

Four Keys to Being Prepared For a Disaster

Created by the Facility Operations Committee
National Disaster Planning Coalition



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).



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 the disaster
 - Ceiling Televisions/ Monitors secured.
 - Machines and chair wheels locked at all times
 - 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. Also consider bottling plants.
 - You may need to have an adapter made to facilitate use.



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? Who is the contact person? What is their phone#?
- Develop a communications plan: how will you keep in contact with each other, patients and local disaster response teams?
 - Give patients a phone number to contact you
 - 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 your plans based on how smoothly the drill went.
- Have a back-up facility agreement with a facility that can take your patients if necessary
 - It is a good idea to have an agreement with a facility outside of your immediate 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



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
 - 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 they have to evacuate
 - Have the assistance they need to carry out their plans.