

South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness e-Newsletter:

Fall 2022

Welcome, we're glad you're here.

Another perk of attending a South Carolina Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness - Basic/Advanced 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.

Focus Area:

Winter Storm Preparedness

As the weather turns cooler, it's time to think ahead on what direct and indirect impacts winter weather can bring. Winter storms can cause several issues including utility failures, blocked roadways, and supply chain issues. See below for recommendations on how to mitigate these hazards.



Photo: Winter storm in Aiken, SC in 2014

Utility Failure



Winter storms, often accompanied by extremely cold weather, can cause an interruption in utilities and services. Large amounts of snow and ice can weigh down tree branches, causing them to damage power lines below. Cold temperatures can cause a building's water pipes to freeze and then burst. Read further for tips to mitigate these issues:

- Trim tree limbs hanging over your facility or nearby power lines
 - If there are tree limbs over power lines along a public road you may be able to call your city/county or your power company and have them trim the limbs
- Install 'frost-proof' faucets on exterior building spigots
 - Be sure to install with a slightly downward pitch to be effective
- If there are downed power lines, stay indoors and call your power provider
 - The power lines could still be energized and highly dangerous
- Be sure to perform inspections and preventative maintenance on your facility's heating systems before cold weather arrives
- **Remember:** the use of portable generators connecting to extension cords *within the facility* is not allowed due to electrical, fire, and trip hazards associated with extension cords
 - From CMS Appendix Z: "Extension cords or other temporary wiring devices may not be used to connect electrical equipment in the facility to a portable and mobile generator due to the potential for shock, fire, and tripping hazards when using such devices. For portable generators, they must be connected and provide emergency power to a facility's electrical system circuits via a power transfer system as recommended by the generator manufacturer. A power transfer system typically consists of a generator power supply cord, power inlet box mounted outside, and transfer switch connected to the facility electrical panel."



Blocked Roadways

Even small amounts of snow and ice can impact roadways in South Carolina. When transportation routes are blocked, your facility's staff may not be able to make it home or come into work.

- Locate cots, air mattresses, or extra resident beds
 - Staff (and their families) may have to sleep overnight in the event the next shift cannot access the facility
 - Another option is to have staff come early before their shift to sleep and avoid icy roadways
 - If there is not enough room at the facility for additional sleep spaces, nearby hotels may be an option
- Keep a Winter Preparedness Kit in your vehicle for emergencies:
 - Gather a supply of kitty litter and/or snow chains to help with icy driveways
 - Keep an ice scraper handy to get snow/ice off of car windshields
 - **Remember:** never pour hot water on a frozen car windshield, the sudden change in temperature can cause the glass to crack
 - Make sure you have sturdy shoes/boots and waterproof winter clothing available in case you are stranded in the winter elements
 - Consider additional items such as blankets in case you have to sleep in your vehicle
 - Always gas up your vehicle before inclement weather
 - For more car emergency kit recommendations, visit [ready.gov/car](https://www.ready.gov/car)

Supply Issues



Certified long term care facilities are required to have a supply of food and water on-hand for emergencies. However, more supplies are used during a disaster than a regular day; and the amount of supplies needed increases further if staff and their families are sheltering at the facility. Response times of rescue personnel and supply/shipping delays may also be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to your required supply storage, consider the following:

- additional potable (safe to drink) water
- manual can openers
- meal options during a power outage
- blankets and clothing layers for residents and staff
- warm hats for residents to improve heat conservation
 - most body heat is lost through the head and residents with chronic medical conditions can decompensate quickly
 - see if any local community organizations are knitting warm hats or beanies to be donated around the holidays - your residents may be able to knit too!

Review/Update: Emergency Preparedness Plan, Policies & Procedures

Prepare before the temperatures drop. Be sure to address the following:

- Review 'triggers' for the initiation of cold-related emergency procedures
- Update chain-of command procedures for emergencies

- If roadways are blocked and the administrator, maintenance director, and director of nursing cannot make it into work - who is in charge? Do they know they are in charge?
 - Conduct refresher training on how to access and use any equipment not used daily including but not limited to: headlamps, flashlights, radios, evacuation chairs, bleeding control kits, and emergency generators
- Review your MOUs/MOAs/contracts for supply fulfillment. Look at contracts for fuel, medical gases, pharmaceuticals, food, linen, and others.
 - These suppliers may have increased delivery times due to the pandemic
 - Call each supplier and ask how quickly they could get an order to your facility and make adjustments or add another supplier option as needed
- Review your infectious disease plans:
 - Winter means flu season for the US and typically peaks between December and February
 - Flu vaccinations are recommended for staff and residents, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Review your policies and procedures for a loss of power
 - From CMS Appendix Z: "For LTC facilities there are additional requirements for facilities who were initially certified after October 1, 1990 who must maintain a temperature range of 71 (min) to 81 °F (max)."

CMS Appendix Z

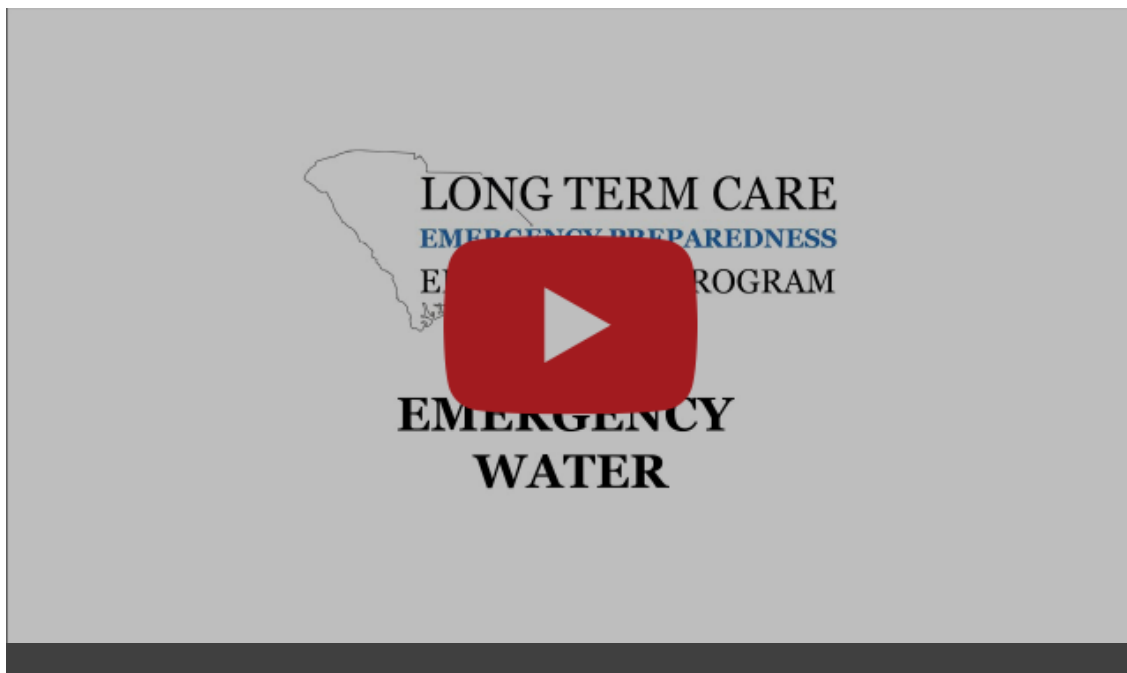
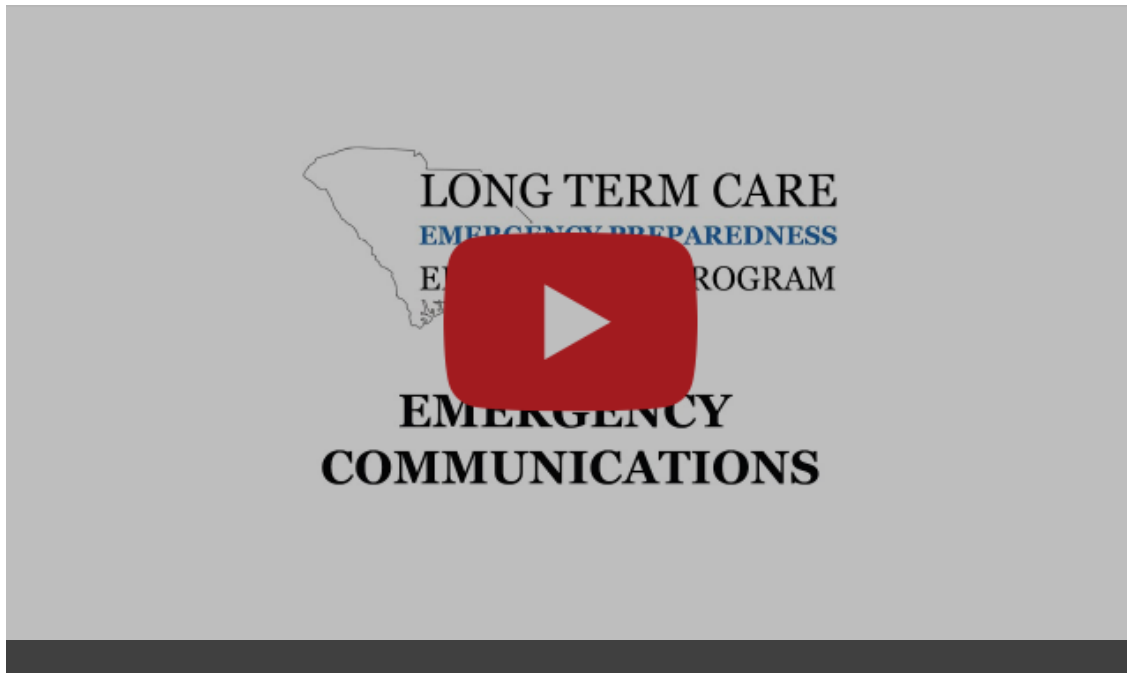
Educational Videos:

The UGA IDM team has produced two educational videos for the program so far, Emergency Communications and Emergency Water. Watch the videos

below and share with your staff members to help prepare your facility before disaster strikes.

You may even spot the occasional alien, zombie, or game show host!

[YouTube Channel](#)



Upcoming Courses:

Year Two features four basic and four (new!) advanced courses offered across the state. Click [here](#) to download a full schedule with links to register.

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

[Facebook Page](#)

Resources

- [South Carolina Emergency Management Division Website](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Webpage](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Contact List Flyer](#)
- [South Carolina Healthcare Coalition Map](#)
- [South Carolina Public Health Region Map](#)
- [South Carolina Health Care Association Website](#)

