STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Home and Community Living Administration
Residential Care Services • PO BOX 45600 • Olympia, WA

09/10/2026

HCLA: AFH #2026-038
HCLA: ALF #2026-037
HCLA: ESF #2026-026
HCLA: CCRSS #2026-020

Home Care Aide Extended Certification Timeline Due to Wildfire Emergency – Chapter 246-980 WAC

Dear Provider/Administrator:

As you know, there has been lasting impacts caused by wildfires across the state of Washington. Governor Ferguson declared a state of emergency under Emergency Proclamation 26-03, Wildfires- Immediate Relief and Response, issued August 1, 2026. The governor has released two subsequent proclamations with amendments on August 10 and August 31, now expanding counties within Washington affected by wildfires.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is informing you that the Department of Health (DOH) adopted emergency rules amending WAC 346-980-025, WAC 246-980-030, WAC 246-980-040, and WAC 246-980-065 to extend certification timelines for impacted home care aides (HCA) and exempt nursing assistants-certified (NA-C) employed as long as long-term care workers (LTCW) during the wildfire state of emergency, providing additional time through November 30, 2026. The emergency rule was filed under WSR 26-18-023.

A LTCW with a certification deadline between August 1, 2026, and November 30, 2026, and impacted by fires in counties or lands outlined within the proclamation, including any amendments, may be eligible for an extended certification timeline. A qualifying LTCW shall complete certification requirements and become certified by November 30, 2026. A LTCW shall submit to the department, on the form provided by DOH, the information demonstrating the worker meets requirements for an extension.

For questions, you may contact RCS Policy Unit at RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov, or the DOH Home Care Aide program contacts found on the Home Care Aide Department of Health website.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbot, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: *"Partnering with People"*