

Transforming
Lives

Preparing for Wildfire and Extreme Heat in LTC Settings.

**Residential Care Services
Spring/Summer 2024**



Planning for Potential Effects of Heat and Fire in LTC Settings

Includes the Following Elements

- Preparing Facility for Wildfire Defense
- Staying Alert
- Communication Plans
- Considerations for Evacuation
 - “Go” Bag Contents
 - Evacuation and Alternative Sites
 - Infection Prevention Measures
 - Non-compliant residents
- Wildfire Smoke
- Extreme Heat

Preparing Your Facility for Potential Wildfires

- Trees limbed up at least 10 ft., minimum of 5 ft. between branches.
- Trim vegetation so fire department can have access to facility.
- Keep vegetation “low and green.”
- Structure should have non-flammable roof and deck.
- Keep beauty bark away from home.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks) within 30 feet of your home’s foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don’t let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Regional DNR offices may be able assess your facility at no cost.
 - <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/fightingfire>

Staying Alert

- **Sign up with local Emergency Management text notifications.**
- **Download FEMA app.**
- **Sign up for National Weather Service briefs.**
- **Follow local EM, Fire, and Law Enforcement on Social Media.**
- **Local news on TV, Radio, Internet, etc.**
- **Make sure RCS has your most up to date contact information.**
- **Stay up to date with local EM sites for evacuation routes and other best practices.**
- **WatchDuty App, Interagency Coordination Center for wildfire specific monitoring.**

Evacuation

Pay Attention to Your Surroundings

- Keep track of the weather, fires near you, and listen to instructions from local authorities.
- You might not get an official notice to evacuate.
- Be ready to leave if local authorities advise, or if you feel you are in danger.
- Familiarize with local levels (1-2-3 or Ready-Set-Go)

LEVEL 1	Be Ready - Residents should be aware of the danger that exists in their area, and monitor local media outlets for information. Residents with special needs should take note and begin making arrangements to evacuate. Evacuations at this time are voluntary.
LEVEL 2	Be Set - This level indicates there is significant danger to your area, and residents should either voluntarily relocate to a shelter or outside of the affected area, or if choosing to remain, to be ready at a moment's notice. Emergency services cannot guarantee that they will be able to notify you if conditions rapidly deteriorate.
LEVEL 3	Go Now - Danger to your area is current or imminent, and you should leave immediately. Listen to local media, and watch for emergency personnel who may be coming by to give further instructions regarding the evacuation.

Evacuation Go Kits

- **Face sheet w/ emergency contact information, H&P, medication & treatment administration, advance directive, trauma plan, discharge note.**
- **Medications (72 hour)**
- **Essential medical supplies (including equipment, special diets, mobility devices, dentures, glasses, hearing aids)**
- **Change of clothing**
- **Activity supplies (of resident's choice)**
- **Incontinent supplies**
- **Laundry bag w/ resident name**

Evacuation Destination Considerations

- **Engage with local Emergency Management for mass sheltering locations.**
- **Have MOUs in place if other facilities are to be utilized. Identify contingency sites.**
- **Other facilities in the vicinity may also be under evacuation orders.**
- **Healthcare Coalitions may be able to assist with placements.**
- **Hospitals should NOT be used for otherwise stable patients. They can be quickly overwhelmed during disasters.**
- **Hospitals could be considered for Infection Control measures, injured, and non-stable residents.**

Transportation

- **Have vehicles fueled.**
- **For residents requiring acute care, ALS/BLS transport may be needed. Consider evacuating those first.**
- **Consider all needs: Oxygen, wheelchair access, etc.**
- **Have MOU in place with EMS agencies. May need ALS, BLS, Ambulance capabilities. Consider interfacing with public transit and school districts.**
- **Understand local EM plans for evacuation routes and mass evacuation plans.**

Non-compliant Residents

- **It is possible for a resident to refuse to participate in an evacuation, even if the situation is dire.**
- **The following steps should be considered to ensure resident and staff safety.**
- **Depending on the urgency of the evacuation, there may not be opportunity for these considerations.**
 - In this event consider enlisting law enforcement if resident is defiant or non-compliant.
 - Consider physically removing using established lifting techniques or evacuation equipment.

Non-compliant Residents (continued)

- Utilize staff members familiar with resident to pursue cooperation.
- Speak calmly, using simple slowed language to help understand situation.
- Speak in a warm & friendly nature to inspire action without fear
- Reframe situation, highlighting the benefit of leaving, emphasizing urgency.
- Clearly explain the process and offer reassurance of safety.
- Request assistance from family or responsible parties.
- Offer snacks or other accommodations as a form of incentive.

Infection Prevention Considerations

- **Crowding and immitted sanitary infrastructure increases the risk of infections spreading.**
- **Transfer residents with communicable diseases to hospitals or similar level facility.**
- **Maintain lists for residents requiring IVs, and antibiotic therapy.**
- **Communicate other symptoms to staff (i.e. cough, fever, vomiting, etc.). Residents experiencing symptoms may need to be separated or transferred.**
- **Provide IP Supplies.**
- **Use general infection prevention standards at evacuation centers.**
- **Coordinate Biohazard waste.**

INFECTION CONTROL TRANSFER FORM

This form should be sent with the patient/resident upon transfer. It is NOT meant to be used as criteria for admission, only to foster the continuum of care once admission has been accepted.

Affix any patient labels here

Demographics

Patient/Resident (Last Name, First Name):

Date of Birth:

MRN:


Transfer Date:

Sending Facility Name:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Receiving Facility Name:

 Currently in Isolation Precautions? Yes

No

If Yes, check: Contact Droplet Airborne Other:

isolation precautions

Organisms

Did or does have (send documentation, e.g. culture and antimicrobial test results with applicable dates):

Current (or previous infection or colonization, or ruling out*)

MRSA

VRE

Acinetobacter resistant to carbapenem antibiotics

E. coli, *Klebsiella* or *Enterobacter* resistant to carbapenem antibiotics (CRE)

E. coli, *Klebsiella* resistant to expanded-spectrum cephalosporins (ESBL)

C. difficile

Other^:

e.g. lice, scabies, disseminated shingles, norovirus, influenza, TB, etc.

(current or ruling out*)

No known MDRO or communicable diseases

*Additional information if known:

Communication Plan

- **Test your communication plan leading into summer months.**
- **Staff, volunteers, family members, service providers, physicians, etc.**
- **Maintain contact with local & state emergency services, regulators, ombuds, healthcare coalition.**
- **Test primary and secondary means of communication.**
- **Maintain method for sharing information and medical documentation if evacuation is needed.**

Extreme Heat

- Older adults are vulnerable to the heat. Extreme has strong correlation with deaths in nursing home settings.
- Keep temperatures within facility at comfortable levels.
- Limit time outside.
- Make sure cooling systems are on generator power. Validate reserve fuel levels.
- Have back-up cooling systems in place, close blinds on windows during day.
- Have transfer plans in place in the event of prolonged utility outages.

Extreme Heat cont'd

- **Monitor residents for sign of heat-related injuries (exhaustion, stroke, cramps, etc.)**
- **Ensure resident's clothing is appropriate for heat**
- **Maintain adequate fluid intake, consider hydrating desserts.**
- **Actively monitor temperatures in care areas and resident rooms.**

Wildfire Smoke

- **Stay up to date with current air quality** www.airnow.gov
- **Limit activities outside**
- **Reduce entry of smoke**
 - Close windows and doors, turn off fans that provide ventilation from outdoor areas.
 - Check seals near windows and doors.
- **Use highest performance filters.**
- **Reduce source of air pollutants**
 - Smoking/vaping, frying/broiling food, candles, etc.
 - Consider purchasing an indoor air quality monitor
- **Use of N95 respirators if necessary**
- **Purchase supplies now.**

Testing and Refining Plans

- **Test evacuation and fire plans before the summer seasons through an emergency exercise, this may include a tabletop discussion.**
- **Make contact with local Emergency Management and responding agencies.**
- **Have MOUs in place and validated.**
- **Refine plans based on lessons learned and content of this presentation and referenced materials.**

References

<http://www.cahf.org/Portals/29/DisasterPreparedness/Evac/EvacuationClientGoKit.pdf>

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/wildfire_evacuation_flyer.pdf

<http://www.cahf.org/Portals/29/DisasterPreparedness/Evac/EvacuationClientGoKit.pdf>

<https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/pdf/rsg-eag.pdf>

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/firewise>

http://www.cahf.org/Portals/29/DisasterPreparedness/NHICS/FireIRG_2017.pdf

Plans, guides, materials, and other resources

- **Evacuation Functional Annex Development Toolkit for LTC settings (Colorado)**
https://cdphe.colorado.gov/sites/cdphe/files/HF_Evacuation-Plan-Development-Toolkit.pdf
- **Evacuation Resources (Including checklists, transfer forms, (California))**
<https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/evacuation>
- **Wildfire for LTC Settings Resources**
<https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/wildfire>

Plans, guides, materials, and other resources

- **APIC Infection Prevention for Shelters During Disasters**
https://apic.org/Resource_/TinyMceFileManager/Practice_Guidance/Emergency_Preparedness/Shelters_Disasters.pdf
- **CDC Infection Control Guidance for Community Evacuation Shelters**
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/commshelters.html>
- **Infection Control Transfer Form**
https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/_files/ugd/69dc94_1e44866a80c9415c82d05de51ac574c0.pdf
- **Emergency Management Guide for Nursing Homes**
<https://ltpcprepare.org/sites/default/files/Emergency%20Management%20Guide%20for%20NHs.pdf>

Contact Information

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