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

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OBJECTIVES

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

HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL?



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

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS New Mexico has new proposed **Emergency Preparedness requirements** for Assisted Living. Although there is no time frame for implementation it's a great time to start preparing!

COMPONENT #1 – RISK ASSESSMENT & PLANNING

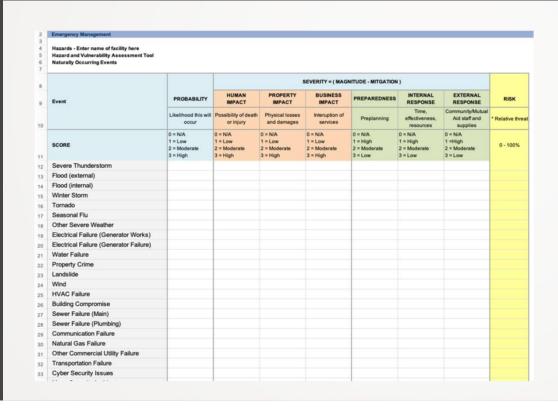
- Risk assessment and planning is commonly completed using an Excel based tool called a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA)
- A great exercise to include staff (it doesn't have to be completed by just one person)
- No need to recreate the wheel there are sample HVA's available from many websites including AHCA/NCAL

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FOUR CORE ELEMENTS TO AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN



HAZARD VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS (HVA)



HVA's can help outline:

- Probability of each hazard or event
- The human, property & business impact of the emergency
- Level of preparedness and response

- Engage staff to help identify other emergency procedures
- Talk with external stakeholders about the community's needs for power sources and or evacuation
- Identify and plan out alternative scenarios where power affects operations and resident needs
- When planning for evacuation, identify the modes of transportation that will work for different scenarios - Have a memo of understanding (MOU) with transportation providers so your community has priority

COMPONENT #2 – POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- It will feel like you are required to have a lot of specific policies and procedures
- From the proposed requirements, a sample of required policies and procedures may include ones on you will:

Provide for substance needs during and evacuation or shelter in place (food, water, medications, PPE, etc.)

Maintain temperature, lighting, sewage, and waste disposal in an emergency

Tracking staff, volunteers, and residents

COMPONENT #2 – POLICIES & PROCEDURES

More samples of proposed requirements

Safe sheltering in place

Safe evaluation of the AL facility

Maintaining medical documentation

Written Arrangements
(memorandums of
understanding (MOU))
with an off-site location(s)
in the event residents are
evacuated

Contacting community resources – who and when

The role of the AL in care in treatment when residents are at an alternative care site

- Create procedures that include the characteristics of your facility
- Change your procedures as your resident population needs change
- Develop policies and procedures that take steps to be able to take care of yourself for at least 72 hours (minimum) – but plan well for any event
 - Do you have a short- and long-term plan? (could be 15 min, 8 hours, overnight, or longer)
- Consider internal and external stakeholders

Internal stakeholders include:

- Residents
- Family members
- Direct caregivers & other facility staff
- Leadership & administrative staff

External stakeholders include:

- Local emergency mgmt. services
- Law enforcement
- Utilities
- Other service providers i.e., homecare & hospice partners

 Think through everything in entirety – examples: Disruption / Loss of Power

Evacuation Plan

Food/cooking

Routes (internal)

Lighting

Transportation (external)

Heating & cooling

Alternative Housing

Medical equipment use

Continuation of Services

Water for toilets and drinking

Cell phone for communication

Multi-story buildings

Satellite phone – even better

- Make sure the evacuation procedures cover all areas of the building (basement, garage, all floors, secure areas, etc.)
- Include in procedure when residents should evacuate and when not to – Sheltering in place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there – a.k.a. staying put
- Identify an outdoor meeting site after evacuation and temporary relocation sites like a church, school, community center, grocery store, etc.

A good
 communication
 plan is a plan
 that identifies
 how you will
 share and
 access names
 and contact
 information for:

Staff and/or volunteers

Entities providing services under arrangement

Resident physicians(s)/PA/NP or other prescriber(s)

Other AL facilities or long-term care facilities Families and designated representatives

Emergency preparedness staff (local, regional, state, and federal)

Regulators

Office of Ombudsman for LTC

Other "sources of assistance"

- A good communication plan will also identify how you will:
 - Access medical documentation for residents
 - Share medical documentation, if necessary, with other providers to maintain continuity of care



- As part of your communication plan, you may want to outline an incident command system (ICS) or organize communications and emergency response
- An ICS is a standardized, top down, management structure to respond to an event
- This management tool is used to meet the demands of small or large emergency and nonemergency situations



- First responders need to understand your population and what their needs are for those with functional and cognitive needs, including:
 - dependence in transfers, mobility, use of walkers, wheelchairs, cognitive impairment, mental illness, blindness, hard of hearing/deaf, etc.
- Know what resources you have and what you depend on others to provide

- Include staff in any updates they know the ins and outs of the building better than anyone
- Thoroughly communicate elements of the plan when they have been updated or changed

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

COMPONENT #4 – TRAINING & TESTING

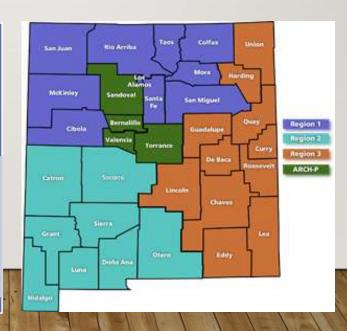
- A big part of emergency preparedness is training and testing
 - Staff must be trained on your emergency preparedness plan upon hire and annually
 - Training must be documented, have demonstrated knowledge, and be based on the facility's risk assessment, as well as the communication plan
 - Must conduct drills and exercises to test the emergency plan to identify gaps and areas for improvement

COMPONENT #4 – TRAINING & TESTING

 Testing (drills and exercises) – the proposal – on an annual basis, the AL will conduct at least <u>two</u> training exercises

1. A full scale exercise that is community based. This may include local fire, EMS, hospitals, nursing homes, other assisted living facilities, etc.

Full scale exercises are usually coordinated by Regional Health Care Preparedness Coordinators – but they need to know you want to be included in such drills



COMPONENT #4 - TRAINING & TESTING

 Testing (drills and exercises) – the proposal – on an annual basis, the AL will conduct at least <u>two</u> training exercises

2. A second full scale exercise OR a facility specific table-top drill / exercise

Table-top exercises are discussion-based sessions where team members meet in an informal, classroom setting to discuss their roles during an emergency and their responses to a particular situation. A facilitator guides participants through a discussion of one or more scenarios



- Have a regular schedule for doing drills
- Conduct some drills in conjunction with resident training
- Decide who will be the lead for each scheduled drill (shake it up and use different people)
- Consider drills relevant to all emergency situations (i.e., tornado, power outage, fire, etc.)
- Consider having an annual inspection by the local fire authorities for ongoing compliance with fire and building codes
- Create a plan for regular training for staff and residents
- Make sure education to staff matches what communication to residents is

TIPS TO MEET REQUIREMENT #4

- If drills don't go smoothly, look at procedures and update accordingly
- Document when these drills were done and what was accomplished
- Make sure to document all training provided
- Make sure to document all drills that were conducted

ONE MORE COMPONENT - EMERGENCY AND STANDBY POWER SYSTEMS

 If the assisted living facility has residents that depend on medical equipment that requires electricity to function, the facility must have in their emergency plan how they will address the power outage and the needs of the resident to keep them safe.

NEW MEXICO REGULATION The emergency preparedness plan must be reviewed annually - not a bad practice to adopt now

NOW HOW ARE YOU FEELING?



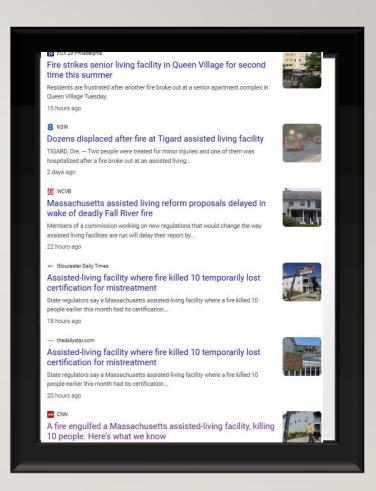
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

FIRE PLANNING

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

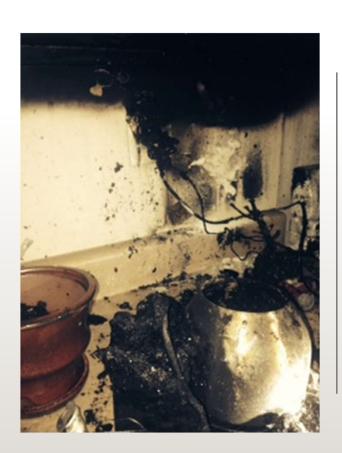
FIRES HAPPEN IN ASSISTED LIVING

Just Google it



FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

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



Charging Cell Phone Fire





FIRE PROTECTION & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



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



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



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

• Tips:

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

NATURAL DISASTERS

- Severe Storms including high winds, hail, lightning, rain
- ❖ Tornadoes
- Flooding / Flash Floods
- Wildfires

- **❖**Drout
- ◆Extreme Heat
- Earthquakes
- ❖Pandemic
- **❖**Etc.

NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING

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



OTHER TYPES OF EMERGENCIES

❖Total loss of power

❖Bomb threat

Loss of utilities

Arson

Gas leak

Active shooter

Frozen water pipes that burst Structural collapses

❖Boiler goes down

Transportation accidents

❖Fires from man-made actions ❖ Explosions

Communication disruptions
Terrorist attacks

❖Chemical spill in the area

*****Etc.

INTERNAL SAFETY CONCERNS

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

INTERNAL SAFETY CONCERNS

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

RESIDENT BELONGINGS

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



RESIDENT BELONGINGS

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

RESIDENT BELONGINGS

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

ACCESS TO APARTMENTS

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

MISSING RESIDENT PLAN

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



ELEVATORS

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



SMOKING

- If you permit smoking in, know that they became a bit safer in 2010 when only "Fire-Safe" cigarettes can be sold in New Mexico
- Include in the plan your policies on:
 - Vaping
 - Smoking on the greater property
 - Smoking in cars in the parking lot



EVACUATION

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

REVISING YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

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

GOOD PLANNING Good planning will: Direct staff on what to do Instruct external stakeholders on what to do and how to help

COMMUNICATION PLANS

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

DISASTER KIT

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

DISASTER KIT

- First Aid Kit
- Whistle to signal for help



- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to <u>shelter-in-place</u>
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation

DISASTER KIT

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

REAL LIFE SCENARIO OF FIRE & EVACUATION

Karlstad, MN (October 12, 2012)

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





BEFORE THE FIRE

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

NOTICE TO EVACUATE

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











WHAT THE STAFF DID WELL

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



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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

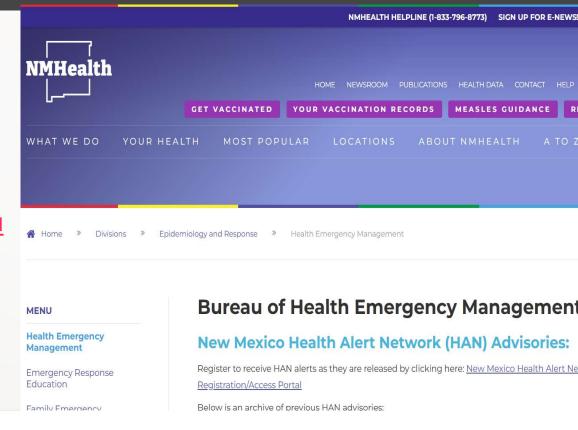
New Mexico Healthcare Preparedness and Response

https://www.nmhealth.org/about/erd/ bhem/hpr



NM Bureau of Health Emergency Management

https://www.nmhealth.org/abou t/erd/bhem/



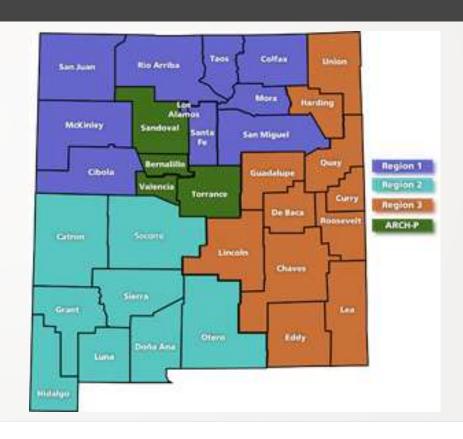
New Mexico Health Care Coalitions

contact John Hodges at

john.hodges@state.nm.us or

505-476-8282

for information



Use other state's resources – just Google!

Minnesota -

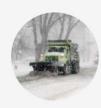
https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/ltc/index.html

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



Home Fire Escape Plan

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



Winter Weather

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

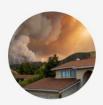
Get #WinterReady



Thunderstorms & Lightning

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

Get Thunder and Lightning Tips



Wildfires

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

Get Wildfire Tips



Flooding

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



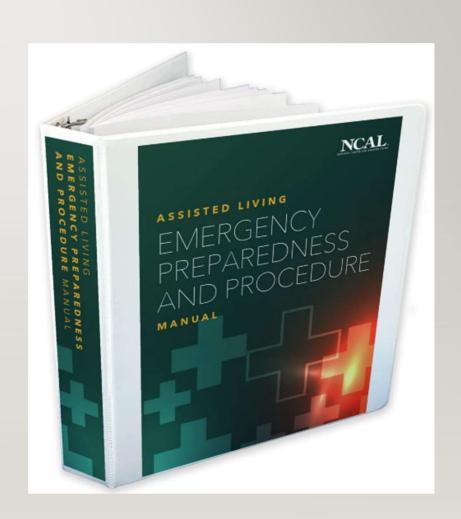
Build a Kit

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

Emergency Supply List

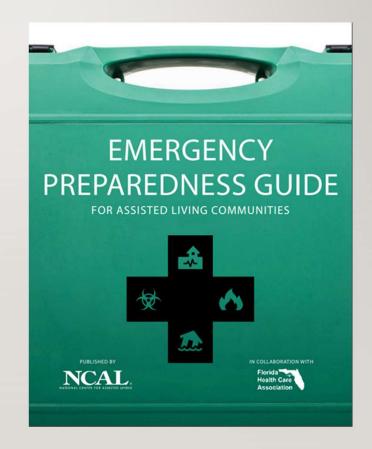
AHCA/NCAL Publications (aka Bookstore)

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



AHCA/NCAL Website

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



IN SUMMARY

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

IN SUMMARY

DON'T HAVE A PLAN LIKE THIS!



Thank you!



IMPROVING LIVES by DELIVERING SOLUTIONS for QUALITY CARE

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