LeadingAge™
Minnesota

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery:
Resource Guide for Older Adult Services Providers

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Disaster planning and emergency preparedness requirements for Assisted Living facilities are found in Minn. Statues section 144G.42, subdivision 10, and in Minnesota Rules parts 4659.0100 and 4659.0110.

The statute reads as follows:

 (a) The facility must meet the following requirements:

    (1) have a written emergency disaster plan that contains a plan for evacuation, addresses elements of sheltering in place, identifies temporary relocation sites, and details staff assignments in the event of a disaster or an emergency;

    (2) post an emergency disaster plan prominently;

    (3) provide building emergency exit diagrams to all residents;

    (4) post emergency exit diagrams on each floor; and

    (5) have a written policy and procedure regarding missing tenant residents.

    (b) The facility must provide emergency and disaster training to all staff during the initial staff orientation and annually thereafter and must make emergency and disaster training annually available to all residents. Staff who have not received emergency and disaster training are allowed to work only when trained staff are also working on site.

    (c) The facility must meet any additional requirements adopted in rule.

Rules part 4659.0100 requires Assisted Living facilities to comply with the federal emergency preparedness regulations for long-term care facilities under Code of Federal Regulations, title 42, section 483.73. These regulations, together with interpretive guidance and recommended survey protocols, are included in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) document called State Operations Manual Appendix Z (this links to the full CMS document), which the MDH rule adopts and incorporates by reference.

Appendix Z is challenging to read because it includes regulatory requirements and guidance not only for long-term care facilities but also other provider and supplier types, such as hospitals, surgical centers, and certified home health agencies. For your convenience, we have developed a modified version of Appendix Z that includes only the long-term care requirements (42 CFR §483.73) and related guidelines. In other words, we have removed regulatory citations and other content that is not applicable to assisted living. We have posted this document to our Assisted Living Licensure Tools & Resources page.

WHERE DO I START?

There are a number of free, on-line resources where facilities can find tools and templates to support development and implementation of an emergency preparedness program, including hazard vulnerability assessment tools and emergency operations plan templates.

Sample Hazard Vulnerability tools are available on-line. One common and well-known example comes from Kaiser Permanente – available through the California Hospital Association. The MDH LTC Toolkit linked above addresses HVA with an example. Other examples are available from the Central and West Central Minnesota Healthcare Preparedness Programs (part of resource library), and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Another model. See ASPR TRACIE for further discussion of HVA.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), working with Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coalitions and other stakeholders, has prepared a Long Term Care Preparedness Toolkit (Baseplan and Supporting Materials) which includes a general guide and numerous appendixes and annexes (scroll to the bottom of the linked page to find this material), and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has developed a Long Term Care: Nursing and Skilled Nursing Facilities Toolkit and Workbook.

The California Association of Healthcare Facilities (CAHF) also offers a number of excellent resources, including a customizable Emergency Operations Plan template with sample policies.

National Associations: Both LeadingAge and Argentum have emergency preparedness resources available for members of those organizations.

Important Note: When using any existing tool or template it is critical to modify and customize the material to align with your facility's specific organizational structure, staff, resident population, physical plant, community – and especially with the results of your facility-specific Risk Assessment. There simply are no standard or one-fits-all emergency plans, policies or procedures. An organization must develop its plan from the ground up, based on a risk assessment, through an inter-disciplinary process among the staff team, then develop documentation to match.

- Many of these templates were designed as tools for nursing homes to implement federal CMS regulations applicable to them. Since MDH has incorporated the nursing home standards to apply to Assisted Living, it is appropriate to work from these templates, however the terminology (something as simple as a phrase like "our nursing home will ….") and content (e.g. may reflect typical nursing home resident populations, or nursing-home typical physical attributes) may often need to be adapted to an assisted living setting.
- Toolkits may include sample policies that address specific hazards which may or may not be applicable to your organization, and may or may not be priorities to address based on your specific risk assessment.
- Review each sample policy or procedure to ensure that it matches your actual organizational practice. Remember that surveyors will be reviewing these policies, asking questions about them, and holding facilities accountable to doing the things the policy says the facility will do. A template may describe human resources policies or staff roles and responsibilities during an emergency that do not accurately describe your existing practices. And there are many other examples.
- The Wisconsin and California materials noted above include certain information that is state specific. Relating to coordination with local response authorities or lists of key external contacts, for example, the template may list agencies and contacts for that state. These must be adapted to fit Minnesota specific local, regional and state agencies.

- Templates may describe a specific activity for which Minnesota has a specific regulation. For example, a template may describe how fire drills are conducted. It would be necessary to adapt that to match what Minnesota's assisted living licensing law requires in this area.
- No template guarantees compliance with regulatory requirements.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Minnesota has established eight [Health Care Coalitions (HCCs)](#), which are led by a Regional Health Care Preparedness Coordinator (RHPC) and an established advisory committee. Although they function and are governed independently, they collaborate inter-regionally across the state for planning and response purposes. Review your regional Coalition's website to identify additional resources.

[Information and Guidelines for Healthcare Facilities and Providers in the Event of Spring Flooding or Other Natural Disasters](#) – This short Minnesota Department of Health 2010 Information Bulletin provides basic information, with a focus on steps for the sending- and receiving-facility in the event residents need to be relocated.

[County Emergency Managers](#) can be reached through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division.

[CMS Emergency Preparedness Checklist-Recommended Tool for Effective Health Care Facility Planning](#) – CMS has posted this six-page checklist to its website. It predates Appendix Z, and in some cases goes beyond what the rule requires, but it provides useful information and organizational support for emergency planning.

[ASPR TRACIE](#) is a healthcare emergency preparedness information gateway that ensures that stakeholders have access to information and resources to improve preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. Three domains (Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange) provide users with support. Free, but registration is required. The site offers a wealth of resources, including [CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule: Resources at Your Fingertips.](#)

STAFFING-RELATED RESOURCES

As part of the COVID-19 response, the Minnesota Department of Health developed a [Long Term Care Contingency Staffing Plan template](#) that could be adapted to broader emergency preparedness purposes.

FEMA offers free independent study training modules relating to Incident Command – recommended courses include [IS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System](#); [IS-700.A: National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction](#); and [IS-200.HCA: Applying ICS to Healthcare Organizations](#).

TRAINING & EXERCISES

NOTE: We encourage members to contact your Healthcare Preparedness Coalition to inquire about training/exercise opportunities and resources.

[Topic Collection: Exercises](#) – from ASPR TRACIE.

EVENT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Active Shooter

[Active Shooter Planning and Response in a Healthcare Setting](#) - This guidance was produced and updated in January 2107 by the Healthcare and Public Health Sector, and takes an in-depth look at the 4-phases of emergency management; mitigation, preparedness response and recovery and offers step by step guidance to assist healthcare facilities in active shooter planning and response.

Mass Casualty Burn Disaster

[Minnesota Department of Health Burn Surge Plan (Updated 2019](#)**)** incorporates a 3-phased approach to best assign resources appropriate to the scope and magnitude of the incident.

Weather-Related

[Ready.gov](#) **–** the U.S. Department of Homeland Security site, includes a page with resources specific to floods, thunderstorms/lightning, snowstorms/extreme cold, and tornadoes.

[MN Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#) **–** this webpage offers information relating to severe weather and winter weather awareness and readiness; some content focuses on families but nevertheless offers good general information.

CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS PLANNING / DISASTER RECOVERY

[Health Care Business Continuity and Recovery](#) – This Minnesota Department of Health webpage includes resources for Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) / health care system recovery planning, including tools and links to free, FEMA independent study training modules.

[Disaster Assistance.gov](#) **-** Integrated Access to Disaster Recovery and Response Resources
An easy-to-use website that consolidates disaster information in one place, launched in 2009 with 17 U.S. Government agencies, sponsoring more than 50 forms of disaster assistance, contributing to the website. It includes an anonymous assistance eligibility survey and a single, online application which will allow for online status checks for applications submitted here.

[Red Cross Map of Open Shelter Locations](#) –listing maintained by the American Red Cross in the event of emergency.

OTHER RESOURCES

[Planning for a Pandemic/Epidemic or Disaster: Caring for Persons with Cognitive Impairment](#) – developed by a coalition, including include the Alzheimer's Association, LeadingAge, and others.