

Emergency Preparedness Guide

February 2014

Timely responses to emergencies are critical for long term care professionals. This guide has been completed to assist professionals to learn more about preparedness, and where to learn more about being prepared.

The Emergency Preparedness Cycle

One of the first things to learn is the emergency preparedness cycle. This includes analyzing risks that may affect the center/community, written response plan and how to react to the event.

Phase I: Mitigation/Prevention

- Mitigation is the activities taken to eliminate and assisting the provider to be prepared for an event. Plans should address the possibility of events occurring. Providers will want to complete an HVA.
- **Action Item**
 - Completing a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment is essential to your plan. This process allows you to plan for different scenarios that may affect your center/community during an event. To learn more please [click here](#).
 - To learn more about mitigation [planning](#).

Phase II: Preparedness

- Preparedness is the development of a plan to meet the needs of residents and staff when you have lost essential services. This will include how you will plan for and prepare for each event and the provider's ability to protect the facility during an event. This includes testing the plan, training and revisions of the plan.
- **Action Item**
 - CMS has developed an [Emergency Preparedness Planning Checklist](#). This checklist is not mandated by CMS; however providers are encouraged to use the checklist when working on their emergency preparedness plans. The checklist reviews items that are important for a center/community to have prepared during an event, such as contracts with vendors, emergency fuel supply and training of staff.

Phase III: Response

- Response refers to the time frame before, during and after then event. Your response addresses the immediate and short term needs of the event. Using the NHICS program can assist with you this process.
- Read below to learn more about NHICS

Phase IV: Recovery

- Recovery includes the activities and programs that are implemented during and after the response to return the facility/center to back to functional status
- CMS provides an emergency preparedness checklist for effective health care facility planning. Download the checklist [here](#).
- **Action Item:**
 - **Providers should complete an after action report after all major drills, or events. This allows providers to determine what needs to be changed in their plans. CMS provides a [template](#) for this process.**

Nursing Home Incident Command System

What is NHICS?

The Incident Command System (ICS) has been around in the world of fire response since the 70s. It was created to provide a framework for organizing multiple people, agencies and actions in way that allowed for maximum efficiency....something that was seriously lacking in the world of disaster response where situations are complex, minutes count and events drag on for hours; sometimes days or weeks. Over the past few decades, what started in the firefighting community, has spread and been adopted in all government agencies that respond to emergency events. ICS is now a facet of the National Response System. It also have been adapted to health care facilities in various forms including Hospital Incident Command (HICS) and Nursing Home Incident Command (NHICS)

What Does It Do?

NHICS provides a framework for organizing staff, volunteers, other agencies into an orderly change of command, with clear channels of communication and authority. The framework is flexible and shrinks or grows in the number of leadership roles and functions that are used, depending on what's needed for the complexity and size of the incident. It also provides a process for dynamic planning called Incident Action Planning. This process supports that leadership team in handling dynamic situations that call for actions and priorities and quick decisions that may not be clearly addressed by the facility emergency operations plan. Finally NHICS gives long term care providers a shared language and basic compatibility with the response partners in their local communities, regions, states, and at the federal level

Why is it Important?

ICS is the standard language of emergency response, and by utilizing this system, long term care providers will be ready to interact efficiently and effectively with others to get their needs met. ICS also provides checklists and quick guides for each position or function, which prepare and guide the staff in the facility at the time of need to step up and lead the response. ICS addresses one of the biggest fears of long term care leaders; “What if the disaster hits when I am not there? Will my staff know what to do?” NHICS has tailored these ICS forms and checklists to the specialized setting of the nursing home facility, and they are able to be further customized to meet the individual facility’s needs. The NHICS framework of command and control and delegation of duties is at the heart of ICS, and, with training, this approach will empower the staff to work together to do what has to be done, no matter who is in the building when the event hits. Through the Incident Action Planning process, the incident management team will be able to carry out and modify as needed, the facility’s emergency operation plans in a way that can be explained and defended later, if the need arises.

- **Action Item: Learn More**
 - NHICS materials including a guidebook, forms, checklists and train the trainer power point modules are posted for free download at the [AHCA website](#) and the [CA Association of Health Facilities Disaster Preparedness Program website at www.cahfdisasterprep.com](#)

CMS Information

During an emergency CMS may implement the 1135 Waiver Process, this process may waive certain Medicare Participation Guidelines. It is important to note that the patient still needs to be receiving Medicare type of services to be “skillable.”

Medicare Fee For Service Emergency & Disaster Related Policies and Procedures:

- This form may be implemented only with an 1135 Waiver. [Learn more here](#).
- An 1135 waiver **only applies to federal requirements and not to state requirements**.
- The 1135 waiver authority can only be invoked when:
 - two separate federal declarations of an emergency/disaster are made:
 - National Emergencies Act; or
 - Stafford Act
 - **And** the HHS Secretary officially invokes the waiver authority:
 - HHS Secretarial Declaration of a Public Health Emergency Under Section 319 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act.

[Click here to](#) learn more about the process.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC provides vast amount of information on their website for LTC providers. The information contained on their website reviews how to care for older adults in an emergency, vulnerable populations and pandemic flu information. To review the information found on [this page](#).

Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans

The SBA Disaster Loan Program is the federal government's primary resource for disaster recovery providing low-interest, long-term loans for homeowners, renters, businesses and nonprofit organizations to repair or replace disaster-damaged real estate, personal property and business contents. Eligibility for SBA disaster loans is limited to individuals and businesses that suffered uncompensated damages in a declared disaster area.

- **Action Item:**
 - **Apply for an SBA disaster loan [online](#).**
 - **Download from the website the SBA Disaster Business Loan Application.**

If you require further assistance, please contact our Disaster Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 or, for people with speech or hearing impairments, at 1-800-877-8339 (weekdays from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, weekends from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm EST), or via e-mail at: disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

Federal Training

FEMA provides free training on how the National Incident Management System. This program allows you to learn more about incident management, and it works across all sectors. In addition, this program can be used on all sizes of events. To learn more about this free training [click here](#).