etc.

Alternate Locations

| Site Location | Contact Person | Special Instructions |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Alternate Congregate Meal Site Place Name Street Address | Name and/or Title (xxx) xxx-xxxx email | |
| Alternate Organization Headquarters Place Name Street Address | Name and/or Title (xxx) xxx-xxxx email | |
| County Emergency Operations Center Place Name Street Address | Name and/or Title (xxx) xxx-xxxx email | |
| Offsite Storage Place Name Street Address | Name and/or Title (xxx) xxx-xxxx email | |

Computers and Software

The following form identifies the key computers and software in your senior center that would need to be replaced or repaired if damaged or destroyed during an emergency. Although your senior center might be small, it is still important to catalogue your computer(s) and software. They are an integral part of the administration of your service delivery.

Worksheet Instructions:

List the computer(s) and software that you need to operate your center.

1. In the “Item” column, indicate the type of computer(s) and software.
2. In the “Description” column, include as much detail as possible, including any brand names, model numbers, etc. in the event that these items need to be replaced.
3. In the “Quantity” column, indicate how many computers you have.
4. In the “Purpose” column, indicate what the item is used for, or any additional information about the item that may be helpful in the event of an emergency.
5. In the “Source” column, indicate where you would get replacements. Include vendor name, contact person, phone number, and email.
6. In the last column, indicate which items would be needed if the operations had to be moved to an alternate site.

Computers and Software

| Item | Description | Quantity | Purpose | Source | Need @Alt Site? (Y/N) |
|------|-------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------------------|
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Reconstitution

If you had to move all or part of your operations because of an emergency, at some point, you will need to move back to your original location. If the center is ready to be opened, you will need to reconstitute, or restart operations. The definition here of reconstitution is the process of getting your center back to its pre-emergency operations.

The following is a list of the possible steps that your center might need to do to reconstitute your facility after an emergency. You can add, change, or remove items from this checklist as needed. You need to fill in the blanks in accordance with the needs of your particular organization.

Checklist for Procedures for Reconstitution

- Identify a person who will act as the Reconstitution Manager for all phases of the reconstitution process.
- Reconstitution will commence when the proper, authorized authority (Executive Director, AAA, State Director, etc.) ascertains that the emergency situation has ended and is unlikely to reoccur.
- Within [insert number] hours of the Continuity Plan activation, the Reconstitution Manager will update the authorized authorities with an update on developments regarding the reconstitution of the center.
- The Reconstitution Manager should determine the status of the primary operating facility affected by the emergency by [insert methods here].
- The center executive staff, in conjunction with proper authorities will determine how much time is needed to repair the primary operating facility and/or plan for next steps.
- Should the decision be made to repair the facility, a decision must be made as to who has the responsibility of supervising the repair process.
- Before relocating to the recovered or replaced primary operating facility, an appropriate security, safety and health assessment must be made by proper authorities to determine building suitability.
- Upon verification by proper authorities that the required capabilities are available and operational and fully capable of accomplishing all essential functions and operations at the new or restored facility, the Executive Director will begin supervising a return of personnel, equipment, and documents to the primary operating facility.

After Action Evaluation and Corrective Action Plan

After every emergency, drill, exercise, or training, the center should document any shortfalls it has found in the plan and come up with a way to fix it. The best way to accomplish this is to have a debriefing with all the individuals involved. This is their opportunity to review what worked and what did not. It should also include a review of all reports, documents, notes, etc., to determine lessons learned, gaps in services and/or plan shortcomings. The main purpose of the debriefing process is to ensure that the center can incorporate lessons learned into the emergency plan. It can also help in advocating for the needs of your clients with other organizations related to the emergency.

Checklist for Emergency Remote Working Procedures

Flexibility is the key to instituting remote working procedures. Unfortunately, for some, work is not practical. If a senior center is open, there needs to be someone or several people serving in a supervisory position. But for those whose jobs can be carried out remotely during an emergency, these are the procedures that apply to them.

These lists should be part of your emergency preparedness plans and also your Continuity of Operations Planning.

Action: First list the positions that can work remotely.

Describe: List what those positions are. For example: Case Workers, Dietitians, Client Services Coordinators.

Action: Identify the IT equipment that each remote worker will need.

Describe: What are those pieces of equipment that will be needed for remote work. For example, a computer with internet browser, a camera for virtual calls (Zoom), telephone, etc.

Action: Identify the other items each remote worker will need.

Describe: This can include material items, such as specific supplies, or procedural things, such as log-in credentials for a specific server, etc.

Checklist for Medical Emergency Procedures

It is a fact that those who attend senior centers or congregate nutrition programs may have certain medical conditions that could lead to medical emergencies – both minor and sometimes even major. Being prepared for these medical emergencies can save lives. A checklist should be a part of your emergency plan and should be reviewed by the appropriate first responders in your community and modified based on your situation and their recommendations. It is safe to assume that neither you nor your staff are trained medical professionals. Therefore, it is always best to engage the first responders in your community when putting together your checklist of just what to do in case of a medical emergency.

Based on best practices throughout the country, there are certain practices that have proven effective. Training on what to do in a medical emergency should happen at least once a year. It is best to have a first responder lead this type of training. They are called first responders because they are the ones we look to first in case of emergencies like these. Have them become part of your annual training. They will be pleased to do so because should they need to be called to your organization in case of emergency, the tasks you perform prior to their arrival can help them save a potential bad outcome. Let's put together some items for your checklist for medical emergencies.

Action: Immediately call for help.

Description: Call 911 and request an ambulance. Give the 911 operator the following information:

- Nature of injury or illness
- Location of the emergency (your building's address and name of the building)
- Report if any hazards are involved
- Tell them where the nearest entrance to the building is

Action: Attend to the person having the medical emergency

Description: Follow these guidelines when attending to a person having a medical emergency:

- Do not move the person unless the person's location is unsafe
- Do not administer first aid or CPR unless you or someone on your staff is trained to do so. If no one has that training, do not attempt it
- Take precautions to prevent contact with bodily fluids and exposure to blood-borne pathogens
- Stay with the person until trained help arrives

Action: Prepare for medical help to arrive.

Description: Control access to the scene. It is imperative to keep unnecessary onlookers away. Meet the ambulance at the nearest entrance or emergency access point and direct them to the person(s) affected by an emergency.

There will be times in a medical emergency that you will have to wait for first responders. This is particularly true in smaller communities where there may be fewer first responders. However, this does not mean that minor first aid cannot be administered. For example, you should always have a first aid kit available in case of an accident that might require stanching of a bloody cut. Firm pressure on a bleeding wound can help but always remember to avoid contact with blood or other bodily fluids. All staff and probably all participants should be made aware of the location of the first aid kit.

Have your community first responders come to your center and give a presentation on just what to do in case of a medical emergency and then have them take a look at your checklist to confirm that what you do in case of such an emergency meets their approval.

Checklist for Fire Emergency Procedures

A fire can happen in any building. It is perhaps more likely to happen in a building where heat is used to prepare and/or serve food. But there are other ways that fires can break out at your center. Being prepared for fire emergencies can save lives.

As with medical emergencies, fire emergency checklists for your center should be reviewed with the appropriate first responders in your community and modified based on your situation and their recommendations.

After you have reviewed your checklist and approved by the proper authorities, your staff must learn the key guidelines. Training should happen at least once a year. It is best to have a first responder lead this type of training. As with a medical emergency, the first responders for fire emergencies would seek your help prior to their arrival to ensure that proper safety procedures are in place before they get there.

✓ Action

Make sure that your center has a working fire alarm and fire extinguisher. According to the National Fire Protection Association: “Performing an inspection is the easiest thing you can do to ensure your extinguisher can be used reliably and effectively in an emergency. At a minimum, inspection needs to consist of the following steps:

- Make sure the extinguisher is located in its designated place
- Make sure the extinguisher is visible or that there is signage indicating where the extinguisher is located
- Make sure you can easily access the extinguisher
- Ensure the pressure gauge is in the operable range or position
- Make sure it is full. This can be done by just lifting the extinguisher or you can weigh it
- For wheeled extinguishers, make sure the condition of the tires, wheels, carriage, hose, and nozzle are acceptable
- For non-rechargeable extinguishers, operate the push-to-test pressure indicators

Description

Fire alarms (or smoke alarms) should be tested monthly to make sure they are working. If you have any questions about how to do that, you should consult with your local first responders. Also, they should be the final say in how often to test them and if they need to be replaced.

√ Action

Immediately call for help.

Description

Call 911 and request the fire department. Give the 911 operator the following information:

- Location of the fire (address of your building and name of your building)
- Nature of the fire
- Fire location within the building

√ Action

Evacuate the building

Description

Evacuation procedures that have already been discussed are applicable in the case of a fire emergency. There are some special procedures, however, that are specific to fire emergencies. They are:

- Redirect people to the stairs and exits away from the fire
- Do not let anyone in your building use an elevator

√ Action

Fight the fire ONLY if:

Description

- The fire department has been notified
- The fire is small and is not spreading to other areas
- Escaping the area is possible by backing up to the nearest exit
- The fire extinguisher is in working condition and personnel are trained to use it

√ Action

After people are deemed safe, protect the facility and equipment

Description

- Disconnect utilities and equipment unless doing so jeopardizes your own safety
- Verify that fire protection systems are operating normally (for example: sprinklers)
- Operate building utility and protection systems as directed by the fire department

√ Action

Coordinate with the Fire Department Incident Commander

Description

- Inform the Incident Commander if everyone has been accounted for and if there are any injuries
- Provide an update on the nature of the emergency and actions taken
- Provide building floor plans, keys and other assistance as requested

Final Checklist Reminders

Throughout this document we have discussed many aspects of Emergency Preparedness and Response. We have mentioned just how important it is to have checklists at hand if and when an emergency arises. These checklists need to be agreed upon by all those who will be responsible for the safety of your center, staff, and clients. They must know what is expected of them prior to and during an emergency. Therefore, they must be well briefed and encouraged to be a participatory member of the ongoing updating and training of the various aspects of your plan. And, your plan **MUST** be updated at least yearly.

If the plan is approved and no changes need to be made, that's fine. But those responsible still need to review the plans on an annual basis to be reminded of what is expected of them. There is always going to be staff turnover and that is another reason that training must be undertaken on a yearly basis. The training can be as simple as marking the various checklists we have provided to ensure that your center and staff is knowledgeable about the checklists and understand their roles in each scenario.

Business Continuity Planning:

Your senior center or your nutrition program is really a business. A business continuity plan is the process involved in creating a system of prevention and recovery from potential threats to your center. The plan should ensure that personnel and equipment (and other assets) are protected and are able to function quickly in the event of a disaster.

- Maps: You should have maps of your facility layout to show where to turn utilities and equipment off. Building floor plans, site plan (building grounds, fire protection systems, emergency shut-offs), street maps, and other appropriate maps.
- Procedure charts: Simple organizational charts with the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of key emergency personnel. (These charts will be useful before and during emergency operations,)
- Key Personnel charts: Which staff members are assigned to key activities, such as dealing with local governments, evacuation responsibilities, etc.
- Service agreements: outline whose responsibility it is to have names and numbers of vendors and plans in place prior to an emergency to ensure prompt restoration of services after an emergency or provision of those services during an emergency.
- Memoranda of Understanding: Agreements made with other entities to assist one another within defined scopes of work during emergencies.

Internal Communications Plan Checklist:

This is a checklist for communicating with staff and clients and others prior to, during, and at the conclusion of an emergency.

- Detailed plan of notification to affected parties of planned shutdown of your center.
- Make sure that your client phone numbers and addresses are up to date on a yearly basis.
- Institute a “call tree” and assign personnel to call clients to let them know if the site is closing. It is also extremely important to know the status of the clients throughout the emergency. If the center will be closed for any length of time, a phone reassurance call is always a good idea.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of your vendors
- Put a plan in place to alert staff members and volunteers of “next steps,” such as working from home or performing other duties not necessarily in their job descriptions.

Workplace Safety Checklist:

This is the most important checklist of all. It is a rather exhaustive list but one that, if executed well, can save lives.

Develop and practice your Occupant Evacuation Plan

Include provisions for:

- Notification of emergency responders
- Notification and training of employees to act as floor wardens to assist in building evacuations
- Conduct evacuation drills
- Document procedures for equipment shutdown and protection, electrical systems, shutdown, and how to protect stored parts and inventory
- Train and drill staff on shut-down procedures

Develop and practice a severe weather Emergency Response Plan

Distribute to staff, as appropriate. Include:

- A communications plan
- Plans to allow for transportation options to safely get your clients home
- Procedures to alert family members of your clients’ needs, if necessary
- Procedures for covering windows and doors and securing the building from storms and potential vandalism
- Procedures for notifying local media, building management, security and local authorities, if appropriate, of a pending closing and with a list of authorized personnel permitted to talk to the press and also permitted on the premises after the storm
- Have emergency supplies on hand

Develop a Medical Emergency Response Plan:

As you are dealing with an older population, it is important to be prepared for any type of medical emergency. You will need to:

- Invite either a local Red Cross volunteer or a local EMS volunteer to present primary first aid training
- Encourage all staff to attend these training sessions
- Have first aid kits in your center or facility and make sure that everyone knows the location of the kits

Develop a Shelter-in-Place Plan

This checklist is important if an emergency or disaster happens suddenly and staff and participants cannot exit the building.

- Identify safe havens in windowless rooms in the center of the building or on a basement level
- You are equipped with flashlights, battery-powered radios, blankets, food, water, and first aid supplies
- Signs alerting staff and clients to shelter areas
- Train and drill staff as to when to shelter-in-place and where to go

Summary of Needs:

- Meet with police and fire department to talk about community emergency response capabilities
- Work with local fire, EMT, and police departments to have them assess your emergency response plan
- Have on hand working flashlights, whistles, and other emergency supplies
- Have go-bags ready in case of evacuation
- Develop contact lists and a notification and communication plan
- Establish contingency plans for vendor supplies
- Post emergency phone numbers to activate crisis response plan
- Assign key personnel positions during emergencies
- Ensure fire extinguisher is in optimal working condition
- Train all staff in emergency preparedness procedures annually
- Ensure that all lists of clients' names, phone numbers, and addresses are updated and that copies of them are available to staff even when power goes out
- Plans and procedures are reviewed and up-to-date
- Staff rosters are updated
- Use tests, drills, and exercises to identify weaknesses in your Emergency Preparedness Plan

Emergency Administration Procedures

Purpose:

The objective of this section is to outline the administrative procedures that would be necessary to support the organization's essential functions during a business interruption.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. The worksheet contains a list of possible supports that your essential functions might need in an emergency. Add, change or remove items from the template as needed.
2. In the Details column, include any information that may be needed for the staff during or after an emergency.

Emergency Administration Procedures

Finances

| Item | Details |
|---|---------|
| Cash | |
| Cash needs if the interruption is | |
| 3 days | |
| 5 days | |
| 10 days | |
| What the cash can be used for | |
| Where the cash will be | |
| Who decides when it will be used | |
| How it is accessed | |
| Credit Card | |
| When it can be used | |
| Where the card will be | |
| Who is authorized to use it | |
| Any special procedures to be used during an emergency | |
| Emergency Line of Credit | |
| Bank | |
| Account Number | |
| Bank Contact Person | |
| Who is authorized to access it | |
| Client payments/contributions | |

 **Emergency Administration Procedures** (continued)

| | |
|---|--|
| Any special procedures to be used during an emergency | |
| Paying bills | |
| Any special procedures to be used during an emergency | |

Human Resources

| Item | Details |
|---|----------------|
| Payroll | |
| When can staff use sick and/or vacation time? | |
| How are employees notified of changes? | |
| Any special procedures to be used during an emergency | |
| Working conditions | |
| Are employees expected to work overtime? | |
| Are some or all employees expected to work from home? | |
| Are changes restricted by a union contract? | |

Emergency Preparedness Plan Maintenance

Purpose:

Your organization should review its Emergency Preparedness Plan every year. Usually, the plan is made up of many parts, with different people being responsible for different parts. The Plan Review Table will help you keep track of all of the parts and to make sure they are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. The Plan Distribution Record will help you make sure the updated plans are distributed to the appropriate people.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. In the first column of the Plan Review Table, enter the different parts of your emergency preparedness plan. The elements in the template can be used as a starting point. Add, delete or change elements as needed for your organization.
2. In the second column, enter the date you plan to review that part of the plan. The dates can be spread out throughout the year, or all parts can be reviewed at the same time. Use a timeline that makes sense for your organization.
3. In the third column, indicate the person who is responsible for performing the review/update.
4. In the last column, indicate the date that the review was completed.
5. Use the Plan Distribution Record to keep track of what has been distributed and to whom. Use the first column to show which component was delivered.
6. In the second column, enter the date it was delivered
7. In the third column, indicate the way it was delivered (by email, inter-office mail, etc.).
8. If hard copies (paper) were sent, use the fourth column to indicate how many were sent.
9. Use the last column to indicate the title and/or name of the person(s) receiving the plan.

Emergency Preparedness Plan Maintenance

Once a year, **[insert organization]** reviews its Emergency Plan, components, and supporting elements, and makes any required updates or changes.

Plan Review Table

| Element to Review | Date to Review | Who Reviews | Date completed |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Essential Functions | | | |
| Alternate Locations | | | |
| Organization Charts | | | |
| Risk Assessment | | | |
| Emergency Response | | | |
| Continuity of Operations | | | |
| Communications | | | |
| Resource Lists | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Plan Distribution Record

| Component Delivered | Date Delivered | Method of Delivery | Number of Hard Copies | Name, Title of Recipient |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |

Emergency Remote Working Procedures

Purpose:

There are a number of reasons that an organization can be forced to move as much of its workforce off-site as possible. When that happens, it is necessary for the staff who are working remotely to have access to the appropriate equipment, supplies and support. Use this form to document the resources they will need and the support they will have to get set up. You should also use this form to document changes in operating procedures that are required to accommodate the remote workforce.

Worksheet Instructions:

The template is a starting point, with a list of actions you should consider for your organization. Add, remove or change any Actions or Descriptions as needed for your organization.

Each staff member who is designated to work remotely in an emergency should check the equipment and supplies they have at home and test their remote log-in capabilities to any systems they would need to access. This should be done at least once per year.

Emergency Remote Working Procedures

| Action | Description |
|--|---|
| Identify positions that can work remotely | Case Workers Nutritionists Client Services Intake |
| Identify the IT equipment each remote worker will need | Equipment requirement for each remote worker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer with internet browser, camera (for Zoom calls) • High speed internet access • Scanner/Printer • Telephone See the organization's policy on the cost to the employee for purchasing any remote working equipment |
| Identify the other items each remote worker will need | Supplies for each remote worker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff directory with contact information of all employees (email, cell phone and land line) • Paper • Pens/pencils • Login credentials for company network, email system, client database |
| Anticipated set up time | Each remote worker will be expected to be able to start remote work within 48 hours of being notified that remote work is required. |
| Identify the process for routing client telephone calls to the proper person | The main inbound telephone line will be routed to [designated person], who will forward the calls to the appropriate person, as able, using their phone's forwarding capabilities. Voice mail messages from the main inbound phone number will be forwarded to the appropriate person using the telephone system's voice mail capabilities. |
| Support provided to remote workers | Obtaining equipment or supplies: name, phone number IT support – logging in: name, phone number IT support – client database: name, phone number |

Emergency Response Staff Assignments

Purpose:

Members of your staff must be willing and able to assist in response to an emergency. Knowing their roles will help ensure the safety of all clients, volunteers and employees in the building when an emergency happens. This worksheet helps organize your staff before an emergency. Compiling this information this way will help you in two ways: (1) make sure everyone has at least one assignment during an emergency and no one has two or more duties to do at the same time; and (2) serves as a guide to assure each staff member receives the appropriate training for the role(s) they would have to perform in an emergency.

Definitions:

Designated Responsible Official should be the person in charge of the facility, i.e, the Site Manager, Center Director, Executive Director, etc.

Emergency Coordinator is the person who will coordinate the emergency response, if different from the Designated Responsible Official.

Alternate Emergency Coordinator is the alternate to either or both of the people above.

Area/Floor Monitors are responsible for assuring everyone can evacuate the building and that no one is left behind. They should be assigned in advance and receive separate training to assure they know the evacuation routes, and who to notify if anyone needs assistance.

Assistants to Physically Challenged will assist those who may need help in evacuating during an emergency. This may include people with visual, hearing or physical impairments (walkers, wheel-chairs, etc). They should be assigned in advance and receive separate training to assure they know the evacuation routes, and who to report to if there is someone they are unable to assist.

Worksheet Instructions:

Not everyone in your organization will be willing or able to participate due to health issues or other important responsibilities. Select people who are able and willing to commit to the task. If you have volunteers who are onsite regularly, you may assign them to roles they are qualified for.

Organizing and training your staff in advance will make them more effective, more confident, and more resilient should they have to respond to an actual event.

Emergency Response Staff Assignments

DESIGNATED RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL (Highest Ranking Manager):

Name: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

EMERGENCY COORDINATOR:

Name: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

ALTERNATE EMERGENCY COORDINATOR:

Name: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

AREA/FLOOR MONITORS:

Area/Floor: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____
Area/Floor: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

ASSISTANTS TO PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____

ASSEMBLY AREA MONITORS:

Area/Floor: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____
Area/Floor: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

STAFF/VOLUNTEERS WITH FIRST AID/CPR TRAINING:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Services Contacts

Purpose:

Emergency Services are the first responders that may be needed in an emergency. This listing should be kept current and readily available. In addition to keeping a copy of this list in the emergency, a copy should conspicuously near the telephones.

Worksheet Instructions:

List any emergency service providers in your area. It should include not only community-based first responders (police, fire, ambulance) but also any other contractors that might be needed in an emergency (plumbing, clean-up, etc.). If the organization has any formal or informal agreements with other community organizations for mutual aid, those phone numbers should also be listed here. Add any emergency service providers not listed on the template and/or remove any that do not apply to your organization. The list should be updated at least once per year.

- 1. In the Contact column, list the name and/or title of the person you should talk to in case of emergency, if there is an alternate, also include that person's name and/or title.**
- 2. In the Emergency Number column, include any phone numbers or pager numbers that can be contacted.**
- 3. In the Non-Emergency Number column, include any additional phone numbers or email addresses that can be used in non-emergency situations.**



Emergency Services Contacts

| | Contact | Emergency Number | Non-Emergency Number |
|------------------------------|---------|------------------|----------------------|
| Emergency Responders | | | |
| Police Department | | | |
| Fire Department | | | |
| Emergency Medical Services | | | |
| Building Security | | | |
| Building Manager | | | |
| Emergency Resources | | | |
| Hospital | | | |
| Public Health Department | | | |
| Emergency Management Agency | | | |
| State Environmental Agency | | | |
| Utility Companies | | | |
| Electric Utility Company | | | |
| Water Utility Company | | | |
| Gas Utility Company | | | |
| Telephone Company | | | |
| Service Providers | | | |
| Electrician | | | |
| Plumber | | | |
| Fire Protection Contractor | | | |
| Elevator Service | | | |
| Hazardous Materials Cleanup | | | |
| Cleanup/Disaster Restoration | | | |
| Other Organizations | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Emergency Systems

Purpose:

Most organizations have several systems that will help prevent or respond to emergencies. Depending on the building codes in your area, you may have smoke detectors, fire alarms or sprinklers installed in your building. Your organization may have supplied you with first aid supplies and personal protective equipment (latex gloves, masks, gowns). You may also have multiple ways to communicate with people, like two-way radios for people who work outside of the building, or a public address (PA) system to make announcements to people inside of the building.

These are referred to as “emergency systems”. This worksheet will help you determine which emergency systems you have in place. It also gives you a place to document where they are located, and how to find the instructions on how to use them.

Definitions:

Protective systems are safety systems that can be activated in an emergency to help protect people’s lives. Many of these systems are built in to the building.

Communications systems are methods that can be used to warn, notify or communicate with people in the building or at other locations during an emergency.

Safety equipment is anything that can be used to help if someone is injured or becomes ill while in the building.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. **Start with the list of systems and equipment that is included in the sample worksheet. Add any systems or equipment that you have that is not included on the list, and remove any that you do not have. Note: before removing anything from the list, think about whether or not your organization could benefit from having it.**
2. **For each type of equipment listed, describe where you can find it in the building. For systems that cover the entire building (like an alarm system), describe where the system’s controls are. For items that are kept in storage, be specific as to which storage location it is, to avoid confusion.**
3. **Also, many types of equipment will have instructions on how to use them properly. If it is not obvious how to use something, include a description of where the instructions for the equipment are kept.**

This list should be available for easy reference by any employee. It should be updated at least once per year.

Emergency Equipment

| System | Location and Instructions |
|--|---------------------------|
| Protective Systems | |
| Fire Alarm | |
| Building sprinkler system | |
| Kitchen fire extinguisher system | |
| Individual fire extinguishers | |
| | |
| Communications Systems | |
| Mass notification system | |
| Two-way radios | |
| Public address (PA) system | |
| Emergency frequency radio | |
| | |
| Safety Equipment | |
| First Aid kit | |
| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | |
| Automated External Defibrillator (AED) | |
| | |

Fire Emergency Procedures

Purpose:

A fire can happen in any building. It is more likely in a building where heat is used to prepare and serve food. Being prepared for fire emergencies can save lives. The procedures in the sample are based on best practices. They should be reviewed with the appropriate first responders in your community and modified based on your situation and their recommendations.

Worksheet Instructions:

After reviewing these procedures with first responders, inform all staff of the key points. Training should happen at least once per year. It is often best to have a first responder lead this type of training.

Fire Emergency Procedures

| Action | Description |
|--|--|
| Activate the nearest fire alarm | <i>Include any special instructions</i> |
| Immediately call for help | <p>Call 9-1-1 and request the fire department. Do not wait for approval or permission. Give the 9-1-1 operator the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the fire (address or building name) • Nature of fire • Fire location within the building |
| Evacuate the building | <p>See Building Evacuation Procedures. Special notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirect people to stairs and exits away from the fire. • Do not let anyone use an elevator. |
| Fight the fire ONLY if | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fire Department has been notified. • The fire is small and is not spreading to other areas. • Escaping the area is possible by backing up to the nearest exit. • The fire extinguisher is in working condition and personnel are trained to use it. |
| After people are safe, protect the facility and equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect utilities and equipment unless doing so jeopardizes your safety • Verify that fire protection systems are operating normally (e.g., sprinklers) • Operate building utility and protection systems as directed by the fire department. |
| Coordinate with the Fire Department Incident Commander | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the Incident Commander if everyone has been accounted for and if there are any injuries. • Provide an update on the nature of the emergency and actions taken. • Provide building floor plans, keys and other assistance as requested. |
| Location/instructions for kitchen fire extinguisher system | |
| Location/instructions for building sprinkler system | |
| Location/instructions for individual fire extinguishers | |

Medical Emergency Procedures

Purpose:

Persons attending congregate nutrition programs often have medical conditions that can lead to medical emergencies. Being prepared for these medical emergencies can save lives. The procedures in the sample are based on best practices. They should be reviewed with the appropriate first responders in your community and modified based on your situation and their recommendations.

Definitions:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment worn to minimize exposure to pathogens in the air and in bodily fluids. Examples of medical PPE include gloves, masks and protective clothing.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a machine that is used to help restart the heart of someone experiencing cardiac arrest.

Worksheet Instructions:

After reviewing these procedures with first responders, inform all staff of the key points. Training should happen at least once per year. It is often best to have a first responder lead this type of training.

Determine if any staff or regular volunteers have medical training. Make sure they are aware of these procedures and determine if they are willing and able to help in an emergency. If so, record their information in the Staff with Medical Training section.

Medical Emergency Procedures

| Action | Description |
|---|---|
| Immediately call for help | Call 9-1-1 and request an ambulance. Do not wait for approval or permission. Give the 9-1-1 operator the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of injury or illness • Location of the emergency (address or building name) • Hazards involved (if any) • Nearest entrance |
| Attend to the person(s) having the medical emergency | Follow these guidelines when attending to persons having a medical emergency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not move the victim unless the victim's location is unsafe. • Do not administer first aid or CPR unless trained to do so • Take "universal precautions" to prevent contact with body fluids and exposure to blood borne pathogens • Stay with the person until trained help arrives |
| Prepare for medical help to arrive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control access to the scene. Keep unnecessary onlookers away • Meet the ambulance at the nearest entrance or emergency access point; direct them to victim(s). |
| Notify any staff or volunteers with medical training | See list below |
| If trained personnel are <u>not</u> available, the following types of assistances can be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the bleeding with firm pressure on the wounds (note: avoid contact with blood or other bodily fluids). • In case of choking, clear the air passages and use the Heimlich Maneuver |
| Location of the first aid kit and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | |
| Locations of Automated External Defibrillator(s) (AEDs) | |

Staff with Medical Training

| Name | Type of Training | Title/Location |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Jane Smith | First Aid/CPR | Site Manager |
| Joann Jones | Volunteer Firefighter | Activities Director |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Testing, Training and Exercise Program

Purpose:

All organizations should develop and maintain a Testing, Training & Exercise program for their emergency plans and procedures. Testing, training, and exercising are essential to demonstrating, assessing, and improving your organization's ability to execute the plans if and when they are needed. This document should help guide the organization's program.

Definitions:

Testing is a small-scale trial of a limited number of procedures that are to be used in response to an emergency. One goal is to assess, validate, and identify corrections needed in any plans, procedures, systems, and/or facilities. Testing also ensures that equipment and procedures are kept in a constant state of readiness.

Training familiarizes employees with their roles and responsibilities in support of the organization's plan during an emergency.

Exercising puts testing and training together. It assures that the employees will be able to carry out their responsibilities and that the procedures will produce the desired results. As with testing, one goal of exercising is to assess, validate, and identify corrections needed in any plans, procedures, systems, and/or facilities. Exercising will also assess, validate, and identify corrections needed in staff training.

Worksheet Instructions:

1. **This template contains sample text. Activities can be added, edited or removed as needed by your organization.**
2. **Change the X's to the planned dates of the activity for your organization (e.g., first month of every quarter, every July, etc).**

Testing, Training and Exercise Program

The organization has established a Testing, Training and Exercise (TT&E) program to support its emergency preparedness and validate its ability to perform essential functions during any emergency. The testing, training, and exercising of its capabilities are essential to demonstrating, assessing, and improving the organization's ability to execute its program, plans, and procedures. The organization performs TT&E activities at regular intervals, as shown in the table below.

| | TT&E Activity | Monthly | Quarterly | Annually | As Re-quired |
|----|--|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Print/review a client contact list | X | | | |
| 2 | Print/review a staff contact list | | X | | |
| 3 | Print/review a vendor contact list | | X | | |
| 4 | Test fire extinguisher system in the kitchen | | X | | |
| 5 | Test the recovery of computer back-ups | X | | | |
| 6 | Test the emergency communications equipment | | X | | |
| 7 | Test the alert and notification procedures for employees | | X | | |
| 8 | Test the employees' remote work capabilities | | X | | |
| 9 | Test primary and back-up systems and services at alternate work locations | | | X | |
| 10 | Review, inspect and update contents of Go Kits | | X | | |
| 11 | Inspect and update contents of shelter-in-place supplies | | X | | |
| 12 | Train essential employees on roles and responsibilities | | | X | |
| 13 | Conduct continuity awareness trainings or orientation for all staff | | | X | |
| 14 | Train the organization's leadership on essential functions | | | X | |
| 15 | Train backups to leadership positions if a leader is incapacitated or is otherwise unavailable during an emergency | | | X | |

| | TT&E Activity | Monthly | Quarterly | Annually | As Re- quired |
|----|--|----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 16 | Conduct an exercise that allows opportunity for essential employees to demonstrate familiarity with <u>emergency response</u> plans and procedures and demonstrate agency's capability to recover from an emergency | | | X | |
| 17 | Conduct an exercise that allows opportunity for essential employees to demonstrate familiarity with <u>continuity of operations</u> plans and procedures and demonstrate agency's capability to continue essential functions | | | X | |
| 18 | Conduct an exercise that allows opportunity for essential employees to demonstrate familiarity with <u>crisis communications</u> plans and procedures and demonstrate agency's capability to communicate with target audiences | | | X | |
| 19 | Conduct an exercise that incorporates the preplanned movement of essential employees to alternate work locations | | | X | |
| 20 | Conduct assessment of agency's emergency preparedness plans and TT&E program | | | X | |
| 21 | Report findings of the assessment to the [insert office/position title] | | | X | |

Appendix B: References

References in this section were used to develop the checklists and templates

Federal Emergency Management Agency; Ready.gov

<https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-planning-suite>

<https://www.ready.gov/business>

<https://www.ready.gov/business-training>

<https://www.ready.gov/program-reviews>

<https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/emergency>

<https://www.ready.gov/crisis-communications-plan>

Federal Emergency Management Agency; Continuity Plan Template for Non-Federal Entities

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/non-federal-continuity-plan-template_083118.pdf

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-101/emrgact/emrgact.pdf>

State of Georgia; Department of Human Services Online Directives Information System

<https://odis.dhs.ga.gov/General>

Missouri State Emergency Management Agency

<https://health.mo.gov/emergencies/pdf/coop.pdf>

Ohio Department of Administrative Services

<https://das.ohio.gov/employee-relations/office-of-collective-bargaining/business-continuity/1business-continuity>

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety

https://disastersafety.org/wp-content/uploads/OFB-EZ_Toolkit_IBHS.pdf

Kaiser Permanente

<https://www.calhospitalprepare.org/hazard-vulnerability-analysis>

New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

https://hocps.blob.core.windows.net/0035/files/Continuity_of_OperationsPlanTemplate_.pdf

University of Minnesota, Department of Emergency Management

https://dem.umn.edu/sites/dem.umn.edu/files/continuity_of_operations_plan_template_2020.docx

Vanderbilt University: Pandemic Plan Matrix

<https://emergency.vanderbilt.edu/vu/flu-pandemic/pandemicflumatrixforwebsite.pdf>

Public Health Agency of Canada, Emergency Food Service: Planning for Disasters

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/Emergency/MajorEvents/Documents/Emergency-Food-Services-Planning-for-Disasters.pdf>

Other references that may be helpful in developing and maintaining emergency plans

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Ready is a national public service campaign designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters.

<https://www.ready.gov/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): the Continuity Resource Toolkit has several resources to help organizations develop Continuity of Operations plans

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/continuity/toolkit>

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) has toolkits to help prepare for Earthquake, Hurricane, Flooding, Power Outage, and Tornado

<https://www.flash.org/readybusiness/>

University of Louisville KY Emergency Preparedness for Aging & LTC Programs: Kentucky LTC Emergency Preparedness Manual contains several checklists and templates for organizations that operate long term care facilities.

<https://kyepltc.org/ltc-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-manual/>

Feeding America/West Ohio Food Bank: Member Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Guidance Template for organizations that operate food banks

http://www.westohiofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Foodbank_Guidance_COVID-19-WOFB-Completed.pdf