



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Licensed Nursing Homes

FROM: Heather Reed
Deputy Director, Long Term Care

DATE: July 1, 2026

RE: Emergencies, Disaster Planning and Reporting

With extreme weather events sporadically occurring in the Mid-Atlantic region, it is possible that Nursing Homes may experience a loss of power or other emergency related issues such as failure of heating or cooling systems, water outages, flooding, fire or other conditions that could impact the health, safety, and/or well-being of your residents or the operation of your facility.

All Nursing Homes are required to have emergency plans in place to accommodate any potential disruption of services. Please refer to [COMAR 10.07.02.40](#) Emergency and Disaster Plan. This regulation includes important requirements regarding compliance with local fire and building codes, fire extinguishers, emergency and disaster plans, evacuation plans, staff orientation and drills, and emergency electrical power generators. Nursing Homes should update their contact information for local emergency management organizations and local health departments.

OHCQ is advised by emergency planning experts that if there is a large-scale disaster, health care facilities should be able to function independently for at least 72 hours before emergency resources may be able to respond. That somber reality underlines the importance of these regulations and the importance of devoting attention to emergency planning. Please refer to [COMAR 10.07.02.40](#) Emergency and Disaster Plan, which states:

A. Emergency and Disaster Plan.

- (1) The licensee shall develop an emergency and disaster plan that includes procedures that shall be followed before, during, and after an emergency or disaster, including:
 - (a) Evacuation, transportation, or shelter in place of residents;**

- (b) Notification of families and staff regarding the action that will be taken concerning the safety and well-being of the residents;*
- (c) Staff coverage, organization, and assignment of responsibilities for ongoing shelter in place or evacuation, including identification of staff members available to report to work or remain for extended periods; and*
- (d) The continuity of services, including:***
 - (i) Operations, planning, and financial and logistical arrangements;***
 - (ii) Procuring essential goods, equipment, and services to sustain operations for at least 72 hours;***
 - (iii) Relocation to alternate facilities or other locations; and***
 - (iv) Reasonable efforts to continue care.***

As a reminder, [COMAR 10.07.02.38C\(1\)](#) requires:

The administrator of the nursing home shall immediately report to the local health department and the Department the occurrence of:

- (a) Infectious disease;
- (b) Poisoning;
- (c) Internal emergency or disaster;
- (d) External emergency or disaster,
- (e) Any symptomatic condition of importance to public health that affects the nursing home; or
- (f) Any other serious occurrence that threatens the welfare, safety, or health of any resident.

Should you experience emergencies during business hours, you may contact OHCQ at: (410) 402-8018 or Toll Free (877) 402-8218 / (866) 810-0099.

The number to call after business hours is 211 or 311 / 911, depending on your jurisdiction.

A facility self-report should be submitted online using the [Nursing Home Self Report Form](#).

For more information on emergency preparedness and response information, please visit [OHCQ's website](#) or the Maryland Department of Health's (MDH) [Office of Preparedness and Response website](#).

Other resources available include:

- CMS.gov Health Care Provider Guidance:
<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-emergency-preparedness/health-care-provider-guidance>
- MDH Extreme Heat Resources:
https://health.maryland.gov/preparedness/pages/resources_hot.aspx
- MDH Cold Weather Resources:
https://health.maryland.gov/preparedness/Pages/Resources_cold.aspx
- Healthcare Facility Preparedness for Extreme Heat and Cold:
<https://health.maryland.gov/preparedness/Pages/Heat-Preparedness---Healthcare-Facilities.aspx>
- MOSH Heat Stress Regulation and Guidance Documents:
<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/labor/mosh/moshheatstress.shtml>
- CDC HeatRisk Tracking tool: <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/>

If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Zulauf: Program Manager at dawn.zulauf2@maryland.gov or (410) 402-8201.