

**Field Staff
Emergency
Planning Manual**

The purpose of this safety manual is to:

Provide staff with general guidelines for emergency situations that may occur either while on or off duty.

Provide staff with agency specific guidelines for emergency situations.

Always listen to and follow the direction of local, state, and federal authorities.

THE FOLLOWING ARE GENERAL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF EMERGENCIES. PLEASE READ AND REVIEW SO YOU ARE ALWAYS PREPARED. IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR EMERGENCY SUPERVISOR'S INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Floods

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods can develop over a period of days, but flash floods can result in raging waters in just a few minutes. Be aware of flood hazards, especially if the home is in a low-lying area, near water, or downstream from a dam.

If local authorities issue a flood watch, prepare to evacuate:

- ✓ Secure the home. Move essential items to the upper floors of the house
- ✓ If instructed, turn off utilities at the main switch or valves. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- ✓ Fill the bathtub with water in case water becomes contaminated or services are cut off. CLEAN THE BATHTUB FIRST.
- ✓ Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you must walk in a flooded area, walk where the water is not moving.
- ✓ Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are ferocious tropical cyclones, which reach maximum sustained winds of 74 mph or higher.

If authorities issue a hurricane warning and you are not advised to evacuate:

- ✓ Closely monitor TV and radio stations
- ✓ Stock up on water (3 gallons per person), canned goods, and first aid supplies
- ✓ Fuel and service vehicles
- ✓ Check batteries
- ✓ Inspect and secure mobile home tie downs
- ✓ Prepare to cover all window and door openings with shutters or other shielding materials
- ✓ Prepare to bring inside lawn furniture and other loose, light-weight objects, such as garbage cans, garden tools, etc
- ✓ Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary
- ✓ Turn off propane tanks
- ✓ Unplug small appliances

- ✓ Fill bathtub with water for sanitary purposes. CLEAN BATHTUB FIRST.

Tornados

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. When a tornado has been sighted, seek shelter immediately. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.

In a house or small building:

- ✓ Go to the basement or storm cellar. If there is no basement, go to an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway, bathroom, door frame).
- ✓ Get under a sturdy table or crouch down as low as possible, hold on, and protect you and your client's heads.
 - You can do this by using pillows, couch cushions, thick blankets, or towels. Stay there until the danger has passed.

If a client is bed bound:

- ✓ Move the client's bed as far away from windows as possible. Cover the client with heavy blankets or pillows being sure to protect the head and face.
- ✓ Then go to a safe area (as stated above).

In an apartment building or high-rise:

- ✓ Go to the lowest level in the building and find a small, interior room or hallway.
- ✓ Stay away from exterior walls and windows.
- ✓ Cover your client and yourself with pillows and blankets.

In a school, nursing home, hospital, factory or shopping center:

- ✓ Go to the predetermined shelter area as directed by the location's personnel. Interior hallways on the lowest floor are usually safest.
- ✓ Stay away from windows and open spaces.

In a vehicle or mobile home:

- ✓ Get out immediately and go to a more substantial structure.

If there is no shelter nearby:

- Lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert with your hands shielding your head.
- Do NOT attempt to out-drive a tornado. They are erratic and move swiftly.

Winter Storms

Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Even areas which normally experience mild winters, can be hit with a major snowstorm or extreme cold. The results can range from isolation due to blocked roads and downed power lines to the havoc of cars and trucks sliding on icy highways.

Keep your car prepared with:

- ✓ Blankets
- ✓ Extra water
- ✓ Flash-light

- ✓ Rock salt to melt ice on walkways and sand to improve traction

Stay Warm:

- ✓ Dress warmly even if you do not feel cold.
- ✓ Wear several layers of loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- ✓ Mittens are warmer than gloves
- ✓ Wear a hat – most body heat is lost through the top of the head
- ✓ Keep the home well heated

Watch for a drop in body temperature:

A temperature below 96° F is dangerous. If your client has any of the following danger signs, call for immediate medical help.

- Sleepiness or confusion
- Slurred speech
- Stiffness in the legs or arms
- Severe shivering

Re-warming the body: While waiting for medical help, you can:

- Wrap your client in blankets
- Lie close to them so their body can heat up
- Avoid rubbing their skin
- Do NOT give them caffeine or alcohol

Hot Weather

Keeping yourself and your client cool:

- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol
- ✓ Wear cool, light-colored clothes even if you do not feel hot
- ✓ Use air conditioning, if possible

Signs of heat exhaustion:

- Cold, clammy skin
- Heavy sweating
- Nausea
- Weakness

Signs of heat stroke:

- Hot, dry skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Confusion
- Body temperature of 104° F or higher

If your client experiences any of these signs:

- Have them lie down
- Drink plenty of water
- Give them a cool washcloth
- Notify the office immediately and call 911

Lightning

Stay inside the home, but avoid:

- ✓ Bathtubs, Water faucets and sinks
 - Metal pipes can conduct electricity
- ✓ Stay away from windows
- ✓ Avoid using the telephone except for emergencies

If outside:

- ✓ Do not stand underneath a lightning rod such as:
 - Flag pole
 - Isolated tree
 - Street lamp/light
- ✓ Keep away from anything metal including:
 - Tractors
 - Farm equipment
 - Bicycles, etc

Power Outage

In case of a power outage, if you require assistance and our agency phone lines are down, do the following:

- ✓ If you are in a crisis or have an emergency situation, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room
- ✓ If you and your patient are safe, stay with your patient and wait for further instruction

EMERGENCY/DISASTER PROCEDURE

Purpose:

- To establish guidelines for patient care during periods of emergency or disaster
- To provide direction for staff to follow in the event of a life-threatening or potentially life-threatening situation that disrupts delivers of home care service
- To identify the process of disaster readiness and emergency management

What are situations deemed to be an emergency requiring planning and execution from both office and field staff?

- Adverse weather such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards and storms
- Natural disasters
- Internal emergencies
 - Communication system failure
 - Utility failure (outages of electricity and telephone system)
- Security Incidents
 - Bomb threats
 - Civil disturbances
- High rate of discharge from an acute, sub-acute, skilled or residential facility
- Chemical spills and bio-hazardous weapons
- Accidents involving multiple injuries
- Staffing shortages
- All other situations as determined by agency management

We have some patients that are considered high risk and need to be the priority to be seen in an emergency situation. Patients are considered “high risk” as determined by the nurse, and may consist of the following:

- Patients receiving continuous infusion therapy
- Dependent on medical equipment (monitors, ventilators, oxygen)
- Physically unable to provide self-care without assistance and has no willing/able caregiver
- Medically unstable – example: diabetics, cardiac patients
- Patients who need 24 hour supervision/cannot be left alone
- Patients located in a high-risk location

WHAT DO YOU DO IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY?

In the event of an emergency, you will be contacted through Kantime messages and mass text that an emergency situation has risen and the emergency plan has been executed. If you are unable to access these notifications, the agency voicemail will also be changed to give instructions to staff.

Follow the instructions – you will be either be directed to report to the emergency site, which will be specified, or wait for a call from an Emergency Supervisor.

- **If you are not scheduled to work on the day of the emergency:**
 - Call the agency to let an Emergency Supervisor know you are ready to help. You may have to leave a message due to high call volume. Wait for a call back from an Emergency Supervisor. You may receive an assignment at that time.
- **If you are with a patient when the emergency plan has been executed:**
 - **WAIT** for a phone call from an Emergency Supervisor for instruction. **DO NOT** leave your patient without speaking to an Emergency Supervisor first.
 - If a family member relieves you should call the agency first and if not directed otherwise, proceed to the emergency site.
- **If you are directed to wait for a call:**
 - Remain calm and wait by your phone, email, pager, etc for assignment call. Stay off your phone so that you can quickly be reached by an Emergency Supervisor.
 - **DO NOT** call in, **WAIT** for a call from us. We do not want to block up the phone lines unnecessarily
 - You may be directed to care for patients that are not normally on your schedule to ensure all patient needs are met.
- **If you are directed to report in person:**
 - Report to the office parking lot or other triage site (if notified of a different location) and look for the Emergency Flag for your group.
 - Try to help keep everyone in order and wait your turn to check in with an Emergency Supervisor. Remaining calm is important to ensuring things run smoothly.
 - If an alternate triage site has been named, you will be given the location.
- Listen to media for updates (radio, TV, internet, etc)

How do I know when the emergency is resolved or under control:

Continue to check Kantime messages and your cell phone for updates or for the “all clear.” The Emergency Supervisor may also change the voicemail greeting on the agency phone in the event that an employee is unable to obtain office messages.

GET PREPARED!

STAY PREPARED!

- If your contact information (address or phone) changes, notify HR immediately.
- Keep emergency supplies in your car/trunk in case of emergency
- Restock supplies at the office as they begin to run low (gowns, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc)
- Keep a notebook and pens in your car/trunk for documentation.
- Keep your badge in your car when not working.
- Check your patient’s folder regularly to ensure still in designated location and contains patient-specific Emergency Plan, Medication list, HHA Careplan, and Admission manual. Report any replacements needed to the supervising nurse.