

Pause for Prevention Module 8

Emergency Preparedness

The Emergency Preparedness Program describes a facility's comprehensive approach to meeting the health, safety and security needs of the facility, its staff, and their resident population prior to, during and after an emergency or disaster. The program encompasses four core elements: an Emergency Plan that is based on a Risk Assessment (that includes communicable and infectious diseases) and incorporates an all-hazards approach; Policies and Procedures; Communication Plan; and the Training and Testing Program (see resources for training and testing). The Nursing Home Emergency Plan should function like a well-oiled machine.



Emergency Preparedness Plan (Communicable/Infectious Disease) Includes:

Risk Assessment

Evaluate the needs of the population served and the facility need based on communicable and infectious disease that includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Screening of staff, residents and visitors.
- Handling of transfers and discharges.
- Physical environment (i.e., physical distancing, isolation, cohorting, capacity/surge, etc.).



Comprehensive Plan (Policies and Procedures)

Policies and procedures must be in place to protect the health and safety of staff, residents and visitors to include (but not limited to) when and how to:

- Post appropriate signage throughout the facility listing expectations for distancing, hand hygiene, wearing of PPE [i.e., when nationally recognized agencies indicate that these measures are necessary (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance supports these preventive measures)].
- Disinfect the setting (resident room, waiting areas, etc.), including the frequency of disinfection.
- Notify local health department and other government agencies with jurisdiction as soon as the preparedness plan is put into action.
- Report details (vaccine administration, etc.) to recognized agencies [e.g., National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)] as required.



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Emergency Preparedness Plan (Communicable/Infectious Disease) includes:

Communication Plan

A written plan contains information about how care is coordinated within the facility, across healthcare providers and with local and state health departments. The Communication Plan includes (but is not limited to):

- A means of making the communication plan readily available and accessible to all staff.
- Current contact information for key people who have a designated role in emergency preparedness.
- A specific plan for communication with emergency management agencies and systems.
- A system to generate timely, accurate information to staff, residents and family members/caregivers.
- Expectations for monitoring of reporting requirements issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) or other agencies with jurisdiction.



Infectious Diseases

The infectious disease component of the emergency preparedness plan should incorporate (but is not limited to) these elements:

- Planning for emerging (more commonly seen now than in the past) infectious diseases including:
 - Novel (not typical) outbreaks (e.g., COVID-19).
 - Biohazardous waste.
 - Bioterrorism.
 - Pandemic flu.
 - Highly communicable diseases like Ebola, Zika virus, SARS or COVID-19.
- A staff designee to monitor the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local public health agency websites for guidance and recommendations during an outbreak in the community and/or facility.
- Steps to maintain a documented and current surveillance and reporting system specific to an outbreak.
- A plan for annual training and onboarding education related to infectious diseases.



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An **Envelope Exercise** is a great way to engage staff from various departments.

**Please note: This activity is not a table-top or exercise that would be considered sufficient in terms of meeting requirements related to Emergency Preparedness training. The intent of this exercise is to raise awareness among staff related to Emergency Preparedness and their roles.*

Leader Instructions:

1. Have several copies of your Emergency Preparedness Plan available. Ensure that staff know how to locate the plan.
2. Print copies of the flyer, page 1 and 2.
3. Print copies of the exercise questions (below) and cut on the lines separating the questions.
4. Place the exercise questions in envelopes (or fold in a manner that does not allow the question to be seen).
5. Gather participants in an area where activity can be carried out without distraction. Explain there are no negative consequences.
6. Review the Module 8 flyer with the participants.
7. Provide each group (2-3 participants per group) with an envelope.
8. Allow the group a few minutes to read the envelope contents and formulate responses.
9. Allow each group to share the questions and responses with the larger group.
10. Provide appropriate feedback related to the facility-specific Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**If there are more questions than participants, consider making this exercise a facility-wide experience. Deliver the questions to various departments within the facility with an expected return date/time clearly included. Discuss the responses, feedback and necessary clarification in huddles, quality meetings, etc.*

Question 1

Who in the facility monitors CMS, CDC and agencies with jurisdiction for updates on guidance for communicable diseases, and how are staff notified of expectations for changes in procedures or policy?

Question 2

What does your Emergency Preparedness Plan (or isolation policy referenced or linked to plan) state about isolation related to infectious diarrhea?

Question 3

Have you had your flu shot? What does your plan/policy say about wearing masks if employees refuse flu shots?

Question 4

What does your Emergency Preparedness Plan state about cleaning a room previously occupied by a resident known to have an infectious (communicable) disease?

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Question 5

What does your Emergency Preparedness Plan state about the type of mask worn if caring for a resident positive for COVID-19?

Question 6

Who in your facility is responsible for training related to using personal protective equipment (PPE), including donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off), as well as cleaning (if equipment is reusable) and storing of PPE?

Question 7

If a communicable disease is suspected or confirmed, when and to whom should this be reported, such as to local/state health authorities? Where would their contact information be found?

Resources (Click the QR code or scan it with your phone to download the tool):

Infectious Diarrhea: Infection Prevention Pocket Card



Long Term Care Requirements CMS Emergency Preparedness Final Rule



Incorporating Infection Prevention and Control into an Emergency Preparedness Plan



State Operations Manual: Emergency Preparedness (see §483.73 Requirement for Long Term Care Facilities)

