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## **The Importance of Knowing a Nursing Facility's Emergency Evacuation Plan**

A nursing home, assisted living, or other long-term care facility should have a comprehensive emergency plan in place just like a family should, so that people can be protected and supported in times of crisis. A nursing home, by federal law, is required to have evacuation plans in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

The facility is required to "tailor its disaster plan to its geographic location and the types of residents it serves." It must also review the evacuation plan, train new employees in emergency procedures and hold drills and periodic reviews with staff. Other types of facilities may or may not be required by state law to have a comprehensive plan in place. Consumers - including residents and their families - should inquire about the facility's emergency preparedness and evacuation plans.

This list of questions can be used to compare nursing homes in your area during visits or can be a great resource if a loved one or friend is already a resident. Questions can be asked or discussed at a resident or family council meeting at the facility.

### **The Plan**

What is the facility's emergency plan for evacuation and for "sheltering in place"? Plans will be different for hurricanes, tornados, and terrorist attacks.

### **Staffing Concerns**

Are there enough staff to carry out the evacuation plan during all shifts? What are the training procedures for staff related to emergency evacuations? Are evacuation drills practiced during all shifts?

### **Coordination with Other Resources**

How is the plan coordinated with other facilities in the area? Are there contracts in place with transportation and other facilities to provide housing for displaced residents? Are all the facilities contracted with the same transportation company and if so does that company have enough vehicles to accommodate all the facilities? How is the plan coordinated with other community resources, the city, county, and state emergency management agencies?

## **Supplies**

What type and how much emergency supplies does the facility have on hand? (food, generators, flashlights, water, oxygen, etc.) If the facility needs to be evacuated, are there plans for supplies to be transported? Can residents have their own emergency supplies in their rooms?

## **Resident Information**

How are the residents informed about the plan? How will residents be identified in an evacuation? How will information about the resident and supplies such as medications be transported? Will these go with the resident or separately?

## **Role of the Family**

How and when will family members be notified about evacuation plans? How can family members be helpful in an emergency situation? Can family members meet the residents at a designated location and/or can they come to the facility to assist? Family members have the right to evacuate their loved-one on their own and move them to a special needs shelter if they choose.

For more information on the requirements of nursing homes and how to advocate for your loved one, visit The National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR) website at <https://www.theconsumervoice.org>. The NCCHR consists of consumers and advocates who define and achieve quality for people with long-term care needs.

Article Source

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

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<https://theconsumervoice.org>

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