



South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness e-Newsletter:

Summer 2022

Welcome, we're glad you're here.

Another perk of attending a South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness - Basic Course is gaining access to this bi-annual newsletter curated for nursing home staff members like you.

Be sure to check out our webpage for other helpful resources.

[SC LTCEP Webpage](#)



Focus Area: *Hurricane Season and COVID-19*

Hurricane season is from June 1st to November 30th each year.

A large amount of preparation is required to keep your facility's residents and staff safe during a typical hurricane season.

This year is different.

The 2022 hurricane season is predicted to be more active than normal and the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. Read about considerations and recommendations below.

Hurricane Hazards



WIND

Hurricanes are categorized by sustained wind speed using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale:

- Category 1: 74-95 mph
- Category 2: 96-110 mph
- Category 3: 111-129 mph
- Category 4: 130-156 mph
- Category 5: 157+ mph

Hurricanes are also known to cause tornadoes. Both hazards can cause widespread damage and disrupt an area's primary power source. Be prepared to shelter away from windows and have a plan to provide backup power or make other arrangements.



WATER

While wind is a threat to healthcare facilities and homes, more damage is caused by water - either through heavy rain and flooding or storm surge. Storm surge is an abnormal rise of seawater generated by a strong storm which can push water several miles inland, contributing to flooding. Facilities can view their estimated storm surge threat by visiting the National Hurricane Center's National Storm Surge Hazard Maps webpage:

<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/nationalsurge/>

Reminders:

A direct storm impact is not required to have personal and professional impacts from a hurricane.

Don't rely on wind speed alone to make decisions: some of the worst historical damage is from slow moving or stalled tropical storms, not hurricanes.

Hurricane Preparation:

Emergency Preparedness Plan



Certified long term care facilities should have evacuation and shelter-in-place emergency preparedness plans. These plans should integrate community partners such as other healthcare facilities and your healthcare coalition. Now is the time to review your plans, policies and procedures to update them as needed and ensure clear triggers are identified to activate the plan. Triggers for impending hurricanes could be hours till landfall of tropical-storm-force winds or align with local community partners guidance. The plans, policies and procedures should be tested in drills and exercises with community partners and facility staff should receive regular education on facility practices.

Plans must include how transportation resources will be provided to evacuate residents. If you have Memorandums of Understanding or Memorandums of Agreement (MOUs/MOAs) with transportation companies, you need to verify they are still operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ask about any changes in their policies due to COVID-19. It could mean you need more transportation vehicles than usual.

The same principle applies to any external service provider or vendor such as medical gases, pharmaceuticals, medical waste, linen service, or food suppliers. Be prepared for longer wait times for shipments and services by reaching out as early as possible.



Emergency Supplies

Certified long term care facilities are required to address resource needs including food, water, and medications in their emergency preparedness plan. It is recommended to prepare to be self-sufficient for 96 hours after the storm has passed. Remember, it may take longer than usual to restore power and water if they are out. Essential medical and non-medical resources to consider are:

- non-perishable foods
- potable (safe to drink) water
- flashlights & headlamps
- weather radios
- batteries
- emergency power options
- pharmaceuticals
- heating/cooling options
- sanitation/hygiene considerations
- trauma kits
- sleeping supplies - cots or air mattresses
- respiratory/ventilatory/suctioning supplies
- additional supplies for staff, visitors, families, and pets
- A few other essentials to include during the COVID-19 pandemic include:
 - two cloth face coverings for each resident and staff member (with extras for visitors and families)
 - hand sanitizer
 - sanitizing wipes (for surfaces)
 - hand soap

Evacuation Considerations



Another large piece of hurricane preparations is determining where residents and staff will be relocated during an evacuation. Due to COVID-19, large shelters should be considered a last resort. Other options include hotel rooms, campgrounds (cabins or RVs for ambulatory residents), and smaller shelters with 50 or less residents and staff to limit transmission of COVID-19. Get creative - reach out to local school systems and religious organizations ahead of time to make arrangements.

If you typically rely on sister facilities for the relocation of residents due to a hurricane, stay up to date on corporate plans and policies which may affect the number of residents you can send to each sister facility. COVID-19 could also affect staffing considerations, it is recommended to send staff with residents to avoid intermingling of residents and staff from different facilities.

No matter what sheltering location is used, residents and staff members will have to be monitored for symptoms of COVID-19 as well as other illnesses including mental health concerns. Other considerations include wearing cloth masks, testing for COVID-19 if available, and setting up intake and isolation areas. See the complete list of recommendations for sheltering from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Guidance-for-Gen-Pop-Disaster-Shelters-COVID19.pdf>

Personal Preparedness:

Encourage staff to prepare their home, family, and pets. Personal preparedness increases the likelihood staff will report to work during a disaster. Remember these three steps to personal preparedness:

Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Be Informed.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/> for more personal preparedness information.



Upcoming Courses:

Year one courses have ended but don't worry, more are coming (including a new Advanced Course!) starting Fall 2022.

Like our Facebook page to stay up to date on course offerings as they are scheduled.

[Facebook Page](#)

Hurricane and COVID-19 Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Webinar on the 2020 Hurricane Season and COVID-19.](#)
- [CDC Natural Disasters, Severe Weather, and COVID-19.](#)
- [CDC Making Water Safe in an Emergency.](#)
- [CDC How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering Infographic](#)
- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season](#)
- [Hurricane Resources from the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response \(ASPR\)](#)
- [SC DHEC Disaster Preparedness for Healthcare Facilities Resource Page](#)
- [South Carolina Emergency Management Division - Know Your Hurricane Evacuation Zone](#)
- [South Carolina Hurricane Guide](#)

