

# Four Keys To Being Prepared For A Disaster

Created by the Facility Operations Committee  
National Disaster Planning Coalition

***An emergency stops being one when you are prepared for it.***

## **1. Determine what kind of disaster you may expect:**

Knowing what kind of disaster you may expect in your area is an important key to helping you decide what courses of action you must take to be prepared in advance. You need to know more than whether or not you are in an earthquake or hurricane zone. Many other events can cause disruptions in a dialysis facility.

Your dialysis facility is at a higher risk of disruption if you are located near a major interstate highway, railway, nuclear power plant, chemical facility, military base, airport, or if you are in a flood zone.

Your facility is at a lower risk of disruption if you have an onsite generator, uninterrupted power supply for your critical equipment or an independent water supply. Simply having a good disaster plan and conducting quarterly disaster drills can reduce your chances of being disrupted.

The items listed in the previous two paragraphs are partial lists. You can find an extensive Hazard Assessment tool in the current CMS Manual “Emergency Preparedness for Dialysis Facilities” (CMS – 11025), starting on page 9.

## **2. Evaluate the readiness of your dialysis facility:**

How prepared is your facility for the kinds of disaster you may be faced with? There are many things that you can do now to minimize the amount of damage to your facility, not to mention your patients and staff.

- **Secure the facility** to prevent injuries during disaster
  - Ceiling TV’s secured
  - Machines and chair wheels locked
  - Oxygen tanks secured
  - Water treatment components secured
  - Storeroom shelves secure, heavy items are on bottom shelves
  - Emergency exits well marked and pathways clear
  - Label utility shutoff valves
  - Keep trees trimmed and away from power lines
  
- **Keep patient and business records secure**
  - Keep data backed up with copies in a secure location
  - Make paper copies of your patients’ orders and medication lists on a periodic basis (at least quarterly or if changed)
  - Distribute copies to your patients

- **Have a back up utility plan**
  - If you do not have an onsite generator you should have a written contract with someone who will agree to provide one if needed.
    - Have a known supply of fuel
  - Make a back up plan for water also: Milk companies can often provide a tanker filled with water if arrangements are made in advance.
    - You may need to have an adapter made

### **3. Prepare Your Staff**

- Identify the disaster organizational structure you will use in the event of a disaster.
  - Who is the person in charge?
  - Who will account for all patients and staff?
  - Who will contact your patients?
  - Who will grab the emergency evacuation box?
  - Who will call the utilities?
- Develop a communications plan: how will you keep in contact with each other, patients and local disaster response teams
  - Give patients a number to contact you with
  - Have an “out of area” contact number
- Educate key personnel in their roles during a disaster.
  - Hold periodic disaster drills (at least quarterly)
  - Include your patients in the drills
  - Evaluate and modify you plans based on how the drill go
- Have a back up facility agreement with a facility that can take your patients
  - It is a good idea to have an agreement with a facility outside of your area as well.
- Know in advance who to contact for assistance and information
  - Your ESRD Network
  - City, County and State Emergency Response Teams
  - American Red Cross Chapter
  - Security Company

### **4. Prepare Your Patients** (Please also see the CMS Manual “Preparing For Emergencies: A Guide for People on Dialysis” CMS - 10150)

- Educate your patients on
  - Evacuation procedures
  - 3-Day Emergency Diet
  - Contact information
  - Shelter information
  - Who to contact for transportation
- Survey your patients regularly to assure that they:
  - Update local and remote contact information
  - Have their current treatment information to carry with them (Medication list and run chart)
  - Have a supply of their medications
  - Have an emergency kit at home
  - Know how to get off the dialysis machine
  - Know where to go if the have to evacuate
  - Know where to get information during a disaster
  - Have the assistance they need to carry out their plans