



Tennessee Department of Human Services

P R E P A R I N G

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS FOR EMERGENCIES

A SIX STEP APPROACH

Each and every situation must be assessed on an individual basis and determinations made based on protecting the health, safety, and well-being of the children in care.



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INTRODUCTION

Are You Prepared to Have Children in Your Care for Up to 72 Hours Following a Disaster?

The following pages are designed to help child care providers develop a specific multi-hazard disaster-preparedness plan which, should disaster strike, will minimize injury or loss of life to children and staff. No guide or plan can address all possible situations which might develop in an actual emergency. However, thinking ahead, developing a plan, and practicing the plan can improve your ability to respond effectively and increase the odds for survival.

A disaster plan for a child care contains the following elements:

- preparation and education of staff, parents, and children prior to the event
- an early warning system
- an evacuation plan, including a transportation plan
- a plan for safety/survival until help arrives
- a plan to reunite children and their parents
- a plan that accounts for children with special needs
- a plan to reopen the facility

This manual is a tool to assist child care providers with the development of disaster plans. The recommendations in this manual are from public health officials, emergency management agencies, the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Save the Children, and others in support of emergency and disaster planning. Child care providers must consult Tennessee child care licensing law and rules for specific requirements for child care agencies. Providers should also contact other governing agencies and organizations for additional information about and assistance with disaster planning.

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) estimates that, in the event of a disaster, it could take as long as 72 hours (3 days) before response resources are able to be completely mobilized.

It could take as long as 72 hours (3 days) before help reaches those who need aid.

All licensed child care facilities should have a written multi-hazard plan for:

- evacuating and moving children to a safe location
- notifying parents of an emergency and reuniting them with their children
- taking care of children with special needs



STEP ONE

Medical Center
→ Main Entrance
→ CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY

In compiling information about potential hazards, it might be helpful to interview police, fire, rescue, local public health, and emergency management personnel in your area.



Prepare and Educate

Information to Collect and Keep

Risk information about hazards to which the child care is particularly or historically vulnerable such as:

- tornadoes
- a nearby stream or river which might flood
- a nearby propane tank subject to exploding
- local industries that produce or store hazardous materials such as chlorine or ammonia
- an upstream high hazard dam
- a railroad track or highway along which hazardous materials are transported
- seasonal climactic disturbances such as tornado, severe winter weather, etc.
- seismic fault which might produce earth movement (earthquake)

Contact information for all emergency services

Sources for threat / disaster information

Child-specific information on index cards or two-sided sheets

Facility floor plan

Planned alternative site information including planned routes

First aid information

Transportation plan with contact information for transportation resources

Contact information for media outlets

Map a plan of the facility which details:

- location and purpose of each room with exits (both doors and windows) clearly marked
- location of main shut-off valves for utilities
- location of electrical master power switch
- location of heating/air conditioning equipment and switches
- location of storage area for hazardous materials
- location of fire extinguishers and permanent fire suppression equipment
- location of first aid equipment
- outside sewer, power, or natural gas lines
- meeting place following an evacuation
- transportation pick-up location
- location of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors

Supplies - Gather and maintain supplies to be used in the event of an emergency both inside and away from the child care.

The following supplies should be helpful in most emergencies:

- weather radio
- mobile phone
- first aid kit
- blankets for all staff and children
- water (for 72 hours)
- food (for 72 hours, nonperishable)
- formula for infants (bottles, nipples)
- diapers, various sizes
- paper supplies
- disposable wet wipes
- portable radio (fresh batteries or hand-crank)
- gloves
- shovel
- flashlight (one for each room – fresh batteries or hand-crank)
- manual can opener
- pocket/utility knife
- tarp
- duct tape
- face masks
- map of area and compass
- red cloth (flag for children to follow)
- auxiliary generator or bottled gas
- list of developmentally appropriate ideas/activities to engage, encourage, and entertain children
- comfort bag* for children

Ask parents to prepare a large zip-lock bag with their child's name on it.

*Include in the comfort bag:

- change of clothes to fit the next 12 months
- food for 1/2 day that will not spoil
- any special medication
- something to hold (book, toy, pacifier, picture of family)

Education

Staff should attend an annual workshop to discuss disaster preparedness and response. Before the annual workshop occurs, the child care director/owner should review the emergency response plan and make any needed changes. All staff should receive a copy of the emergency policies and procedures. New staff should be oriented on emergency procedures and plans before beginning employment. All staff should be strongly encouraged to develop their own Family Emergency Plan.

All staff should be familiar with hazards to which the child care is particularly or historically vulnerable as listed in the above section: "Information to Collect and Keep."

All plans should be practiced and evaluated regularly. Assess the ongoing monthly evacuation drills. Discuss the posted evacuation plan and posted emergency

"Go Bags" containing essential supplies should be gathered into ready-to-go backpacks. Child-specific information on index cards or two-sided sheets (including emergency contact information for children) and media and emergency services contact information should be included

These packs should be available to all staff and taken on each drill when leaving your usual location, even if staying within the building.



Update Comfort Bags every 6-12 months.





Some good first aid manuals are available as “apps” for mobile devices.



numbers with staff and clearly define and practice the responsibilities of all. All plans should be assessed according to:

- Effectiveness of the warning signal
- Problems encountered
- Potential solutions
- Staff response time
- Time it takes to evacuate all

Consider the possible use of community resources to train and educate children and staff, e.g., the fire department may present special programs geared for children. There is often no charge for these presentations. Staff attendance can be counted toward training hours required by licensing regulations.

Education and planning should occur for each of the following areas:

Responsibility – Determine and clearly communicate the chain of command in the event of a disaster. The most qualified person (not necessarily the owner of the facility or the director) should be given command. Determine who will be second-in-charge if the designated person is unavailable or incapacitated. Spell out the specific duties and responsibilities of every staff person. Point out where key information is kept. Emphasize to staff that they are expected to stay with the children despite their normal, and understandable, desire to be reunited with their own families. Staff should remain with the children until the children are returned to their parents or a person designated on their emergency form.

Safety - Every adult on the premises should know and practice how to shut off the electricity, gas, water, etc. Every adult on the premises should know the location of the telephone as well as where the emergency numbers and the parent's numbers are posted.

Sheltering in Place – Plan for keeping all children and staff safely and comfortably in your facility in the event you cannot safely leave or if you are directed to stay. You may need an alternate source of heat and toileting, as well as sleeping materials (blankets, pillows) for all staff and children.

Medications - A 72 hour supply of prescribed medications should routinely be kept available for staff or children with chronic health needs. Have a first aid kit available along with first aid guide or manual. Be sure every staff member knows where the first aid kit is and knows how to use it.

Evaluation - Practice evacuating the building during your monthly fire drills. Special health or developmental needs of children or staff should be considered and included in planning. Plan for and practice the evacuation of children who are not yet walking and for those who may have a functional need which would require specific assistance in evacuating.

Transportation - Prepare at least two transportation plans from the neighborhood, one for evacuation by motor vehicle, another for evacuation on foot. Again, consider functional needs of children and staff. Educate and practice both plans.

Injury – Know which staff members are trained in first aid. Determine which room could best function as a "sick bay" area. Determine which room will be designated as a temporary morgue in the event of death.

STEP TWO

EMPLOY EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Alerting, Warning, and Communication

It is important to determine how you would know if an emergency situation was developing in your community. Every child care provider should have a primary and back-up notification system.

Every child care should have a weather radio and a telephone that can receive emergency notifications. “Land line” phones from a public telephone service (phones which do not require electrical power) are the best backup to a weather radio. A mobile phone is critical in an evacuation but service may soon become unavailable in a large-scale emergency. Hand-crank and battery operated radios can also help keep a program informed during an evacuation or power outage.

Televisions and radios should be considered supplemental warning systems. These media are only effective if constantly monitored.

Child care programs located in schools have a warning signal (a bell or electronic alert tone) and a public address system which allows directors to communicate with everyone in their center simultaneously.

These systems are invaluable for disseminating emergency information and instructions in times of crisis. By using special code words or phrases, information can be conveyed to caregivers without frightening or alarming the children. Unfortunately, disasters often disrupt utilities and unless these systems are on back-up power, they are useless.

For this reason, a back-up plan should be developed which would allow two-way communication with every room and service area. This can be accomplished by using designated caregivers or auxiliary staff as “runners” or message carriers. Such a system should be included in the plan and individuals should be assigned to specific routes.

Social Media

Don't forget that social media such as Facebook™, Twitter™, YouTube™, or services such as Skype may be useful in a disaster!

The National Weather Service provides continuous weather information through special frequencies on weather radios. These frequencies are also found on many multi-band portable radios. Weather radios are available at modest prices. Weather radios are available which have Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) capability, so users can program locations for which they prefer to receive alerts.

An emergency call-up roster of all caregivers and auxiliary staff, as well as local emergency support agencies and personnel, should be kept in the Go Bag in the director's office.



STEP THREE



In an emergency situation, if the prearranged relocation site is not available, the staff should follow the directions of local police or disaster-relief personnel and allow them to direct the vehicles to a safe relocation site.

Evacuation by Motor Vehicle

Remember to consider the number of child safety seats that might be needed.



During evacuation by foot, staff should be aware of dangers such as downed power lines, swollen creeks, missing manhole covers, etc.

DEVELOP AN EVACUATION PLAN

An emergency call-up roster of all caregivers and auxiliary staff, as well as local emergency support agencies and personnel, should be maintained in the director's office and in a central location readily accessible to any adult in the facility when needed.

In the event an evacuation appears to be necessary, child care providers should use their best judgment, coupled with the recommendations of local emergency support agencies, to determine the safest way to proceed. Safety of staff and children must be the first consideration. Call 911 to notify emergency personnel if evacuation is necessary and inform the operator of the relocation site.

Two evacuation plans should be developed. One plan should be used when motor vehicles can be used and another for evacuation by foot. *It is essential that caregivers stay with the children so that no child becomes lost or overlooked in the excitement of evacuation.*

Evacuation by motor vehicle

Each facility should have prearranged relocation sites. It is possible that child care providers in different neighborhoods could make informal arrangements to serve as relocation sites for one another.

Once an evacuation/relocation plan is in place, parents should be notified in advance of the probable relocation site or sites. A plan for posting the location where their children have been taken should be developed and maintained. A message should be posted on the door of the facility describing where their children have been taken. This posting should include the route and method of transportation.

Contact information for all drivers (primary and alternate phone numbers) should be included in the emergency call-up roster.

As children are evacuated from the child care they should be taken to the transportation pick-up area and then evacuated quickly and safely to a previously arranged site.

The child care program should plan to use community resources such as bus lines if they have no transportation available. School buses, rescue squads, or ambulance services may be available and their availability determined in advance.

Evacuation by foot

If children are evacuated by foot, knowledge of the neighborhood is essential for caregivers/staff who must lead the children to the relocation site. Again, as above, a note should be posted on the door of the facility describing where their children have been taken. This posting should include the route and method of transportation along with a mobile phone number for a staff member accompanying the children.

Contacting parents

The child care program should contact parents directly during an evacuation. Emergency information on each child should be recorded and kept together. Someone should be given the responsibility of ensuring that the emergency information is evacuated with the children. It is recommended that the information sheets be two-sided and contain the following information for each child:

Side one:

- name of child
- name of parent(s) or legal guardian and emergency contacts
- home address
- home phone number
- place of employment of each parent and emergency contact
- work (or emergency) phone number of each parent and emergency contact
- name and phone number of child's pediatrician
- medical information such as allergies, special needs of child, medication required by child, etc.
- name and phone number for child's health care provider

Side two:

- Side two should be a profile of the child with personal information about the child's likes, needs, etc. This will provide an emergency caregiver with additional information to help support the child.

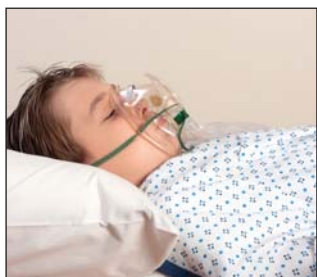
Additionally, notification of parents can be made via the news media with the director or a designated individual dealing directly with the press, radio, and/or local television stations.

The following information should be provided:

- nature of emergency (what, when, where, how, why)
- general condition of children
- present location of children
- relocation site (if necessary)
- where and how children can be picked up by parents or by the person(s) designated on their emergency form



STEP FOUR



DEVELOP A PLAN FOR SAFETY/SURVIVAL UNTIL HELP ARRIVES

Planning Guidelines for Specific Hazards

Utility Failure (water, electric, gas, sewer, telephone):

Develop a procedure for:

- contacting the appropriate utility department (most have 24 hour emergency numbers).
- shutting off main valves or switches. Find out what should be done when the service is restored.
- removing the children to a temporary shelter if the utility failure will be long-term.
- procuring auxiliary generators, bottled gas, drinking water, temporary portable toilets, etc., along with clear instructions on how to use them safely.

Injury or Illness of Child or Caregiver

Develop a procedure for determining:

- Who is injured?
- Where are they located?
- What assistance is needed?

Develop a procedure for requesting outside assistance:

- ambulance
- rescue
- fire department
- law enforcement
- poison control
- public health

Determine who is responsible for making the call.

Develop a procedure for notification of family of parents or staff.

Develop a procedure for dealing with **mass injury** situations:

- Is there an alternate method(s) for requesting outside assistance if phones are inoperable?
- How can the injured be located?
- How to remove the injured to a safe environment (Note: relocation of injured should be a last resort)?
- Who is trained in CPR and first aid?

Injury or Illness of Child or Caregiver (cont.)

Determine:

- where the first aid area will be located
- where a temporary morgue can be established
- an emergency check-in station where parents can be reunited with children
- a plan to assist children with special health needs who may require individualized aid

Fires and Explosions

Select a fire alarm signal and an alternate, back-up signal.

Develop an all-clear signal.

Establish two evacuation routes from each room and post the routes in each room.

Establish a meeting area at an outside location.

Develop a procedure to check all restrooms, closets, storage areas, etc., to ensure that every child is evacuated (frightened children often hide).

Develop procedures for evacuating children with special health needs.

Develop a procedure for requesting outside assistance:

- fire department
- ambulance
- rescue
- law enforcement

Determine who is responsible for requesting outside assistance (and who is a backup if that person is not present).

Develop a procedure for shutting off utilities (gas, electric, water) if necessary.

Develop a procedure for moving to a temporary shelter.

Establish a command post.

Establish a check-in station(s) where parents can pick up their children.

Conduct monthly fire drills!

All staff should know the location of fire extinguishers and be trained in how to use them. Fire extinguishers should be maintained annually.

Plan how to evacuate a large crowd or assembly (such as an open house or training event).

Plan to safeguard records (lock them in a fire-proof receptacle or move them to a safe place). Maintain a copy of records at a secure, off-site location.

Hazardous Materials Incidents

(Hazardous materials are those which might cause injury if inhaled or touched. A train derailling, a truck overturning, or a warehouse catching on fire can potentially release hazardous materials.)

Develop a notification system in order to be informed of a hazardous materials incident in your area.

Notify the appropriate agency if you witness the incident.



Be sure staff knows and practices alarm signals.



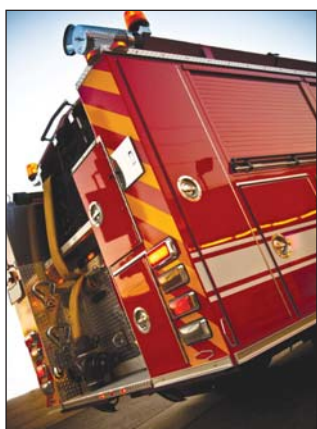


Some good first aid manuals can be purchased as “apps” for mobile devices.

Department of Children's Services Child Abuse Hotline

To report abuse or neglect call:
1-877-237-0004 or
1-877-54ABUSE

Plan to safeguard your records (lock them in a fire-proof receptacle or remove them to a safe place). Maintain a copy of your records at a secure, off-site location.



Move to a room with few windows or doors (NOT the basement as fumes may settle there). Take your radio with you. Close all windows and doors, place wet towels or thick tape over gaps. Stay away from windows in case of explosion.

Turn off air conditioners, heaters, or fans. Close fireplace dampers.

Develop a procedure to check all restrooms, closets, storage areas, etc., to ensure every child is in a safe place. (Remember, frightened children may hide.)

Develop procedures for assisting children with functional needs.

Don't evacuate unless instructed to do so by emergency personnel. For some gases it may be necessary to shelter-in-place. Develop a procedure to shut off HVAC. (Local EMA or Fire Department can assist with this type of planning.)

Develop a procedure for moving to a temporary shelter in the event an evacuation is necessary. Plan for transportation and for walking routes. When outside, protect breathing by covering mouth and nose with damp cloths.

After evacuation, local officials will issue instructions on decontamination procedures for your child care.

Law Enforcement Emergencies

(child abuse, child abduction, riots, protests, strikes, shots fired, crimes, spouse abuse, terrorist attack, etc.)

Notify law enforcement - *dial 911*.

For all law enforcement emergencies, establish a code that can be paged to alert workers in other parts of the building so workers will recognize to keep the children out of harm's way.

If in your power, isolate or localize the incident.

Move children to a safe location in child care.

Move to a temporary shelter, if needed, but be cautious leaving your child care and entering the streets. A police escort may be advised.

Bomb Threats

Post a procedure for handling the caller. (Record the exact wording of the threat. Ask where the bomb is located.)

Notify law enforcement - *dial 911*. (In some communities the fire department may also respond.)

Develop a procedure and type of alarm for evacuating the building without unduly alarming the children.

If a bomb threat has been made, it is safest to evacuate the building immediately. Be sure to evacuate a safe distance from the facility. An evacuation site in the immediate neighborhood could be pre-determined (such as a nearby school or business) so the children can walk to the location.

Do not return to the building until given permission by law enforcement personnel.

Develop a plan for evacuating children with functional needs who may require extra assistance.

Notify media and parents, if necessary.

Law enforcement personnel, with the assistance of child care personnel, should search the building.

Animal Encounters

Notify appropriate authorities when stray animals are in the vicinity of the child care. Keep children and staff away from stray or wild animals, whether or not they appear diseased. Do not take children outside if a stray or wild animal is in the vicinity. If children are outside when the animal appears, bring them inside until the animal leaves or is captured. Staff should not attempt to capture the animal themselves.

If a bite or scratch occurs, follow basic first aid procedures until professional medical attention can be given. If contact with saliva from a wild or stray animal or **any** contact with a bat occurs, consult a physician and the local health department. Any bat exposure, even without obvious bite, may call for rabies vaccination. Other animals such as skunks and foxes carry rabies in Tennessee.

Earthquakes

A. During an earthquake:

- If children are inside, stay inside until the earthquake is over.
- Children and staff should be taught how to drop, cover their heads and necks, and hold on.
- If possible, everyone should get under tables and cover their heads. If there isn't a table or desk nearby, cover face, head, and neck with arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- If children are outside, stay outside. Avoid being under trees, near the fences (brick and metal), buildings, or power poles. Fallen electrical lines can be deadly.

B. After the quake:

- Prepare for aftershocks.
- Take roll immediately.
- DO NOT TURN ON OR OFF ANY light switches (to prevent explosion of possible gas leak).
- Make an assessment of safety.
- Check for injuries. Apply first aid.
- Check for damage to building. Inspect building for utility leaks (gas, water, sewer) or electrical shorts. If building is unsafe, evacuate immediately. Turn off utilities.
- If evacuation occurs, post a notice on the door so parents who come to the child care will know where their children have been taken.
- Stay away from damaged areas.

C. Assessing damage

- After the quake, if the damage to the building is not too severe, remain indoors. Clean-up of broken glass, turned-over shelves, etc., should begin as quickly as possible to prevent further injuries from glass and debris.
- Turn off utilities (if required).
- Staff should stay with the children until parents, or the person designated on the emergency form arrives to pick up the children.



Bats

If a child was sleeping in a room where a bat is found, you should try to safely capture the bat and have it tested for rabies. The same precautions should be used if a bat is seen in a room with an unattended child, or if a bat is seen near a mentally impaired person.

If a bat is indoors, especially if there might have been contact with a person, do not attempt to scare the bat away. Instead, confine the bat to a room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room. Contact an animal control or public health agency for assistance in capturing the bat.

Earthquakes

To reduce the chance of injury:

- **DROP** down onto hands and knees.
- **COVER** head and neck under a sturdy table or desk.
- **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops.



Check with local health department or other agencies (USDA, FDA, foodsafety.gov) for food safety issues after long term power outage. Find out what is safe to keep in the refrigerator or freezer and what needs to be thrown away.

Floods - Know the Terms

Familiarize yourself with these terms to help identify a flood hazard:

Flood Watch:

Flooding is possible. Tune to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flash Flood Watch:

Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flood Warning:

Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Flash Flood Warning:

A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground immediately.

Source: FEMA



Severe Weather

Have a device to receive warning of severe weather conditions (telephone, weather radio, radio, tone-activated receiver, etc.).

Tornadoes and Severe Thunderstorms

Know the safest shelter locations inside the building.

Don't hesitate to move to a safe location. These safe places are usually basements, the center part of the house on the lowest floor, in a small room such as a closet or bathroom, or under sturdy furniture.

Alert staff without alarming children.

If children are outside, immediately move them inside.

Keep away from windows. Stay off phones and away from water and appliances while lightning.

In a large building, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor, or to the designated shelter area. Stay out of auditoriums, gymnasiums, and other structures with wide, free-span roofs.

Mobile homes should be evacuated in tornado or high wind conditions.

Post procedures in each room, office, library, etc., so staff know what to do and where to go (this is especially relevant for substitute or new staff).

At least two evacuation routes should be established for each room.

Teach children and staff how to crouch and protect their heads and neck.

Make provisions to check outdoors, restrooms, closets, storage rooms, etc., to ensure that every child is in a safe place. (Remember - frightened children hide.)

Develop a plan for children with special health needs who may need assistance.

Develop an all-clear signal for staff.

Safeguard your records. Maintain a copy of your records at a secure, off-site location.

Periodically practice tornado/severe weather drills.

If facility needs to be evacuated, follow evacuation plan.

Develop a plan for children with functional needs who may need assistance.

Winter Weather

Have a procedure in place for receiving warning of severe winter weather (telephone, weather radio, radio, tone-activated receiver, etc.)

Plan for a source of emergency heating. Be alert to fire hazards that might exist while using the emergency heating source.

Have battery-powered equipment, heating fuel, food, and other supplies.

Wear layers of clothing. Use mittens, not gloves.

Avoid overexertion and exposure.

Make necessary trips for supplies before the storm develops.

Floods and Flash Floods

Contact the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (800-358-9616), or visit the National Flood Insurance Program (FEMA-NFIP) web site: <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/>, to determine if your child care is in a flood plain. Copies of FEMA flood maps may be ordered [online](#).

Have a procedure in place to receive flood warnings.

Alert staff without alarming children.

Store drinking water in clean bathtubs and in various clean containers as water service may be interrupted.

If facility needs to be evacuated, follow evacuation plan AND go to higher ground.

While evacuating, do not drive through flooded areas as roadbeds may be washed away underneath the water.

Do not attempt to walk through moving water.

Develop a plan for children with special health needs who may need assistance.

Plan to move or protect furniture, equipment, supplies, etc. in your child care by moving items to higher areas or out of danger area entirely.

Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with flood waters.

Boil drinking water for one minute before using or treat with professional water purification tablets.

Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas.

Use flashlights, not lanterns or torches, to examine buildings - flammables may be inside.

If necessary, turn off utilities.

Severe Heat Waves

Decide ahead of time when and if the facility will be closed.

Develop a plan for the safety of children with special health needs who may be adversely affected by the heat.

Reduce activity levels.

Drink lots of water and other fluids (not alcohol).

Stay inside during the hottest part of the day.

Avoid over-exposure to the sun.

Closely monitor vehicles to be sure children are not left inside unattended.



STEP FIVE



The American Red Cross maintains a “Safe and Well” website used to assist with reunification of separated families: <https://disastersafe.redcross.org>

A PLAN TO REUNITE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

Staff must remain with children until the parent or the designated person(s) on the emergency form arrives to pick up the children. A safe, accessible area should be selected as a “command post”, and parents should be directed to this site to sign out their children.

Be advised, there have been occasions in the past when individuals have used the chaotic environment during emergencies to abduct children. Caregivers should be alert to this possibility and take every possible measure to ensure children are safely reunited with their parents. If individuals appear and represent themselves as emergency personnel, they should be asked to produce valid identification prior to the child being released to their care. When children are transported for emergency medical treatment, they should be accompanied by a caregiver.

In the event of an evacuation of the child care, the following steps should be followed for reuniting children with parents:

- Post a notice at the child care informing the parents of the evacuation and where the children have been relocated.
- Once the children have been safely evacuated, the director or another designated individual should contact local media. The following information should be provided: the nature of the emergency (what, when, where, how, why), the condition of the children in general, the present location of the children, where and how the children can be picked up by their parents/guardians.
- If children and staff evacuate to a shelter or other site managed by the American Red Cross, the children will be registered at intake.
- The caregivers will stay with the children until they have been safely released to their parents or to a person designated on the emergency form.
- If a child is injured and taken for medical treatment, a caregiver shall accompany the child and remain with the child until a parent or person designated on the emergency form arrives to assume responsibility.

Remember: An emergency heightens the responsibility of documenting when a child leaves and with whom!

After initially informing law enforcement of an evacuation, the program should continue to work with the department or agency until all children are released to the proper parent/caregiver.

STEP SIX

DEVELOP A PLAN TO REOPEN THE CHILDCARE

After a disaster, the owner, operator, or director of a child care should notify the licensing office as to their status of operation. The licensing authority can help to ensure that health and safety standards for continued operation have been met.

The child care may open for business if:

- it has NO structural damage
- it has FULL electrical service
- the water and sewage/septic tank are working properly, and
- the location and surrounding area has been cleared for access by the Emergency Management Team

Under NO circumstances are candles, open flames, gas, or fuel lanterns to be used.

If the child care facility/home SUSTAINS DAMAGE, regardless of the extent, on-site inspections are required PRIOR to opening. Licensing staff must ensure the structure is sound, no live wires or open sewage exists, etc. For DHS staff, these inspections may be accomplished in collaboration with other departments or agencies.

Things to Remember

- A.** If water service is disrupted, water used for drinking/cooking should be purchased (bottled water). Safe water can often be obtained by melting ice.

Water used for hand washing, cleaning, etc. must have 8 drops of bleach added to each gallon of water. Mix well and let sit for 30 minutes before use. Water may also be vigorously boiled for one minute before use. Consult with your local health department for additional requirements or information.

- B.** Provisions must be made for the facility/home to be kept cool and comfortable when children are in care.

Fans may be appropriate; however, they must have safety features and kept out of the reach of children.

- C.** If flooding has occurred within the child care, clean up must occur before allowing children in, including the disposal or sanitization of any toys and equipment.

- D.** Consult the local health department regarding sewage contamination and septic tank capacity, damage, and stress created by excessive rains, flooding, and standing water.

- E.** Outdoor areas must be safe for play and free from debris. Do not allow children to play near downed power lines or flooded areas.



Caution: Generators, if used, must be located outdoors away from windows and doors. Exhaust can easily cause carbon monoxide poisoning if it enters the building or home. The generator must also be inaccessible to children.



Programs may be allowed to reopen even if outdoor areas are not useable; however, approval by the licensing authority is required to reopen. Temporary fencing/barriers to prohibit access may be used to keep children out of the play area.



- F.** For food preparation in the absence of electrical power, pre-packaged foods that do not require refrigeration should be used and made available. Consult the local health department on alternate meal planning and safe food storage.
- G.** Regardless of circumstances, staff-to-child ratios must be maintained to provide appropriate supervision.
- H.** Children may be accepted on a temporary basis; however, the licensed capacity may NEVER be exceeded. Enrollment information is required and contact numbers are critical. Complete medical record requirements may sometimes be waived temporarily until the emergency situation has passed.

If children are moved to alternate sites, parents must be informed. Child care providers are responsible for notifying the local licensing authority for confirmation that the site is appropriate. Both licensing staff and the provider should work with their local Child Care Resource and Referral agency to help get the message out, to confirm location changes, and to ensure all children are provided care.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov
<http://www.ready.gov/>
<http://www.ready.gov/kids/home.html>

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

www.tnema.org

Ready Classroom from Discovery Education

<http://readyclassroom.discoveryeducation.com/#/map>

Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/disaster

Tennessee Department of Health

www.tn.gov/health

CONCLUSION

Once emergency-preparedness guidelines have been developed, they should be reviewed with your local Emergency Management Agency or law enforcement authority. These agencies employ individuals with special training who are available to offer advice and suggestions.

For best effect a plan should be written, practiced, evaluated, and revised on a continuing basis.

It is the responsibility of the child care agency to follow all Tennessee licensing rules and to contact the local Child Care Licensing office for assistance during emergencies.

Call 911 if...

There is a medical emergency

You see a suspicious person or vehicle loitering in
or near the child care

An unauthorized individual enters the child care

There is an assault on a child or staff person

An individual brings a weapon into the child care

There is an accidental death or homicide

You are concerned about a fire or safety hazard
during a power outage

There is a hazardous material accident

You suspect a parent/guardian who arrives at your facility
to pick up a child may be under the influence of alcohol
or drugs, and you are incapable of preventing their exit

There is any situation which puts a child in danger



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<http://www.tn.gov/health>

