

# Emergency Planning

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is a complete Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)?

A complete EOP contains any documentation that will help the facility get through an emergency or disaster without panic or chaos. Facilities PLAN for disasters so the steps they take to save lives and protect property go smoothly. Plans should include hazards the facility may face, information on HOW the facility will face those hazards, WHAT they will do during the emergency, and WHEN the plan will be activated, stopped, or changed.

### 2. Why should I update and change my old manual or Disaster Plan?

State regulations require that facilities review their plan every two months. With the simple tools provided by HFEMSD, updating your plan can be simple and effective for staff and residents. Since some disasters are seasonal, (for example, tornado season) it makes sense to review the Tornado Standard Operating Procedures BEFORE that season begins. Likewise, before winter, it makes sense to review the Shelter in Place plan and the Loss of Vital Services Standard Operating Procedures in case severe weather causes a power outage or need to shelter at the facility for several days.

### 3. Where are materials located to help me update my plan?

Information from HFEMSD is located at [www.healthfacilities.info](http://www.healthfacilities.info) and should be modified to suit each facility. In addition, the Information/References section contains other emergency planning information available online (such as how to find your county emergency manager) to help facilities develop personal emergency planning tools.

### 4. How much time should Emergency Planning take?

Emergency planning is an ongoing task. Since Assisted Living Residences must review their plans every two months, seasonal planning makes it easy. As you find tools that work for your facility and staff, incorporate them into the EOP. Each time you practice a section, change it until it works. A planning team from the facility can divide tasks, and every staff should know and understand their roles in the disaster scenario. Keep it simple and user friendly!

### 5. What are surveyors looking for in Emergency Planning?

Surveyors are looking for complete plans that include the five required hazards, basic responses to those hazards (Sheltering in Place and Evacuation instructions) training records, evaluation of the plan records, and proof that staff understand their roles in the emergency or disaster.



6. Why is exercising the EOP important?

Regulations say that EOPs should be practiced, revised, reviewed and current. If the staff at the facility panic or are unprepared during emergencies, lives could be endangered. It is important that staff practice and are comfortable with their roles during disasters, in order to keep residents safe.

7. How frequently should the EOP be revised?

As frequently as it is reviewed, practiced, trained or it is found that procedures just don't work. Facility EOPs should be considered "living documents." It is good for them to change!

8. Why is it important to include the local and county emergency managers when planning?

Communities have emergency managers to help with resources, to connect the communities, and to support state and local efforts for emergency response. There is also funding available to them for exercising community plans. Assisted Living Residences may be able to practice their plans as part of community disaster exercises, which may show facilities how they fit in, how much time it may take to evacuate or respond, and what resources the community may be able to supply to the facility during an emergency or disaster. Emergency managers may not even know your facility exists until you contact them. It is important for Assisted Living Residences to be included in community-wide emergency planning and response. Show local emergency managers your plan! They can help!

9. What should the final EOP look like?

Facilities should determine how they develop their plans, what format they follow, and how they evaluate and practice their plans. Facilities don't have to re-invent the wheel; there are resources available to make emergency planning easier. Resources and samples are available at [www.healthfacilities.info](http://www.healthfacilities.info), but that is only one source of information. Make your plan useable for your facility, staff and residents.

10. Why is HFEMSD involved in facility emergency planning?

We want facilities to be good at emergency planning in order for them to save lives and protect property. Emergency planning is not rocket science, but if EOPs are complete, and staff know what to do during emergencies, emergency response becomes second nature and less traumatic for staff and residents during an actual event. Planning can be simple, and makes Response, Recovery and Mitigation for the next event go more smoothly. Don't wait until it is too late.

