

# Issues to consider when developing or reviewing Emergency Management Plans



## 1. Development and activation

- What emergency and evacuation plans are currently in place? How effective are these?

### NOTE:

*If Residential Aged Care is part of a larger health service, it is imperative that this facility is incorporated into the organisation's overall Emergency Management Plans.*

*Ensure each phase of the plan is clearly defined, documented and regularly tested. Include plans for –*

- *'stay and shelter-in-place'*
- *partial evacuation*
- *full evacuation to alternate facilities*

*Ensure all plans address the impact of evacuation on residents' health, including physical, emotional and psychological impacts.*

- What are your legal, contractual and regulatory obligations when making a decision to either evacuate, or to 'stay and shelter-in-place'?

*What other issues should be considered when making a decision to evacuate or to 'stay and shelter-in-place'?*

- Who (title, not name) makes the decision to activate the plan? Who will make the decision if this person is not available?

*Which local, state and / or federal authorities should be involved in any decision to evacuate the facility or alternatively, to 'stay and shelter-in-place'?*

- Have staff (and volunteers) been trained in all aspects of emergency management from 'stay and shelter-in-place', to full scale evacuation?
- What information regarding emergency and evacuation procedures is included in the orientation program for new staff and volunteers?
- What plans are in place to manage staff shortages during an emergency – e.g. staff may be unable to come to work?
- What support / counselling services are available to residents and staff after the disaster?

## 2. Identification of alternate facilities

- What alternate facilities, have been identified, if 'stay and shelter-in-place' is not appropriate?
- What written documentation confirms the commitment of these facilities (e.g. an 'in principle agreement')?
- What is the process for ensuring these alternate facilities will still be available at the time of the evacuation?
- What process is in place to notify the alternate facilities that a decision has been made to evacuate residents to their facility?

## 3. Resources for evacuation

- What critical shortages of medicines, food and other supplies are anticipated during a prolonged emergency?
- What resources / equipment are available to move residents from each room and building? (Include when lifts are not operating)
- Where is this equipment stored? Is the area clearly marked for staff access during an emergency?
- By what means can staff access this equipment 24/7?
- What staff training is provided in the use of this equipment?
- What is the process for maintaining an 'inventory' and 'maintenance schedule' for this equipment?
- Are the residents who require the use of this equipment clearly identified? If so, how? – E.g. Interdisciplinary Care Plan.  
*What is the process for ensuring this information is regularly updated?*
- In what 'order of priority' are people evacuated from the buildings?
- How will you maintain each resident's 'plan of care' during transportation and at his / her alternate facility?  
*How will you ensure each resident is clearly 'identifiable' before, during and after transfer?*

## 4. Transportation

- What transportation resources have been identified (e.g. buses, vans, ambulance etc)?

*Remember to consider that transportation needs may vary based on environmental conditions – e.g. road conditions may have been altered by flood etc.*

- Do the transportation resources meet the needs of the residents (e.g. supine, wheel chair etc)?
- What written documentation confirms the commitment of the 'transport provider' to ensure the vehicles are readily available when needed?

- What is the process for ensuring these agreements are kept current, especially in the event of a wide scale emergency?

- Have secondary / alternative transportation resources been identified if needed?

- How long will it take to fully evacuate all residents to the alternate facilities?

*Is there another route to the alternate facility?*

- How long will each resident be in transit?

- What resources / supplies are required to care for residents during transit? E.g. blankets, water, medicines, toileting facilities, continence supplies etc.

- Do you have enough staff to accompany residents during transit?

- How will you maintain effective communication during the evacuation process and at the alternate facilities?

- What is the process for the ongoing assessment of each resident's transport needs especially based on his / her pre-existing conditions?

- How are these needs communicated and documented (e.g. Interdisciplinary Care Plan)?

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### 5. Evacuation destination

- Does each resident have a pre-determined destination (other RAC facility, home with family, hospital etc)?
- What is the process for ensuring that the destination is appropriate to meet the needs of the resident?

*Consider the length of time each resident may need to spend at the alternate facility.*

*Is there enough room for friends and family to visit residents in the alternate facility?*

- Have you discussed the evacuation and ongoing care of the 'sickest' residents with the hospitals in your local area?
- How are residents' needs communicated and documented (e.g. Interdisciplinary Care Plan)?
- What is the process for ensuring your staff are available to care for the residents at the alternate facilities?

### 6. Tracking the arrival of residents

- What process is in place to track each resident's arrival at his / her destination?
- Who (titles, not names) is responsible for tracking the residents' arrival at the destination?
- What is the process for ensuring each resident has a smooth transition back to their facility when the emergency is over?

### 7. Family / emergency contact notification

- What is the procedure for notifying a resident's 'emergency contact person' of a decision to evacuate or to 'stay and shelter-in-place'?

*Are you obliged to seek the resident's consent to move him / her to the alternate facility?*

*How will you manage a resident who refuses to move to another location?*

*How will you respond to families who refuse to allow you to move a resident?*

- Who is the person(s) (title, not name) responsible for notifying residents' emergency contacts?

*What is the process for creating a 'script' to ensure the right information is communicated consistently – e.g. why, when, how, where?*

*What is the process for tracking completion of notification to emergency contacts?*

- What is the process for identifying those residents who are unable to speak and / or make decisions for themselves?
- What is the process for assigning staff (and volunteers) to care for these residents?

### 8. Room / facility evacuation

- What procedure is in place to verify that rooms / buildings have been fully evacuated?

*Have 'assembly areas' been identified?*

- What is the process for informing Emergency Services (e.g. Fire Brigade) of this procedure?

### 9. Transportation of records and supplies

- What is the procedure for transporting 'medication administration records' and other medical records to the alternate facility?

*How will you manage a resident's care if medical records are destroyed or become unavailable?*

- How will confidentiality of records be maintained during transit?
- How are resident specific treatment supplies identified for transportation?
- How will you obtain necessary supplies if you evacuate to an alternate facility or decide to 'stay and shelter-in-place'?
- What is the procedure for transporting residents' medications (preferably a minimum of three days supply) to the alternate facility?

- What is the procedure for transporting residents' Schedule 8 medications to the alternate facility?

*What procedures are in place to account for the transfer of Schedule 8 medications between facilities?*

- What is the process for ensuring the information outlined in this section is regularly updated and tested?
- Where is this information maintained (Interdisciplinary Care Plan)?

### 10. What other issues should be considered when developing or reviewing Emergency Management Plans?

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Source – Adapted with permission from Elaine Davey – Director SWAHS Counter Disaster Unit (NSW) July 2009.

Additional sources –

<http://www.acswa.org.au/gemac/> Guide to Emergency Management in Aged Care.

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/documents/pandemic\\_influenza/2.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/documents/pandemic_influenza/2.htm) Business Continuity Planning and Resilience.

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