

Safety And Fire Prevention

A guide to help Community Living Support Staff prepare for, respond to and prevent emergencies in a residential setting.

Safety and Fire Prevention

Emergency Information and Supplies:

During orientation you should become familiar with the specific needs of the individual(s) residing in the home. Make sure you are familiar with safety needs pointed out in the PCP. If you have a suggestion to improve safety in the home, or recognize an area of concern discuss it with your employer or their guardian.

What supplies are recommended at minimum?

Latex (or similar gloves), are ideal for clean up and help prevent spread of illness or disease when accidents or emergencies may occur.

A first aid kit, battery powered radio, flashlights and extra batteries can keep you informed and able to move about safely in a power outage!

Severe storms and tornado safety

Have a discussion about the safest place in the home to be if a severe storm or tornado occurred. If a basement is not available or practical for use, the safest place is usually the smallest centrally located room without windows.

A “**watch**” means: conditions are favorable for a severe storm or tornado to occur.

A “**warning**” means: that a severe storm or tornado is actually happening and you should take cover.

If you are traveling when conditions are favorable for a tornado, drive to the nearest large building that can be used as a shelter. Stay near a shelter until the threat has passed. If you are driving and a warning is issued, seek shelter in a large building. If a building is not available, you may need to lie down in a ditch or ravine. Do not try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle!

Winter storms

Winter storms call for special precautions. Snowfall, blizzards and ice storms can trap people inside for days. Snow and ice can break power lines and cause loss of electricity and heat. A winter storm may also cause utility failure. Extended exposure to cold temperatures may cause injury or death.

What precautions can you take?

A battery-powered radio is your best source of information in an emergency.

Draw water into as many containers as possible. Gather battery-powered lanterns, flashlights, etc. in case you lose your power. Make sure you have a home has a corded phone or cell phone!

If candles are used, **BE CAUTIOUS!** Candle-holders should surround the candle totally (like a glass globe or a fish bowl). Do not leave a candle burning unattended. Battery operated candles or camp lights are good ideas!.

If you experience heat failure, dress in layers and keep moving!

If your home has fuel delivery, remember to assure an adequate supply of fuel is available at all times, especially if a winter storm is predicted!

Notes:

- If you experience a heating failure you may need to keep a steady trickle of water flowing from each faucet to prevent the pipes from freezing.
- If the temperature inside falls to below 55 degrees it may be necessary to contact someone so that you can evacuate.

Floods

Floods usually occur in Michigan during the Spring and Fall when rainfall and water runoff are at their peak. Floods can interrupt power and make roads impassable. Severe floods occur rarely, but knowing how to prepare and respond can prevent disaster.

Notification and warning

Notification of a flood **watch** or **warning** is received by:

1. Radio and television
2. Sirens and alert monitors
3. Emergency personnel who go door to door
4. National Weather Service or local emergency jurisdiction

If a flood warning is issued for your area, local government officials will issue evacuation instructions over the television or radio.

Never drive through an area where water is covering the road or moving swiftly across the road. Turn around and find another route.

Water Shortage Precautions

- Keep a supply of bottled water in case of an emergency.
- Fill bathtubs if a water shortage is possible. This will allow water for filling toilets, washing dishes, personal care, etc.

Power Outage Concerns:

Air Conditioning Failure:

Air conditioning failure can pose a serious threat to the elderly or those with other health conditions. The following tips will help you keep cool in an air conditioning failure:

- Shut all curtains
- Don't open windows unless it will let cooler air in.
- Go to a lower level of the home if possible to stay cool.

Foods that spoil:

If a power failure continues for a long time, food may begin to spoil. A loaded freezer will keep foods frozen 36 – 48 hours if the door is kept shut.

Avoid opening freezer and refrigerator doors more than necessary. Transfer foods you will use soon to an insulated chest type freezer. If you can obtain ice, transfer as much as possible into coolers.

Gas Leaks:

If you think there is a gas leak do the following:

1. Evacuate immediately!
2. Do not turn any electrical switches on or off.
3. Do not use the telephone.
4. Do not use any matches or lighters.
5. Go to a neighbor's and call the gas company right away.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

Carbon monoxide is a clear, odorless gas. The symptoms may be headaches, dizziness, and sleepiness. Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended. If your carbon monoxide detector goes off, or you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, you must evacuate immediately!

Other emergencies:

- Know the symptoms and treatment of Frostbite and Hypothermia.
- Know the procedures for responding to a suspected Poisoning.

Fire safety and prevention:

Immediate evacuation is the key to safety in a fire or smoke emergency. If a smoke detector goes off you should assist people out of the home immediately. Fighting a fire is never recommended. Discuss safety concerns with your employer or their guardian. Things to consider and discuss are:

- Will your employer hear the alarm? Would a bed shaker or other assistive device help?
- Are their barriers in the home to a fast exit? Would rearranging a room be helpful?
- Does everyone know where they would meet when they exit the home?
- Does everyone know they should not re-enter the home once they are out?

Fire extinguishers:

An ABC (multi-purpose) extinguisher will put out most fires that start in a home. An extinguisher is useless unless you know how to operate it!

Using a fire extinguisher:

1. Hold extinguisher upright. Pull the pin out.
2. Stand at least 6-8 feet from the fire. Do not get closer!
3. Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire and squeeze the handles.
4. Sweep side to side slowly, moving closer as the flames diminish.

Fire extinguishers last only about 8-10 seconds! Fires can and do re-ignite. Fires can double in size every 19 seconds. Assisting people out is important. Fighting fires is not recommended.

Protection plans and considerations:

Protection plans are recommended. Be sure you know all the following information!

You should know how to assist or evacuate a person before an emergency. Are you confident in your ability to do this?

Fire prevention is the key to a safer environment!

Are there enough working smoke detectors to provide sufficient warning? At minimum there should be one on every level and outside sleeping areas.

Are detectors properly placed according to manufacturer instructions.

Are detectors tested regularly?

Are batteries replaced at least once a year?

Don't take the battery out of a smoke detector because it keeps going off due to cooking, etc. If you are having nuisance alarms check to see if the detector is located too close to an area that would cause problems such as the kitchen or bathroom.

Monitoring provides opportunity for preventative measures!

- ___ Is a smoking policy available and in effect?
- ___ Are safety ashtrays used?
- ___ Fire extinguishers – minimum of one per floor and basement?
- ___ Is the extinguisher a 5 lb. ABC? (A 10 lb. Is Recommended).
- ___ Are hallways, stairways, egress routes clear of obstacles & storage?
- ___ Do all exit doors open easily?
- ___ there a special alarm for people who are deaf?
- ___ Are stairway handrails secure, steps in good condition?
- ___ Does the main floor have two separate means of egress?
- ___ If wheelchairs are used is there a ramp at both exits?
- ___ Is the mechanical room free of stored items?
- ___ Is the furnace filter clean?
- ___ Are flammable or combustible items properly stored?
- ___ Is emergency lighting available?
- ___ Is the dryer vent solid or flexible metal?
- ___ Is the dryer filter cleaned after use?
- ___ Is the stove vent screen clean?
- ___ Does the oven door shut tightly?
- ___ Are electrical outlets overloaded?
- ___ Are there any frayed, hanging or exposed electrical cords?

I have read and understand the training regarding safety and fire prevention.

Signed:_____ Date:_____

My employer is: _____