

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

The capability to continue essential agency service functions during disaster/emergency situations. The objectives are:

- Ensuring essential functions/operations continue during an emergency.
- Protect the infrastructure, equipment, records and assets, including human assets.
- Mitigate or reduce disruptions of operations.
- Provide safety for human assets, minimize damages and losses.
- Achieve efficient recovery from a disaster/emergency and resume full service to public.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

To preserve viability, organizations must:

- Maintain high level of readiness.
- Capable of implementation with or without warning.
- Be operational within 12 hours of activation.
- Must be able to maintain independently for up to 30 days.
- Coordinate with any existing field agencies and/or horizontal agencies.

AGENCY COMMITMENT

- Effective all hazard planning must have a strong level of commitment and support from senior-level management on down.
- Representation from all employees, including people with disability is recommended are involved in planning process. Include many types of disabilities, i.e., mobility, vision, cognitive, developmental and hearing. This will increase the buy-in from employees.
- Delegate authority; provide for a decision maker and alternates.
- Establish an all hazards response team. Everyone has a role and understands their function and meet regularly.
 - Regular meetings can provide forum to discuss concerns, conduct trainings, and listen to recommendations and their rationale.
 - Have an organizational chart and descriptions of responsibilities and supervision in an emergency.
 - Cross train employees to provide certain functions in case the designated individual is unable to fulfill those duties.
 - Practice established all hazard plans before an event to work through issues before a disaster.
 - Determine when it is appropriate to implement plans and procedures.

- Consider devolution of essential functions, the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential services functions to other personnel or like agencies and employees if necessary. Reconstitution is the process of resuming agency functions and responsibilities.
 - Identify which programs and authorities are needed at all levels of the organization.
 - Identify circumstances when authority should be exercised.
 - Identify limits of authority, when they begin and terminate.
 - Determine if assigned authorities are trained to fulfill the emergency duties.
 - Establish order of succession if appointed authority is unable to fulfill the emergency duties. Sufficient depth should be identified to ensure agencies ability to fulfill essential duties.
 - Describe in positions, not names.
- Agencies should include processes for activating an emergency information call-in number, accounting for and tracking all employees and providing assistance to employees and their families. This includes alerts, advisories, and pre-designated facilities if current location is not habitable, with and without warning, during duty and non-duty hours.
- Involve key personnel,
 - ❖ Senior management and employees
 - ❖ First responders
 - ❖ Fire department
 - ❖ Police department
 - ❖ Local emergency management coordinator, (LEMC)
 - ❖ Disability community
 - ❖ Service providers
 - ❖ Surrounding agencies
 - ❖ Local Public Health
 - ❖ State Vocational rehabilitation agencies
 - ❖ Centers for independent living
 - ❖ Department of Elder Affairs
 - ❖ Department of Veterans Affairs regional offices
 - ❖ Volunteer groups
 - ❖ Faith-based organizations
- Has the plan been reviewed by first responders?
- Does the plan conflict with procedures established by neighboring agencies?
- Does your facility share space with other agencies and is your plan compatible with theirs?

COLLABORATE

- Partner with the media.
 - Appropriate information before and after the disaster.
- Partner with disability community

- Establish a hotline that can provide specific information for your area and access available resources.
- Provide all hazard planning, education and training, include personal planning.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Essential functions are functions that must continue with no or minimal disruption during an emergency or disaster.

- Identify all services that must continue under all circumstances.
- Prioritize these essential services.
- Determine what staff and resources are required to fill these essential functions.
- Protect the infrastructure of the facility i.e., assets, records, equipment.
 - Maintain administrative functions, payroll, and billing.
 - Maintain records and documentation.
 - Have electronic back-up of records taken weekly to a secure off-site location.
 - Transport active patient information to a safe location if storm is imminent, this information can be kept current on disk or zip drive.
 - General administrative support functions
 - Supplies and provisions
 - Ability to communicate during/after the disaster to assess damage and begin response.
 - Defer functions that are not essential until resources and staff can become available.

EMPLOYEES

- Establish proposed contingency plans, overtime and compensation. Consider a flex schedule; consider needs of employees and their families during a disaster.
- Training will be provided to all employees about emergency planning, including consequences for no shows.
- Each new employee will receive training as part of orientation.
- Provide psychological/behavioral resources available to employees.
- Encourage staff to have specific personal supplies, at least a three to seven day supply.
- Plan for high worker absenteeism.

ALTERNATE FACILITIES

It may be necessary to relocate to an alternate operating facility. These locations should be identified within the continuity plan. Alternate operating facilities should be prepared for the possibility of unannounced relocation from your facility. For example, all forms of communication have been disabled and the facility must be evacuated. Cooperative

interagency agreements will promote sharing of facilities that are equipped to support operations.

DECISION TO EVACUATE

If it is necessary to evacuate begin activating all hazard plans which include client evaluation, accessible communication, and transportation from triage to definitive care – beyond emergency care. Some facilities

Objective: To provide horizontal evacuation as seamless as possible. Vertical evacuation may be the only option. Have pre-authorized memorandums of understanding (MOU's) in place for relocation to pre-designated facilities, with or without warning, during duty and non-duty hours.

- Patient mobilization centers: Medical response, which includes medical equipment, supplies, patient triage and other primary and emergency health care services provided to disaster victims at a disaster site. Establish patient reception centers.
- If transporting to a shelter make sure all facilities and services are accessible, including bathrooms and showers.
- Provide shelter, food, water, medication and staff supervision before, during and after disaster.
- Provide interpreters, Telephone Text (TTY) communication, signaling devices, large print material.
- Have an alternate plan to communicate to coordinate rescue.
- Evacuation plans must include non-business hours for all occupants.

Rescuers are trained to make quick on-the-spot decisions. Those involved in all hazard planning should understand these basic points.

- Access
 - Are the occupants safely accessible?
 - How many rescuers are needed per person?
 - Is special equipment needed?
- Victim contact and evaluation
 - Is the victim viable?
 - Will Emergency Management Services (EMS) be needed before and during the rescue?
 - How many victims?
 - Where are they located?
- Victim rescue factors
 - How many rescuers are required for each person? It may require 15 firemen 30 minutes to rescue one victim.
 - Does the victim need special equipment?
 - Will the victim be able to understand and assist in instructions?
 - Is EMS equipment or other rescue equipment on the area, or will it be needed?
- Exit from the building

- Where is the patient handed-off?
- Where do rescuers report conditions, rehabilitate or replenish supplies?
- What are the rescue recycle time and requirements?
- When re-locating people with disabilities who has priority in an emergency and who is responsible for restoring people to assistive devices?

SHELTER IN PLACE

Remaining in the facility may be the best option in some disasters because individuals are placed at higher risk of injury if evacuated. If sheltering in place, all essential services must continue without disruption. This includes:

- Twenty-four hour support of residential services, adequate food, water, medical services, shelter and staff supervision.
- Medical care and supports necessary to maintain health and safety.
- Back up generators to maintain utilities if regular service is compromised.
- Protection to prevent illness due to enclosed surroundings.

WARNING SYSTEMS

Establish incident-specific warnings to alert employees, individuals and visitors to remain in the building. Make sure these warnings are visual, audible and tactile. Audible alarms should run on intervals so that blind or visually impaired people can hear instructions or the voices of others. Make sure all occupants of the facility have a thorough understanding of each warning and procedure. Practice each drill, updating when needed.

- Employers should install Braille signage and maps for employees with vision impairments. Audible directional signage and pedestrian systems could also navigate people to shelter areas.
- All hazard plans should be made available in alternative format such as Braille, electronic format, or large print.
- Employers need to recognize that some people with psychiatric impairments may benefit from one-on-one instruction and/or written instruction for drills.
- Employers could provide alpha-numeric pagers or other communication devices to people with speech impairments to communicate with emergency personnel.
- People with motor impairments may need evacuation devices that can maneuver stairs and rough terrain. Evacuation chairs are a possibility for those with mobility limitations. These chairs vary in quality. There are no current standards for their design and construction or placement in a building. People should be trained how to use and assist with these devices.
- People with respiratory impairments could benefit from emergency hoods, masks or respirators.
- Designated shelters areas need to have an operating phone, Telephone Text (TTY), or a two-way radio for communication, a closing door, and supplies to

- provide a barrier from smoke or chemical toxins and respirator masks. This location should be made available to first responders ahead of time.
- All warning systems must be accessible to people with disabilities. For example, people may not have the strength or dexterity to operate a manual pull station device. Systems must have Braille instruction mounted beside them and not be too high for those of short stature or in a wheelchair.

PLAN MAINTANENCE

After a plan has been written and distributed to all employees, drills should be preformed to test the process. Choose leaders with experience and delineate responsibility to supervise and evaluate the drill. These leaders must have a thorough understanding all hazard plans and their roles during and an emergency. There are three types of drills – walk through, scheduled, and unannounced. Walk through provides discussion and practice using evacuation techniques and equipment. Scheduled drills provide the opportunity to practice in a slow controlled environment. Unannounced drills should occur after a scheduled drill. This ensures that if any problems existed, they will be corrected and people will not practice incorrectly. The plan should become standard operating procedure and reviewed with all employees often. Drills should include stairwells, especially transfer hallways. Know if using the elevator is an option. In some cases the elevator may be disabled due to a power outage or it is being used for first responders.

To ensure that emergency evacuation plans are effective they should be practiced and updated. Employees should receive fire extinguisher training and fire alarm activation procedures. Each new employee needs to have a full understanding, including participation in the planning. Communication with first responders needs to be maintained. Any equipment should be inspected to guarantee it is in proper working order.

TRAINING

Everyone should be involved in training and drills. If people opt-out and do not participate in the drills the actual time it takes to evacuate will not be accurate. Employers should provide training to employees and residents:

- Annually.
- When emergency plans are updated or changed.
- New employees begin or change work location.