



Division Guideline # 40

Date: June 25, 2015

Title: Emergency Procedures

Application: To all Division of Developmental Disabilities Regional Offices

Purpose: To prescribe the structural consistency needed for planning, drill and evaluation processes in emergency situations.

Definitions:

Biological/Bioterrorism: Biological agents are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects on people, livestock and food sources. Examples of biological agents include anthrax, plague, botulism, salmonella, smallpox, etc. Biological agents cannot necessarily be detected and may take time to incubate and transmit disease. Because there is a delay between exposure and illness onset, outbreaks of illness may closely resemble naturally occurring outbreaks and be difficult to recognize by health authorities. They can be intentionally sprayed into the air or put into food sources or drinking water.

Bomb or other Explosives: Any threat expressing the plan or intent of placing or detonating an explosive device, or the presence of an object perceived to have an explosive potential. The threat may be made by phone, in person, or by the delivery of suspicious materials to the facility.

Center for Disease Control (CDC): is an agency of the [United States Department of Health and Human Services](#) that works to protect [public health](#) and [safety](#) by providing information to enhance health decisions.

Fire Hazard: Fire may be intentionally set, accidentally caused or caused by a natural event such as lightning. The fire may involve a facility building or may be a threat to the facility from a neighboring building or wild fire.

Flash Flood Warning: A flash flood warning means you may have very little time before flood water reaches your area. A flash flood can happen so rapidly that you may not even get a warning.

Loss of Major Operating Systems: Loss of heating, electrical, plumbing, and water systems and/or shelter for an extended period of time.

Mail Threat: A letter or package received that contains a threat or that is suspicious and may contain dangerous material.

Pandemic: The rapid spread of a disease in a large region.

Regional Office Emergency Plan: Emergency procedures specific to the unique needs regarding staff, building layout, and community.

Safety Committee: Members appointed by the Regional Director to assist in the review of Regional Office emergency plan, implementation of the plan, and to post event reviews.

Safety Coordinator: Chairperson of the safety committee.

Severe Weather Bulletin: A warning issued by the local office of the National Weather Service when a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been sighted in the area.

Workplace Violence: Any threats, threatening behavior, or attempted or violent act against an employee that creates an environment that negatively affects the employee, either physically or psychologically.

Overview

All Regional/Satellite Offices shall have an Emergency Plan that allows for an individualized approach in the planning process to accommodate the differences in structural sites, staffing and geographic location of each Regional Office. The Emergency Plan shall identify the following:

1. A communication system to be utilized during an emergency situation so that essential communication is maintained to support staff functions and individual service delivery. The communication system will identify chain of command, an existing alarm system, back-up alarm system, procedures for reporting emergencies, and procedures for communication with the Department of Mental Health Central Office and staff that are away from the facility or in transit.
2. A Safety Committee with a Safety Coordinator appointed to ensure that the Regional Office is prepared for probable risks to the facility, staff, and guests in the event of an emergency. The committee should meet a minimum of twice a year. The Safety Coordinator or designee will be responsible to train all staff on emergency plans, schedule regular drills, conduct post-event reviews, make recommendations to the Director for any needed action, and periodically review and revise the emergency plan. The membership of the safety committee shall be appointed at the Regional Director/designee's discretion.
3. The location of a posted map of the Regional Office/satellite offices indicating the location of exits, exit paths, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, first aid kit, and designated safe meeting areas.
4. The positions, skills and personnel needed to continue essential Regional Office functions in the event of an emergency.

5. The location of an alternate operating facility in the event that an emergency damages or destroys the building so that it cannot be safely occupied.

Each Regional/Satellite Office may refer to The All-Hazards Planning Guide as a resource to assist with an all-hazards approach in planning, mitigation, and response and recovery efforts for a variety of emergency situations that may occur. Each Regional/Satellite Office may also refer to the Disaster Mental Health Resources listing.

Procedures for Response to Emergencies

Biological/ Bioterrorism:

1. The designated facility nurse will notify the Local Public Health Agency and the Department of Health and Senior Services Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism (800) 392-0272 of any suspected biological emergency after consulting with the Regional Director/designee.
2. Listen to a local radio station.
3. Officials will tell you whether to stay inside or leave the building.

Bomb Threat:

1. When a bomb threat of any kind is received, the Director/ designee shall be notified immediately.
2. Evacuation shall occur of all employees and guests.
3. DMH Central Office shall be notified.
4. Law enforcement/emergency personnel will give permission for all staff and guests to return to the building when determined that it is safe.

Guidelines for response to bomb threat by phone:

1. Remain calm and courteous.
2. Listen; do not interrupt the caller.
3. Signal a coworker that a bomb threat caller is on the line.
4. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Pretend difficulty with hearing. Ask questions such as 'where is the bomb', 'when is it set to go off', 'what does it look like'.
5. Fill out the bomb threat check list located in the facility Emergency Plan, to include the following information. The person taking the call should also write down all information received (what, when, where, why, who) using a Bomb Threat Checklist to include:
 - a. Identification of caller if s/he will provide it; gender.
 - b. Distinctive features about caller's voice – accent, etc.
 - c. Caller is calm, angry, excited, intoxicated, etc.
 - d. Caller has familiarity with facility terms.
 - e. Why caller has planted a bomb.
 - f. Information about bomb – where it is, when it is set to go off, kind of bomb, etc.
 - g. Background noises.
6. Hang up phone after caller disconnects and immediately take it back off the hook to preserve the trace capabilities, or use the caller I.D. function, if available, to identify the source of the call.

Earthquake:

1. If indoors
 - a. Do not run outside; falling debris may cause injury.
 - b. Take cover under sturdy furniture placed against a wall (not in the middle of the room), or in a corner.
 - c. Protect your head and neck.
 - d. Stay away from glass windows, doors, and mirrors that might shatter.
 - e. Stay clear of anything that might fall on you.
 - f. Do not use elevators.
2. If outdoors:
 - a. Do not attempt to come indoors.
 - b. Stay in the open away from buildings and power lines.
3. After an earthquake:
 - a. Stay alert for aftershocks. Do not return to your office until directed.
 - b. Give first aid to injured personnel.
 - c. Do not move victims unless absolutely necessary.
 - d. Alert emergency personnel and/or supervisors to anything needing their attention.
 - e. Be alert for electrical wires and steam, gas, or water leaks.
4. If you are still in the building:
 - a. Replace telephone handsets, but do not use the phone except to report fires or medical emergencies.
 - b. Go to the interior of the building staying away from the exterior walls.
 - c. Wait for and follow instructions from Emergency Personnel.
 - d. Keep the streets and lanes clear for emergency vehicles.
 - e. RO Director/designee will contact responsible party to turn off all valves for water supply, gas valves, electrical switches, according to plan outlines. Check buildings for damage, water leak, fire, electrical outage, etc.
 - f. Order the evacuation of individuals from the damage area if structural damage has occurred. This will be done by Regional Director/designee.

Fire:

Anyone detecting a fire should follow RACE: (Rescue, Alarm, Contain and Evacuate).

1. Rescue any persons in immediate danger. If clothing is on fire, use stop, drop and roll.
2. Activate the fire alarm.
 - a. If the fire alarm fails to operate, yell fire several times and notify switchboard to instruct staff and guests to exit the building.
 - b. Call 911 and report the following:
 - i. Name.
 - ii. Location of fire.
 - iii. Extent of fire.
 - iv. What is burning, if known.
 - c. Don't hang up until 911 Operator tells you to hang up.
 - i. Contain the fire by closing all doors beginning with the doors closest to the fire. Do not reopen any doors except to exit and then re-close.
 - ii. Upon evacuating:
 1. Do not use elevators.

2. Before exiting a room with a closed door, check the door with the back of your hand for heat before opening. Do not open hot doors.
 3. Check each room for individuals as you move toward the exit. As necessary, assist those needing help with exiting the building.
 4. Close each door as each room is vacated.
- iii. Trained staff may use the fire extinguisher if appropriate and does not put them at risk of safety.

Flooding:

Those in the affected areas should listen to the local radio stations for weather updates and be prepared to move immediately to higher ground. If a flash flood warning is issued, you should move everyone to higher ground or seek safety immediately. Stay tuned to the local radio station for further weather updates.

Loss of Major Operating Systems:

When any of the systems fail or become inoperative, the Director and the Assistant Director of Administration and Habilitation will be notified immediately. When it has been determined by one of the above that a system will be incapacitated for an extended period of time, the Director will decide if the Regional Office is operable. If it is determined that the Regional Office is not operable, Central Office will be notified.

Mail Threat:

1. Leave the suspicious mail (letter or package) where it is and do not handle to preserve fingerprints.
2. If the package leaks a powdery substance, do not touch, open, taste or smell it. Treat it as suspicious.
3. Immediately notify the facility head or designee and security.
4. The facility head or designee will contact law enforcement.
5. If a chemical or biological agent is suspected, immediately shut off the heating and air conditioning system.
6. Isolate the area around any suspicious packages, closing off all doors leading to the area until authorities arrive.
7. If the item is handled by staff, they should wash exposed skin areas for at least three minutes with soap and water and rinse for one minute. Exposed staff should shower with soap and water as soon as practical.
8. Isolate staff who may have been exposed to a suspicious substance until authorities determine any further interventions that should be taken.
9. Make a list of all staff that has touched the letter/package including contact information and have this information available for the authorities.
10. Only discuss the incident with those persons necessary to the investigation.

Pandemic Disease:

1. Cooperate with health authorities.
2. Report those exposed and those most susceptible to exposure.
3. Follow recommendations to protect against spread of the illness by:
 - a. Learning about pandemic Disease: www.dhss.mo.gov

- b. Practicing good hygiene such as hand-washing, and cough and sneeze protection.
- c. Cleaning and disinfecting areas in and around your office; to include door knobs and light switches.
- d. Respect others personal space to avoid spreading infection.
- e. Staying home from work if you become ill or shows signs of having a pandemic disease.

Snow and Ice:

- 1. Review the DMH hazardous travel policy and monitor media broadcasts for announcements of winter weather advisories.
- 2. Consult the MODOT hotline at 800-222-6400 or website at www.modot.mo.gov/road_conditions/ for current road conditions before traveling.
- 3. Make reasonable effort to report to work. If hazardous conditions prevent you from traveling, it is the responsibility of the staff to report their absence. .
- 4. Take necessary precautions when traveling on state business and consider not traveling when winter weather creates hazards.
- 5.

Tornado:

If a severe weather bulletin issues a warning:

- 1. Switchboard operator shall announce the warning twice over the PA system and contact by phone any endangered outlying areas not connected to the PA system.
- 2. All staff will assemble in the facility designated “safe areas” that may include basements or towards the center core of the building, closing doors to rooms and fire doors, and staying away from exterior windows and glassed areas.

Workplace Violence:

- 1. Assess nature and scope of situation. Do not attempt to intervene.
- 2. Notify Director or his/her designee
- 3. If the threatening situation is verbal and the situation is deteriorating and may lead to physical violence, or if the incident involves physical force to property or person, the Director or his/her designee shall:
 - a. Call 911 and indicate the type of situation, scope, injuries, etc.
 - b. Instruct receptionist to broadcast a warning announcement to the building occupants to take cover and, if possible, evacuate to safety. This announcement should declare a building emergency specific to the area where the event is occurring which may require altering evacuation routes and/or designated safety or meeting areas.
- 4. Prevent further access to the building, secure the area, and monitor situation.
- 5. Follow directives of emergency and law enforcement personnel until they arrive. Return to building only as directed by law enforcement personnel.
- 6. All staff should notify their Director or his/her designee of any potential situations they believe could lead to violence in the workplace.

Emergency Drills

Emergency procedures also require certain drills and exercises to test the plan and to assure that all employees are aware of the plans and the procedures for conducting them. The designated Safety

Coordinator shall conduct drills at least annually and monitor such test drills and exercises, report any deficiencies and make recommendations for improvement to the Director/designee.

Post Event Review

The Safety Committee will perform a post event review to determine the need for adjustments in planning and training that would reduce the risk factors in future emergencies. This would include the following areas:

1. Warning method effectiveness.
2. Safety and Security measures.
3. Communications and planning.
4. Continuity of operations.
5. Evacuation process.
6. Staff performance and response issues.
7. Determination of corrective actions needed.
8. Other issues relevant to the specific situation.

The review and recommendations should be completed and submitted to the Director/designee for any needed action within 30 days of an emergency event.

Authority:

All Hazards Facility Planning Guide

<http://dmh.mo.gov/docs/diroffice/disaster/FacilityAll-HazardsTemplateWithRevisions9-11-08.pdf>

This guideline will be reviewed and updated annually, if needed.