



FOR PROVIDERS.
BY PROVIDERS.

Creating an Effective Emergency Preparedness Plan

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Emergency Preparedness



- Emergency preparation is essential for all providers to ensure patient needs are met and staff safety is maintained
- Consider the past year and what providers have faced:
 - Pandemic, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, chemical spills resulting in evacuations, ice storms, blizzards, extreme snowfall resulting in closure of a major highway for an extended time, and civil unrest
- While inevitably there may be emergencies that could occur that we were not fully prepared for, having a plan to address the likely scenarios will assist your company with your emergency preparedness

Important Aspects of an Emergency Plan

- Risk assessment or hazard vulnerability analysis
- Determine any state or local regulatory requirements
- Create the plan
 - How to respond
 - Business continuity
- Test the plan
- Implement the plan
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and revise as needed
- Staff education

Risk Assessment



This is a fundamental yet crucial step in developing and maintaining a plan for how you will prepare for emergencies.

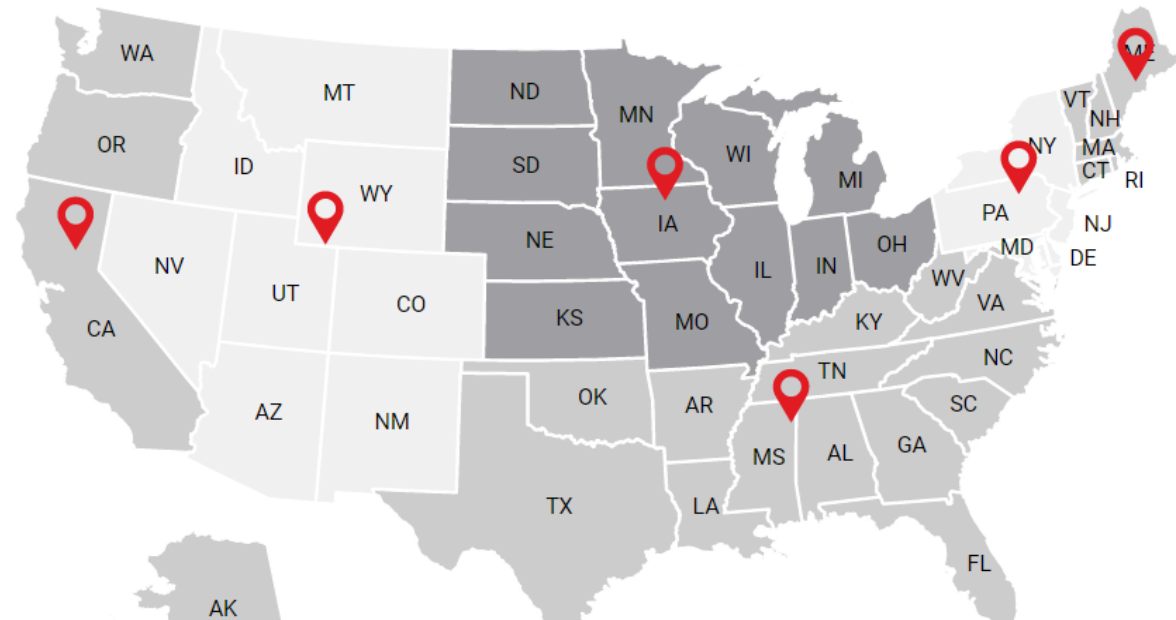
- Evaluate the likely emergencies and hazards that can happen in your geographical area for natural disasters that may include:
 - Floods
 - Hurricanes
 - Tornadoes
 - Wildfires
 - Blizzards, ice, snowstorms
 - Earthquakes

Example of Common Disasters by Region from the Red Cross website:

Common Disasters Across the U.S.

Some disasters, like lightning strikes, home fires and windstorms can occur anywhere. Others, like earthquakes and hurricanes are more common in certain regions. Click on the map below to learn about possible disasters in your area. Regardless of where you live, [powerful apps](#) like the [Red Cross Emergency App](#) can help you stay informed, while instructive apps like [MonsterGuard](#) make preparedness learning fun for kids between the ages of 7 and 11.

Click on the map pointers to see tips for natural disasters by region. Click on the star to read tips about how everyone should prepare for natural disasters.



Example of Common Disasters by Region from the Red Cross website:

Midwest

You live in this region if your address is in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kansas or Missouri. You're at high to moderate risk of:



Tornadoes

Know where the safest place is in your home to gather, preferably a windowless interior space on the lowest floor.



Earthquakes (Illinois, Missouri)

Practice DROP, COVER and HOLD ON with everyone in your household.



Wildfires (North Dakota and South Dakota)

Sign up for the emergency notification systems that your community uses. Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice, and keep an emergency kit in your car. Listen to local radio and television for the latest on safe evacuation routes.

Risk Assessment



- Also consider how you would prepare for non-weather-related emergencies that could occur:
 - Infectious diseases
 - Staff shortages
 - Hazardous materials exposure
 - Loss of communications
 - Power outage/other utilities failure
 - Facility damage or loss
 - Workplace violence
 - Terrorism
 - Civil unrest

Emergency Preparedness Regulations



States may have their own specific requirements for emergency planning

- Access state license information to determine the requirements, if any
- For example, a state may require:
 - 24-hour oxygen back-up in the event of an emergency
 - That the HME supplier has a specific emergency plan document and will assist with special needs registration, etc.

Creating the Plan



Important considerations

- Consider when to initiate the plan
- Establish methods to contact staff and consider alternate contact methods
- Know how to obtain and mobilize resources
- Have a plan to prioritize patients
- Ensure staff safety

Creating the Plan



Build an Emergency Team

- Identify a team leader (and backup leader) to oversee the initiation and operation of the plan
- Designate staff responsibilities
- Have an emergency plan huddle when implementation is required to remind all staff of their responsibilities

Creating the Plan



Identify timeframes for initiation of the plan

- For weather threats where there is a time to prepare such as Hurricane, severe snowstorm/blizzard, etc., begin implementation of your plan early-on to ensure you are prepared
- When emergencies are sudden such as tornado, power outages, terrorism, etc., the plan would be implemented immediately

Creating the Plan



Establish methods for contacting personnel

- Examples include:
 - Call tree for all staff
 - Updated list of employee cell, home phone and their emergency contacts, email address
- Designate a backup location to meet in the event the building is destroyed and have a secondary backup location in the event the primary location cannot be used
 - Ensure all staff are aware of primary and secondary meeting places

Creating the Plan



- Specify measures for anticipated emergencies typical or appropriate for the geographical area served (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, fires, chemical spills, and inclement weather)
- Include the detail on how you will create an emergency preparedness plan based on your risk assessment that identified likely emergencies that could occur in your area

Creating the Plan




- Sample of types of emergency information on the Red Cross website that includes information in general terms on how to prepare, what to do during and after the emergency; examples to follow

The screenshot shows the American Red Cross website navigation bar with the following links: American Red Cross, Donate, Give Blood, Training & Certification, Volunteer, About Us, and Get Help. Below the navigation bar is a grid of eight emergency information links, each with a representative image and a title followed by a double arrow symbol (»).

Emergency Type	Image Description
Heat Wave »	A bright sun in a clear sky.
Highway Safety »	A police car on a highway with traffic cones and officers.
Hurricane »	A dark, stormy sky over the ocean.
Landslide »	A large pile of rubble and debris from a collapsed building.
Nuclear Explosion »	A long, brightly lit tunnel with pillars.
Poisoning »	A close-up of a hand holding a red pill bottle.
Power Outage »	A dark sky with a bright lightning bolt striking a building.
Terrorism »	Two people wearing hard hats and safety vests in an industrial setting.

Red Cross Emergency Apps






Donate
Give Blood
Training & Certification
Volunteer
About Us
Get Help
🔍


Emergency App
Hurricane App
Tornado App
Earthquake App

Emergency App

Help Keep Your Family Safe. Be ready to respond when a natural disaster or other hazard strikes. The FREE Emergency app lets you monitor for more than 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts in your town, and other cities that matter to you. Learn how to prepare your family and home, check if loved ones are safe and let them know you're safe. Select English or Spanish language with an in-app toggle. Compatible with Apple Watch and Android Wearable devices.

Or text: "GETEMERGENCY" to 90999


Emergency

Every Day Apps

Disaster Apps

Apps for Parents and Kids

Hospitals & Medical Professional App

Alexa Skills and Google Actions

Creating the Plan



Obtain and mobilize resources to meet critical needs

- Determine delivery needs for the patients
- Ensure vehicles are fueled up and ensure adequate stock is maintained in the vehicles
- Create a point person to monitor updates on the weather, FEMA notices, traffic changes such as contra flows that occur with evacuations or bridge/road closure
- Coordinate with IT department

Creating the Plan



Obtain and mobilize resources

- Prepare your office*
 - Post emergency numbers for all staff
 - If facility has a generator how often is it tested to ensure readiness?
 - Have a plan to access additional or replacement delivery vehicles
 - Ensure additional equipment and supplies are available

Creating the Plan



Obtain and mobilize resources

- Know appropriate community resources
 - Identify a local radio or TV station that can be used to transmit your company phone number for your patients to call if an alternate number is utilized
 - Identify a location where a potential temporary workspace could be established in the event the office is no longer safe

Creating the Plan



Alternative resources for the provision of care

- Create/update vendor list of key contacts including after-hours numbers for oxygen vendors, key manufacturers, Home Health Agencies, Infusion companies as applicable
- If your facility has sister locations, identify a location and point person that could assist with staffing/equipment needs, etc.
- If you have remote customer support, ensure there is communication pathways to service customer calls
 - Utilize IT resources
- Do you have relationships with other providers that may assist as needed in an emergency?

Creating the Plan



Identify and prioritize patients based on their needs so that care/service is ensured for those whose health and safety might be at risk.

- Ensure there is a system to run reports/gather patient detail to identify the patients that are at risk
- Ensure staff is aware of the questions to ask during the patient calls

Creating the Plan



Staff Safety

- How will your plan ensure the safety of your staff?
- Items to consider:
 - Verify office area is safe to work in
 - Adequate stock of PPE, first aid kits
 - Ensure truck safety reviewed - water, snacks, blankets, etc.
 - Ensure you can communicate with your team on the road throughout an emergency and/or post emergency

Creating the Plan



Staff Safety

- Monitor road and bridge closures as well as weather advisories
- Ensure all staff are accounted for after an emergency has passed
- Assign staff responsibility for checking the facility to ensure it is safe to enter, and there are not downed power lines, trees or other damage to facility that would cause hazards
- If needed, utilize call tree and implement the utilization of a temporary facility

Test the Plan



Before the start of severe weather season:

- Assess your plan
- Review your inventory to ensure you have appropriate levels of patient equipment and supplies that may be needed
- Review your vehicles for safety related items
- Update list of employee contact information and call tree as applicable
- Update key utility information, special needs shelters and other emergency numbers

Implementing the Plan



In addition to the information already presented, consider the following elements for examples of emergencies that could occur in your area:

- Hurricane
 - Prior to the storm approach, identify community resources that may assist such as special needs shelters for patients with medical equipment that relies on power
 - Provide this information to the team to assist when calling the priority patients
 - Run priority patient reports, begin the patient calls and initiate deliveries

Hurricane



- Ensure all staff who drive are off the road when the winds reach a level that is identified in your plan or when the roads/bridges are closed*
- Consider how/when to evacuate the office if you are in the evacuation location
- Ensure local police/community emergency operations have deemed the roads safe for travel for your location after the hurricane has passed
- Verify facility is safe for office staff to return
- Use apps that can provide what gas stations are open in the event of widespread power loss that can result*

Floods



- Ensure access to emergency alerts on cell and office computers to keep apprised of flooding dangers and communicate with all
 - Listen to local radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for updates
- Be prepared to evacuate to higher ground if flooding in your area
- Remind all technicians "turn around don't drown" on flooded roads
- Ensure local police/community emergency operations have deemed the roads safe for travel for your location
- Verify facility is safe for office staff to return

Tornado



- Ensure access to emergency alerts on cell and office computers
 - Listen to local radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for updates
 - Communicate updates with team
- Ensure all staff are aware of the safest place to withstand a tornado – inside lower floor away from windows and outside walls
- Account for all staff after tornado threat is over
- Ensure local police/community emergency operations have deemed the roads safe for travel for post emergency travel
- Verify facility is safe for office staff

Power Outages



- Contact power company that services your location and advise that your organization is a home medical equipment provider and will need service to provide equipment/supplies to patients
- Roll phone lines to answering service or an alternate department/source that can be contacted as applicable
- Ensure access to emergency alerts on cell phones; communicate updates with team
- If office cannot be utilized due to extreme cold or extreme heat in a prolonged power outage, prepare for a temporary office location with appropriate climate control
- If damage to the building's electrical lines, ensure the power company assesses the lines and safety of the system

Evaluate your Plan



Complete an annual practice drill of your plan if you have not implemented your plan for an emergency

- Identify a likely scenario of an emergency that could impact your area and test your plan
- An effective drill will provide value to staff involved and to leaders to remind all of the steps to take, and their respective duties and responsibilities
 - It will also help in identification of any areas that could be improved
- Document your drill including the date, time, and type of drill

Evaluate your Plan



If you have implemented your emergency action plan:

- Document an after-action review for information that could be used for key learnings on how the plan can be improved
- This is an important process to ensure that your plan will meet the needs of your patients and your organization
- Update plan as needed

Evaluate your Plan

- Examples of key learnings or after-action emergency plan updates:
 - Improve access to afterhours staff of crucial vendors such as oxygen suppliers
 - Know their capabilities of responding to emergencies
 - Do they have onsite generators that can provide fills in your area?
 - Are there sister locations that can be used if needed?
 - Obtain backup suppliers in the event the primary supplier cannot meet your needs
 - What if there is flooding on the floor where the generator is located?
 - Impact of prolonged power failures on gas/diesel availability
 - Utilize technology to find what gas stations are open and have gas
 - Have an identified process to store items such as enteral food in an environment that is temperature controlled in the event of power outages
 - Sister locations?
 - Use of a generator for portions of the facility?

Educate your Staff



- On hire and on an annual basis!
- Involve all in the drills to help with their understanding of the plans and processes

Emergency Preparedness Resources



<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies.html>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html>

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/basic_preparedness.pdf

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

Your local emergency management division and state license board



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Questions?



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Thank you