

**SUPPORT COORDINATORS**

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:**

**BEST PRACTICES**  
**GUIDELINES**



**Developed by Louisiana Support Coordination Agencies**

**In collaboration with the**

**Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities**

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# SUPPORT COORDINATION

## Emergency Preparedness: Best Practices Guidelines

### Introduction

Representatives from Louisiana's support coordination agencies have developed Emergency Preparedness Best Practices Guidelines to support people with developmental disabilities to ensure the following:

- People will be prepared/ready in the event an emergency;
- People will respond in the event of an emergency; and,
- People will recover from the after effects of the emergency.

These guidelines will provide a framework whereby Support Coordination agencies can design emergency preparedness procedures and guidelines which enable appropriate agency response in emergency situations and afford guidance in developing individualized emergency plans for each person who receives Medicaid Waiver Services through the agency.

### **I. Readiness: Preparation in the event of a declared emergency.**

#### **A. Support Coordination Agency Operations**

1. For support coordination agencies best practices in emergency preparedness include the development of a detailed emergency preparedness plan, which clearly outlines agency responsibilities. Actions include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Designate an agency emergency coordinator (and backup) to lead the agency management team.
  - b. Develop a roster of agency employees who will be mobilized in emergency situations in order to assure availability of staff to coordinate services/supports for people.
  - c. Develop partnerships between support coordination agencies to assure continuity of services/supports in times of emergency for people served who have evacuated.
  - d. Develop a plan for protection and storage of important documents, in the event of an evacuation.
  - e. Provide information and education on disasters and emergencies to staff.

2. Support coordination agencies will implement methods to assure communications with applicable Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) offices and with people receiving services/supports in the event of an emergency which include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
  - a. Develop a process to distribute support coordination agency emergency contact information to applicable DHH offices and people receiving agency services/supports (e.g., toll free telephone numbers); establish national e-mail and/or web site accounts.
  - b. Assure that support coordination agency employees are trained to provide people receiving supports with information regarding communication with applicable DHH offices and the support coordination agency in the event of an emergency; develop a process to track/locate people who evacuate in an emergency.
  - c. Complete a quarterly review of the person's individualized emergency plan with the person and his/her support team to assure the following:
    - i. The plan is current and team members know their roles and responsibilities in implementation of the emergency plan.
    - ii. Team members discuss evacuation and make an effort to maintain communication with the support coordination agency if evacuation is required.
    - iii. The person and the appropriate support team member receive instruction and can demonstrate attachment of identification, e.g., a lanyard, laminated identification cards, ID bands, etc., which displays the person's name, personal contact information, and contact information for responsible support team members on his/her arm.
    - iv. The person and the appropriate support team member are aware that they should contact the applicable DHH office through the 1-800 number following the evacuation to advise of his/her location.

B. Individualized Emergency Preparedness Plans

Support coordinators, with the input from the person and other support team members, will develop individualized emergency plans for people receiving support coordination services/supports. The individualized emergency plan for each person will be included in the person's Comprehensive Plan of Care (CPOC). Best practices in the development and implementation of individualized emergency preparedness plans include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

1. Facilitate the person's support team to identify specific needs/supports necessary to assure his/her health and safety during an emergency in the individualized emergency plan.
  - a. Assure that the following issues are addressed in the development and ongoing review of an individualized emergency plan.
    - i. Current Medications:
      - Assure current documentation of the person's medications.
      - In event of evacuation, pack the person's medication bottles/blister packs in the emergency kit or locate in a place that is secured by the person and his/her support team member.
    - ii. Transportation:
      - Assure that the person will have transportation to evacuate in the event of a declared emergency/mandatory evacuation.
      - Identify a support team member who has agreed to be responsible for assuring that transportation will be available to the person.
      - Identify the specific type of transportation necessary to support the person to evacuate.
      - Identify a support team member who has agreed to be responsible for transporting the person, or for arranging the necessary transportation.
    - iii. Medical and/or Necessary Equipment:
      - Assure that an identified support team member has access to a current Form 90-L or other documentation of medical conditions to be taken

with the person in the event of a declared emergency.

- Identify and specify equipment which must be available and transported with the person in the event of a declared emergency.
- Identify the support team member who will be responsible to take the medical information and arrange for necessary equipment for the person if evacuation is required.

iv. Miscellaneous Necessities:

- Emergency Kit - Assure that a kit is developed and maintained with items specific to the person's needs and other general items identified as necessary (see attached Appendix A for recommendations of development of emergency kits). Include the person's identification in the event of mandatory evacuation.
- Disposable incontinence products and other personal supplies.
- Maintain a food and water supply specific to the person's identified needs.
- Maintain a copy of important papers (i.e., Social Security Cards, other insurance cards, etc.).

v. Pets - Make arrangements for the person's pet(s).

b. Address possible action(s)/strategy(ies) related to sheltering in specific emergencies:

i. Shelter in home.

ii. Evacuation to a local shelter.

iii. Evacuation out of the immediate area (i.e., city, town, and parish). If evacuation out of the immediate area is required, the team must:

- Identify actions needed for short term and long term evacuations.
- Provide information, education, and training to people/families so that they are able to make informed choices about evacuation and understand the significance of choices/consequences inherent in emergency situations.

- Provide the person/family with current information regarding shelters near their home, how to contact emergency assistance, and discuss availability of health resources.
  - c. Indicate that support team members have agreed to implement the following actions/strategy(ies) based on informed decision making:
    - i. To be accessible and available to implement specified plan action(s)/strategy(ies).
    - ii. To be responsible for their designated action(s)/strategy(ies).
    - iii. To inform the support team if they will not be able to implement their designated responsibility.
- 2. Facilitate a support team discussion about the consequences of a person's choice to refuse to evacuate when developing, revising, and reviewing the person's individualized emergency plan.
- 3. Along with support team members, assure that people have identification in an emergency in order to minimize disruption in communication and/or inability to locate people served.
  - a. Assure that the location of the person's identification (e.g., lanyard, ID band, laminated identification cards, etc.) is known at all times.
  - b. Assure that all direct support staff (including newly hired staff) are trained on the importance of possession and location of the person's ID band at all times.
- 4. Provide information regarding shelter locations closest to the home of the person and/or family at support team meetings and review this information regularly at support team meetings.

## **II. Response: Action taken in the event of a declared emergency**

### **A. Support Coordination Agency Operations**

1. If the agency's functioning has not been adversely affected by an emergency, support coordination agencies will complete the following actions to mobilize agency operations in the event of that emergency:

- a. Activate the support coordination agency emergency plan in order to provide services/supports to people.
- b. Assure that the person's necessary information (i.e., family, medical, psychological, etc.) and the person's support plan are available electronically, or on a flash key/CD, for communication to resources providing assistance to the person.
  - i. Activate partner support coordination agency(s) emergency plan(s), when necessary, to assure continuity in support coordination services and supports to people.
  - ii. Request that the support coordination agency emergency coordinator(s), or designee, of each partner agency establish a communication/information exchange process by which:
    - Contact will be made between agencies in the event of an emergency in order to accurately identify and assure continuity of supports to people who evacuate from a disaster/emergency affected area.
    - People who receive services/supports will be identified and necessary information regarding service planning, resource information and referral, and service coordination in the respective agency(s) is communicated between agencies.
    - Communication between partner agencies will be assured so that people, if necessary, are assisted to locate housing/shelter, are supported in maintaining health and safety, are receiving necessary plan supports and services/supports, and receive information and referral as required/requested.
    - Partner agencies will conduct ongoing tracking and support to people at the evacuated site to assist them to return to their home.

2. If the agency's functioning has been adversely affected by an emergency, support coordination agencies will complete the following actions:
  - a. Notify applicable DHH offices that the agency must evacuate to an alternate site.
  - b. Notify applicable DHH offices of arrival at evacuation destination.
  - c. If necessary, contact the applicable DHH Waiver Supports and Services regional office to request necessary information to assure implementation of a person's individual evacuation plan, or to request information as a back-up.
  - d. Monitor and utilize the applicable DHH office website.
  - e. Utilize a national email account or web page that is unaffected by the emergency for communication with the applicable DHH office.
  - f. Make available to all people served, agency employees, and other contract agencies, a state monitored toll-free telephone number, that would be unaffected by the emergency in order to maintain contact with people during and after an emergency.

B. Individualized Emergency Preparedness Plans

Ensure that the agency's support coordinators implement each person's individualized emergency plan:

1. Determine the location of the person and respond to requests for service/support coordination and resource information.
2. Assess the health and safety of the person and identify and address immediate needs.
3. Reevaluate implementation of the person's individualized emergency plan and modify plan goals, strategies, and actions as necessary.
4. Assure that the person is connected to services/supports by locating agencies that help provide resources in the emergency.



5. Respond to requests for supports from people who receive support coordination from another support coordination agency as follows:
  - a. Assist him/her to locate and contact the agency he/she is linked to for supports.
  - b. If the original support coordination agency is unable to provide supports, ensure that the new support coordination agency provides information, referral, and resources if required/requested.

### **III. Recovery: Actions following a declared emergency**

#### **A. Support Coordination Agency Operations**

The support coordination agency will review the effectiveness of the implementation of their agency emergency preparedness plan and evaluate the ability of the agency emergency coordinator to complete following:

1. Mobilize staff to locate people and implement strategies/actions on the individualized emergency plan.
2. Implement/coordinate the partnering process between agencies, if necessary.
3. Assure the protection/storage of records in order to:
  - a. Provide support coordination to people.
  - b. Communicate necessary information to alternate sources.
4. Assess the effectiveness of the national email account or web page for communicating with the applicable DHH office.

#### **B. Individualized Emergency Preparedness Plans**

Support coordinators will review the person's situation and, if necessary, meet with the person's support team to:

1. Determine if the person is demonstrating signs/symptoms of emotional disorders (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, depression/anxiety).
  - a. Provide information, education and counseling to staff to be aware of the signs/symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder.

- b. Revise the plan, if necessary, to coordinate services/supports to assist the person to address post-traumatic symptoms (e.g., depression, emotional outbursts, and physical aggression).
2. Determine the need for housing, temporary or permanent (i.e., apartments, hotels). If a shelter is the only housing available, determine whether the person's needs will be met and document that this housing is the last resort.
3. Evaluate local community resources to determine when/if people can return to their homes and obtain information necessary for the support team to make this decision.
4. Assure that all basic health and safety resources are available and operational (e.g., health care services/supports, emergency services/supports such as police/fire protection, and available housing).

### Emergency Supplies Kit(s)

**Type 1. Basic, Portable Emergency Kit: In case of evacuation, or for home use.**

<b>Identification and Important Documentation</b>	
	<p>1. Identification - The first step in an emergency (especially when evacuation is required) is <b>to assure that the person has some form of identification</b> in his/her possession or on his/her physical person (e.g., lanyard, laminated identification cards, ID band, etc.).</p> <p>Examples of information to be included on the form of identification are as follows: the person's name, address, the name of family member(s) or a guardian, the name/telephone # of the person's support coordination agency/waiver service provider agency, and a central DHH/OCDD telephone number(s) to call following completion of evacuation.</p> <p>1a. If possible <b>develop a computer flash key</b> containing information regarding the person's current service delivery such as a plan of support, important evaluations (medical, psychological, psychiatric, etc.) which should be created and periodically updated. <b>The flash key should be imbedded in the person's evacuation kit.</b></p>
	<p>2. A card or laminated page/booklet including important telephone contact numbers for people such as family, friends, staff, emergency assistance, applicable DHH office phone number, etc.</p>
	<p>3. Photocopies of important documents such as identification cards, Social Security cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards (including any other insurance information, and credit cards)</p>
	<p>4. Cash and Coins</p>

<b>First Aid Kit and Manual</b>	
	1. Two pairs of latex, or other sterile gloves (if allergic to latex)
	2. Sterile dressings, adhesive bandages
	3. Cleansing agent/soap, antibiotic towelettes, and/or disinfectant; antibiotic ointment and burn ointment to prevent infection
	4. Daily prescription medications (e.g., insulin, heart medicine, asthma inhalers). Try to keep a current supply if possible (rotate medication through to prevent expiration or use bottles that have already been emptied)
	5. Prescribed medical supplies (i.e., glucose and blood pressure monitoring and supplies)
	6. Special needs items such as extra eye glasses, contact lens solution, and hearing aid batteries
<b>Other Helpful Supplies</b>	
	1. Matches in a waterproof container, extra clothes/blankets, and a whistle
	2. Flashlights, extra batteries, map of the local area, other items to meet the unique needs of the person with special needs
	3. Portable radio and batteries
	4. Cell phone and charger or two-way ham radio
	5. Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever; anti-diarrhea medication, antacid, laxative

**Type 2. Supplemental Emergency Kit: For home use, or to take if evacuated (if possible)**

<b>Water and Food</b>	
	1. Three day supply of non-perishable food items. Choose foods that the person/family will eat (e.g., ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables; fruit bars; dry cereal, peanut butter, crackers, canned juices, non-perishable pasteurized milk, etc. (Include Manual can opener, plastic utensils)
	2. Three day supply of water (one gallon of water per person, per day; use small easy to open bottles)
	3. Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils
	4. Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, pacifiers
<b>Other Helpful Supplies</b>	
	1. If person will not leave without pet, make accommodations and store pet supplies
	2. Extra clothes
	3. Smoke alarm
	4. Fire extinguisher
	5. Battery operated TV
	6. Wrench for gas turn-off (use only if you or someone else smells gas)
	7. Rubber or heavy gloves, broom, etc. (to clean up broken glass)
	8. Duct tape or masking tape
	9. Signal flares & flag
	10. Dust masks & eye protectors
	11. Rain gear
	12. Candles

<b>Helpful Resources</b>	
	1. Phone book, particularly front section which includes helpful directories including contact numbers for fire, police departments, relief agencies (i.e., Red Cross) (Also contains basic advice in preparing for emergencies common in your area, etc.)
	2. Fire/Police Departments: Many communities require people with disabilities to register with fire or police departments. Even if this registration is not required, it is a good idea to make these agencies aware of your own situation in the event of a disaster; they are also a valuable source of preparedness information.
	3. Local Red Cross Chapters: The Red Cross emphasizes personal preparedness.

**Type 3. Vehicle Emergency Kit**

<b>Emergency Supply Kit for Your Vehicle</b>	
	1. Flashlight, extra batteries, and maps
	2. First aid kit and manual; white distress flag
	3. Tire repair kit, booster/jumper cables, pump, and flares
	4. Bottled water and non-perishable foods, such as granola bars
	5. Seasonal supplies: sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or greater); shade item (umbrella, wide brimmed hat, etc.)