



# **CHILD CARE FACILITIES EMERGENCY PLANNING GUIDE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This planning guide is directed to child care providers and facility managers. It is intended to provide assistance in meeting the planning requirements necessary to protect employees and children within the facility. Because of the differences in size and complexity between different child care facilities, this guide is intentionally generic in nature. In smaller facilities, there may be only one person to perform all of the functions listed here, in larger facilities a larger staff and child population may make a more complex plan appropriate. The procedures and principles discussed in this guide are no more than common sense. Use your own judgment as to how complex the plan needs to be. Remember, when it comes time to use the plan, there won't be a lot of time to read. On the other hand, a complete series of checklists might help you to remember some critical details during the excitement just after an alarm sounds.

No matter where the child care facility is or how large it is, children, staff, and even parents may be at risk as a result of natural or human-caused disasters. Effective planning and response is achieved by coordination, cooperation, and the participation of individuals and the community at large.

## **I. Everybody Has a Role in Emergency Planning and Response**

### **A. The Child Care Provider or Manager**

1. Develops (with help from a planning team) the facility emergency plan and coordinates it with municipal emergency management officials to make sure that it is compatible with the municipality's Emergency Operations Plan.
2. Trains staff and children in the provisions of the Emergency plan.
3. Assigns emergency responsibilities to staff members as required, with regard to individual capabilities and normal responsibilities.
4. Secures necessary training for staff members (as applicable).
5. Conducts drills and initiates needed plan revisions based on drill evaluations.
6. Keeps parents and staff members informed of emergency plan revisions.
7. Supervises periodic safety checks of the physical facility, equipment, and vehicles.
8. Provides copies of the Emergency plan to the county Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

### **B. The Facility Staff (as available)**

1. Participates in developing the facility's Emergency plan.
2. Participates in emergency preparedness training and drills.
3. Helps children develop confidence in their ability to care for themselves.
4. Provides leadership during a period of emergency.

### **C. Facility Maintenance Personnel (as applicable)**

1. Conducts periodic safety inspections of the facility.
2. Identifies shut off valves and switches for gas, oil, water, and electricity. Posts a chart showing shut off locations so that others can use them in an emergency.
3. Provides for emergency shut-off of the ventilating system.
4. Instructs all staff members on how to use fire extinguishers.

D. Facility Food Service Personnel (as applicable)

1. Maintains adequate supplies of non-perishable food and water for emergency use.
2. Rotates supplies to assure freshness.

E. Parents

1. Become familiar with the Emergency plan and procedures they are to follow.
2. Know the procedures for picking up their children after an emergency causes the facility to relocate to another site.
3. Ensure that the information that the facility has on the children and themselves is current and correct
4. Assist the facility manager in writing the plan.

F. Community

1. The community, especially local government, can be a source of:
  - a) Warning
  - b) Emergency Resources
  - c) Information
2. This assistance should come primarily from:
  - a) Municipal Governments
  - b) Emergency Medical Services
  - c) Law Enforcement Agencies
  - d) Fire Departments
3. Other possible sources of assistance include:
  - a) Individuals
  - b) Churches
  - c) Civic clubs and organizations
  - d) Businesses and industries

- e) Hospitals
- f) Local Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other voluntary service agencies

## II. Preparing the Emergency Plan

Child care facility management personnel have a responsibility to staff members, occupants, parents, and anyone who happens to be in their facility, to develop an Emergency plan. Additionally, Pennsylvania child care regulations and licensing procedures require that a plan be maintained. Authority for the plan and its implementation should be established and the circumstances during which emergency procedures are to be followed must be identified. An awareness of the natural and human-caused hazards likely to occur in a particular area and a thoughtful assessment of the facility and available resources - both material and human - are required.

### A. Plan Content:

It is important that facilities have a comprehensive written plan with procedures to be followed when an internal or external disaster occurs. The plan should be rehearsed periodically.

1. As a minimum, the following emergency situations should be addressed:
  - a) Fire and explosion;
  - b) Severe weather situations, including floods;
  - c) Utility failure;
  - d) Hazardous materials and radiological emergency;
  - e) Acts of terrorism or civil unrest;
  - f) Police incidents near the facility
  - f) Any other emergency that may directly impact the facility.
2. For the above emergencies, there may be common functional responses (e.g., the same evacuation procedures will work for a fire or a gas leak). The plan should include emergency procedures or checklists that are easily understood. A standardized format should be used throughout the plan that clearly establishes how procedures will be carried out. The procedures should answer the questions "who, what, when, where, and how" and allow the facility staff members to be ready to act effectively in an emergency situation.

3. The procedures should also address, as a minimum:
  - a) Special needs of clients or children (e.g. which staff and children require medication or a medical device, which may require assistance in evacuating because they are in a wheelchair, or are deaf or blind. etc.)
  - b) Notification of municipal emergency services and parents.
  - c) Provisions to shelter people inside the facility if it's more dangerous outside.
  - d) Alternate living arrangements if the sheltering is required for a period of a few days.
  - e) Evacuation plans if it's necessary to leave the facility, including means of transportation and evacuation routes if it is necessary to move outside the immediate area.
  - f) A designated "Relocation Site" outside the immediate area where staff and children will be safe if the entire area needs to be evacuated, and how to get there.
  - g) Protection of valuable records.
  - h) Notification of family members and procedures for re-uniting the children with their families.
  - i) Procedures to return the facility to normal operation after an emergency.
4. Information in the Plan
  - a) Information on charts and maps should be kept as simple as possible. Visual effectiveness can be increased by using color codes and large uncomplicated symbols.
  - b) A current list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses for staff members and emergency service agencies should be developed and maintained. Privacy concerns should dictate that this information not be given to the general public. A pocket card listing this key information may be given to staff members for quick reference.
  - c) Information on hazards in the area and plans that have been made for community response to emergencies (The local and county emergency operations plan will provide this).
  - d) Information on each of the children should be available to accompany them should it be necessary to relocate in a hurry.



e) Emergency energy sources.

5. If portions of a facility's plan depend on the resources or services of somebody outside the facility, a written agreement should be executed with the other party or parties that acknowledge their participation in the plan. This mutual agreement then becomes part of the plan.

B. Plan Specifics: The following should be included in the plan:

1. A description of how the facility is to receive notification of an actual or impending disaster/emergency.
2. A description of how facility management will communicate the warning to occupants of the facility and parents.
3. A list of emergency telephone numbers, including the facility staff, parents, and community emergency services.
4. An identification of designated shelter areas or best protected areas inside the facility.
5. An identification of evacuation assembly areas, and alternate facilities (or relocation centers) outside of the facility.
6. Designation of the "All-Clear Signal" showing that it's safe to come out of shelters.
7. A description of the organization and action of staff members and other occupants in moving to shelters or evacuating and moving to host facilities.
8. A list of responsibilities and assignments(s) of staff members for anticipated emergency situations.
9. A description of education, training, and drills required to assure effective operation of the plan.
10. A provision for periodic review and revision.

C. Planning Recommendations:

The ideal plan is easy to find and easy to read during an emergency. You must keep in mind that the plan must be specific enough to give directions for immediate action, but flexible enough to allow for changes as unexpected situations develop. The planners should strive for simplicity and clarity. A few hints to consider are:

1. Provide space for the phone numbers of key responding personnel and their alternates.

2. Step-by-step procedures should be as simple as possible so that they are clear to someone unfamiliar with the plan.
3. Whenever possible, save time and avoid confusion by developing standard procedures that fit multiple situations.
4. Staff responsibilities should be as close as possible to “normal” jobs so staff members are familiar with their emergency location and responsibilities.
5. Try to keep emergency procedures similar to non-emergency procedures – this will reduce the stress on children and make it easier to manage them.
6. Use checklists to ensure that infrequently-practiced emergency jobs are done correctly.

#### D. The Planning Team

The Facility Manager should solicit help from staff members and even interested parents in the development or revision of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. A major part of this process will be to secure the counsel and assistance of the municipal Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC).

#### E. Supporting Information:

A planning team should rely on a variety of sources. Much of the information gathered to assist in planning will also be useful in emergency response.

1. Planners should know the history of natural or man-made emergencies which have affected the facility and community. Local historical clubs, emergency service agencies, libraries, and newspaper files are all good sources of information.
2. Climatic data can be supplied by local weather stations. Planners should know the general weather and climatic patterns of their area. All parts of Pennsylvania are subject to severe weather, but vulnerability to different types of weather varies widely across the State.
3. Topographic and street maps can be used to assess vulnerability to hazards such as floods, landslides, forest fires, and transportation accidents which may involve dangerous materials. They may also aid in planning traffic flow in case an evacuation is necessary.
4. Facility floor plans and blue prints offer planners a summary of building features so that internal shelter areas can be determined and facility evacuation routes planned to avoid hazardous areas (boiler rooms, etc.) and take advantage of safety construction (fire walls, etc.).

5. A local phonebook will have a wealth of information about other facilities and possible resources available. (Planners should contact facilities to get a written agreement before an emergency occurs. There's a sample Memorandum of Agreement in the Supporting Documents part of this plan.)

F. Hazard Assessment:

The first step in writing the plan is assessment of the hazards in the facility and its county, region, or metropolitan area. Use maps, local history, and climatic data to identify the hazards and determine planning priorities. While all hazards should be addressed, the greater effort will be devoted to those emergencies most likely to occur. The hazard assessment should include:

1. Evaluation of the building and site, including inspection of the grounds.
2. Evaluation of the surrounding area in terms of vegetation, buildings, or activities which may be potential hazards. Locate pipelines, rail lines, and highways that are used for the transportation of hazardous materials. Note storage areas and industries that have hazardous or radioactive materials.
3. Evaluation of the community and region. Consider natural phenomena such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and flash flooding.
4. Consider how vulnerable the facility is to terrorists or other potential acts of violence, and mitigate or plan as necessary. Check with your local law enforcement for assistance.

G. Resource Identification:

The next step is to examine resources that may be available to you during the emergency. Then apply those resources to satisfy the needs you identified, and take steps to make sure they will be available when needed.

### **III. Parts of the Basic Plan**

While the actual appearance of the plan may vary, you should consider each of the following for inclusion. The basic Plan provided as part of this toolkit is an example of how this may look.

- A. Introductory Material: We suggest that at the very beginning of the plan you include:

1. Concurrence: A statement from those persons or organizations who are essential to the execution of the plan, or who will provide resources to accomplish the plan should be signed and included here to acknowledge that they understand their responsibility.
  2. Record of Changes: as changes are made, this is a way of keeping track of them. Of course, if you replace the entire plan, it gets a new date and the old changes don't need to be tracked.
  3. Authority: a statement by executive management that this plan contains the procedures to be used during emergency.
  4. Table of Contents: to allow users to find things in the plan.
- B. Purpose and Scope: a brief explanation of the reason for writing the plan (Purpose), and the persons to whom it applies and circumstances under which it should be used (Scope).
- C. Situation and Assumptions: briefly state information about the facility, its location and size, and the principal hazards facing it. This may seem obvious to you, but new staff, parents or emergency workers reading your plan may not be aware of the details of your facility.
- D. Basic Concepts: a description of how the facility will respond.
1. Who will be responsible for the response? Where will that person be positioned? Will there be some sort of command post?
  2. Describe the difference between sheltering and evacuation, and who will make that decision.
  3. Also describe any special teams (e.g. fire brigade) which will play a part in the response.
  4. Describe how the facility plans to accomplish the major response functions of shelter in place, evacuation, relocation, reunification & return to normal operations.
- E. Organization and Responsibilities: a listing of major responsibilities, and who answers to whom. It need not be as detailed as the listings in the checklists.

- F. Staff training – describe how staff will be made aware of the provisions of the plan, and how they will practice the procedures in it.
- G. Plan Development, Maintenance, and Distribution: should list how often the plan needs reviewed, who will review, and update it. It should also list where all of the copies are so that all copy-holders can get an update.
- H. Supersession: If you already have a plan in place, mention that the existing plan is being superseded or replaced by the new one you're writing. (If you don't have a plan, simply put N/A - not applicable). This will help to avoid any confusion about which version of the plan is to use.

#### **IV. Checklists and Supporting Documents**

- A. Checklists are Implementation Documents: The plan itself is written in a narrative format that explains things and gives a big picture. However, during an emergency, the plan may be too big or too complex. It's a lot more functional to have checklists that help people to remember important things that need done.

There is a series of checklists included as a part of this planning toolkit. You should go over each of these and modify it to fit your situation, and then use the checklists as a basis for staff training and drills. You may not need all of the checklists that are provided, or you may need to write others.

Checklists contain personal information about staff and children, and checklists contain information about emergency response plans that may prove harmful if the information fell into the wrong hands. For that reason, checklists should not be released outside of the facility.

- B. Supporting Documents: The final part of the planning toolkit is a set of "Supporting Documents" that are suggested for your use. None of these forms are mandatory, and you're encouraged to modify them to fit your own situation. The use of them will help to streamline your planning, and should result in more complete emergency procedures.

Some of the forms are marked at the bottom with a note to send the form along with the basic plan to the Emergency Management Agency. This is so the EMA is aware of what you are planning to do, and can share that information with emergency responders who may come to your aid during an emergency.

#### **V. Planning Strategy**

- A. Emergency Functions: there are several functions that need to be accomplished during emergency response that are common in many different kinds of emergencies. Rather than repeat the instructions for each Emergency, it is easier to organize the plan according to emergency functions. Different facilities

may have different circumstances, so all of the following may not be needed, or others may need to be added. With the plans for these emergency functions in place, the only decisions that need to be made during the emergency are which functions will need to be implemented.

1. Direction and Control: emergency decisions will need to be made, and everyone in the facility must know what those decisions are and who makes them.
  - a) The plan should specify who will be in charge (with an alternate) and where that person will be positioned. Depending on the size of your facility, you may need to designate a “command post” where staff can find the "Senior on-site facility person" (person in charge). An alternate command post should be designated in case an evacuation is needed.
  - b) Emergency service organizations use a control system called the “Incident Management System.” This lets all of the responders know who is in charge. It breaks each unit into sections or divisions so each leader has a manageable span of control (not greater than seven people). You should become familiar with the incident management system, and be prepared to interface with it when emergency responders arrive at your facility.
  - c) When emergency services arrive, they will be responsible for dealing with the emergency, but you will still need to be responsible for the children, and your facility. In some situations, the incident commander from the fire/police department may need a facility representative as part of a unified command.
2. Communications: this includes communications within the facility (announcing emergency measures) and outside the facility (notifying parents, answering machine, sign on door, etc.). If you plan to use cell phones or radios, mention it here. You should test this equipment regularly and consider obtaining additional communications equipment, if necessary. For example, having only telephones available for communications may be inadequate during an emergency because that is when the demand for phone lines and cell-phones is greatest. Each facility should have an alternate warning system or method which can alert the entire facility in the event of a power failure (cowbell, bullhorn, etc).
3. Evacuation: effective procedures for the orderly evacuation of a facility to a safe area are paramount. Evacuation plans should be designed to evacuate the facility as quickly and safely as possible. These should be coordinated with local government.
  - a) Evacuation instructions should:

- (1) Be given to all new staff members when hired.
  - (2) Be displayed by fire exits.
  - (3) Be provided to parents on facility tours and explained in correspondence.
- b) Evacuation routes should:
- (1) Take advantage of natural protective features (i.e. fire walls).
  - (2) Avoid hazardous areas, such as wooden stairs, open stairwells, and boiler rooms.
- c) Evacuation Plans should include each staff member's role in evacuating the building, such as designating who should:
- (1) Check rest rooms, vacant rooms, storage areas, and other spaces.
  - (2) Make sure that the "Go Kit" (a list of items in the go kit can be found in the Supporting Documents) is brought out of the building as well.
  - (3) Close windows and doors when leaving (time permitting).
  - (4) Lead evacuation lines.
  - (5) Guard or lock exits to prevent unauthorized persons from entry into building.
- d) You should always evacuate to a pre-designated "Assembly Area" close to, but a safe distance from the facility. While at the assembly area, you should:
- (1) Conduct roll-call for accountability.
  - (2) Determine whether to wait there or go on to a shelter.
- e) Display in each room in the facility a copy of the floor plan indicating evacuation route in case of fire, along with the location of the shelter to be used by the children if the emergency requires a shelter rather than evacuation.
- f) Evacuation should be conducted:
- (1) In orderly lines and no running.
  - (2) Quietly with no talking to minimize confusion and allow for changes in orders to be heard.

4. Lockdown: - If there is a dangerous person inside or immediately outside the facility, the best procedure may be to lock all interior doors and to protect the staff and children in their rooms. To do this requires immediate action on the part of staff and should be done quietly and in an orderly fashion.

- a) A coded signal to all staff should tell them that there is a danger, and that all rooms should be locked.
- b) Children should be kept inside the rooms, away from doors or windows where they can be seen
- c) The senior on-site person should summon police assistance, then try to get the dangerous person(s) to leave the facility.
- d) Staff should only unlock the doors to their rooms if they hear a previously agreed-upon "all-clear" signal.

5. Shelter in the Facility

- a) If it is unsafe for the occupants of the facility to go outside, provisions should be made to provide "protected spaces" inside. Depending on time available to move the children, it may be necessary to try to shelter in a "close" part of the facility, rather than the most protected space.
- b) In either case, these spaces should:
  - (1) Be in the interior of the building away from glass that may shatter.
  - (2) Not be in rooms with large ceiling spans (like gymnasiums or auditoriums) that may fall if subjected to shaking from an earthquake or tornado.
  - (3) Have furniture and wall-hangings secured so that they will not fall onto occupants.
- c) Suggestions on where to find these "protected spaces" are:
  - (1) In multi-story facilities.
    - (a) Use identified shelters or basements.
    - (b) Use first floor interior halls.
    - (c) Use closets, rest rooms, or other enclosed small areas away from large glassed-in areas or large open rooms.



- (2) In one-story facilities.
  - (a) Use identified shelters.
  - (b) Use interior hallways.
  - (c) Use rest rooms or other areas away from large glassed-in areas or open rooms.
  - (d) If hallways are not suitable, use the inside wall of a room on the opposite side of the corridor from which the storm is approaching.
- (3) Basements offer protection from high winds and other types of “missiles”. (Many older buildings, especially homes have small rooms off the basement that used to be cold cellars or coal bins.) Be careful though because there might be things stored in the basement that aren’t “kid-friendly.” Also, after the disaster there’s a real danger of not being able to get out – making it even more important that the emergency responders know where you are.
  - d) Make a diagram of the facility that shows which areas are to be used as shelters and the quickest way to get there (Attachment 5 of the Supporting Documents). Try to list “close” shelters as well as best protected spaces if there’s a chance that a fast-breaking emergency won’t allow everyone to get to the best one.
  - e) Check the space available and number of persons who will use each area (match people with space).
  - f) Accountability is essential. Procedures should assign everyone to shelter, and make provisions to report to the facility manager those persons who are in the protected area.
  - g) If you are being kept inside because of smoke or toxic chemicals outside, all air intakes and openings should be closed to protect the atmosphere inside.
  - h) Display a copy of the shelter plan in the Manager's office.
  - i) Display in each room in the facility a copy of the floor plan indicating the location of the shelter to be used by the children in that room, along with evacuation route in case of fire.
  - j) Provide a copy of this information to municipal Emergency Services.

## 6 Shelter outside the Facility

- a) If the hazard is more widespread, it may be necessary to relocate the children and the staff to a shelter in a safe area. This “relocation facility” should be expecting you, and should be able to protect you until the danger is past and the children’s parents can pick them up.
- b) You’ll need to let all of the parents know that you’ve relocated, and to where.
- c) Accountability procedures should be established to ensure that all children and staff are safe at the relocation facility. You will need to supervise them until their parents can come to the new location for them. A possible plan would be the use of public shelters, or of another child care center far enough away to be safe. The municipal Emergency Management agency can help with this decision.
- d) The plan should contain an estimate of how many children will need to be sheltered in whatever relocation facility you choose.
- e) You should get a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) (there are samples included in the Supporting Documents with the planning toolkit) with the relocation facility.
  - (1) You should first visit the potential relocation facility (or the office that will manage it) and explain the types of circumstances under which you may need to use their facility.
  - (2) The main reason for the MOA is to have both parties (you and the relocation facility owner/manager) acknowledge that they know you’re coming, and what you expect them to provide while you’re there..
  - (3) This is a good opportunity to spell out other details – like who is responsible for what and what rooms will be used.

- 7 Transportation will be needed if you go to a relocation facility. It will be best if you can provide transportation for all of your children and staff. Consider asking neighbors and parents if they may be available or willing to help. As a last resort, the municipal emergency management agency may be able to help, but it won't be able to guarantee that you will remain in one group, thus complicating your accountability problems.

- a) List of transportation assets: Because emergency procedures may necessitate immediate evacuation/relocation and require transportation at irregular hours, a list of the following information should be available (A sample list format is included in the Supporting Documents.):
    - (1) The number and capacity of facility owned and/or contracted transportation available for an emergency call. The names of operators and contact procedures should be included.
    - (2) The number and capacity of vehicles with specialized equipment, ramps, or hydraulic equipment (if necessary.)
  - 6. Procedures to safeguard records: In order to provide for the children, there are certain records (medical, etc.) that will be needed as long as they are in your care. Other business records will be needed if you are to continue to operate after the emergency has passed. You must identify these records, and ensure that they aren't lost as a result of the emergency. If necessary, make duplicates of the records and keep them in the "go kit".
- B. Staff Training and Drills: training and drills are essential to having an effective response in times of an emergency.
- 1. Pre-emergency training for each staff member with an emergency duty should develop awareness in all staff members of potential hazards and what measures to take to protect life and property. Training should also acquaint them with an understanding of warnings and public information announcements.
  - 2. Exercises, drills, and tests are vital parts of training and should be utilized once the staff has been trained in the procedures to follow and their respective roles.
    - a) Testing and Evaluating Response Procedures
      - (1) Drills should be carried out frequently so that everyone is familiar with the procedures.
      - (2) Procedures should be just as important as time. It's important to make sure that everyone gets it right as well as done quickly.
      - (3) Conduct drills at various times during the year. Some hazards are seasonal, but disaster has no calendar.
    - b) Drill evaluations
      - (1) Use staff members and administration as evaluators.
      - (2) Consider using municipal emergency service agencies as evaluators.

(3) Keep records to share lessons learned with others. Use this opportunity to improve the plan.

C. Supplemental Documents: include charts, lists, and other items that will help in understanding the plan. Keep needed information easily accessible during an emergency.

## VI. Understanding Specific Hazards

Even with plans based around emergency functions that are usable for a variety of emergencies, it's still helpful to understand a little about the types of emergencies that can impact the facility. Your hazard analysis may show that there are others, but these emergencies are among the most frequent in Pennsylvania.

### A. Fires and Explosions

Fires and explosions are an ever present danger. They may originate within the building or threaten from without. A small fire in a rural wooded area or a built up urban area can quickly get out of control and threaten a nearby facility. Internal fires may result from anything from carelessness to arson. Explosions and resulting fires may be caused by leaking gas lines or faulty heating systems.

#### 1. Warning and Communication

- a) Ensure that the alarm system is in good working order.
- b) In case of a malfunction, an alternate signal should be available (cowbell, whistle, bull horn, etc.).

#### 2. Preparation

##### a) Equipment

(1) Staff members and children should be familiar with the location and operation of alarms and extinguishers.

(2) All equipment (including extinguishers, sprinkler systems, fire doors, etc.) should be regularly maintained in accordance with State and municipal ordinances.

b) Training: All staff should be thoroughly trained in the differences in the types of fires (electrical, oil, chemical, etc.) and the various materials and equipment available to combat each type of fire, including commonly available substances and materials (baking soda, sand, water soaked blankets, etc.).

#### 3. Response

- a) When a fire is discovered, an alarm should be sounded immediately
- b) Evacuate the building immediately, using the building evacuation plan.
- c) After occupants are safe, the fire department should be notified without delay.
- d) Take the “go-kit” with you.
- e) Time permitting, windows should be closed.

## B. Severe Storms

Thunderstorms are a frequent occurrence in Pennsylvania. Tornadoes and tropical storms are less frequent but because of their potential to do damage, all are worthy of our attention. Thunderstorms bring with them intense rain, lightning, damaging wind in excess of 50 mph, and hail. Winds in tropical storms can get up to 100 mph. Under certain climatic conditions, thunderstorms can be a prelude to a tornado, which can generate whirling winds in excess of 200mph. Tornado damage can be very localized, while a hurricane can devastate several states. Intense rain can cause rapid rise in streams and severe flooding. While tornadoes strike with very little warning, we normally get some warning for thunderstorms, and tropical storms are tracked for days before they get to Pennsylvania.

### 1. Warning:

You should monitor National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio, Alert-PA or a local radio/TV station for public warnings when weather conditions indicate. Outside sirens ARE NOT sounded unless there is a danger of a tornado. The National Weather Service (NWS) issues the following:

- a) Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Indicates that weather conditions are such that a thunderstorm may develop.
- b) Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Indicates that a severe thunderstorm has developed and will probably affect those areas stated in the bulletin.
- c) Tornado Watch: Means that weather conditions are such that a tornado may develop.
- d) Tornado Warning: Means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated on RADAR and protective measures should be taken immediately.
- e) Tropical Storm Watch: Means that conditions indicate that a storm is possible, but has not yet occurred.

- f) Tropical Storm Warning: Means that a tropical storm is expected to strike the area within 24 hours. It contains an assessment of flooding dangers, high wind warnings for the storm's periphery, estimated storm effects, and recommended emergency procedures.

## 2. Preparation

- a) Have the facility evaluated for its ability to withstand high winds.
- b) Identify and designate the best internal protective areas within the facility.
- c) If the facility is in a particularly hazardous area, keep materials on hand to tape and/or board up windows, and provide other protection to the facility and outdoor equipment, as necessary.
- d) All staff members and children should know the "symptoms" of severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.
- e) Selected staff members should be trained as "severe weather watchers" or "tornado spotters" and know how to use the facility's warning and communication system. Know the history of tropical storms in the area and elevation of the facility above streams and rivers that may flash flood.
- f) Know safe evacuation routes to official shelters.

## 3. Response

- a) DO NOT stand at the window to watch
- b) When you receive a tornado warning or if a tornado sighting is reported, children and staff members should seek shelter WITHIN the building or in a designated tornado shelter.
- c) If your facility has a tornado alarm system, it is important that the sound of this alarm not be confused with that of a fire alarm or any other evacuation signal.
- d) During a severe thunderstorm warning, or during periods of particularly high winds, keep children away from glass.
- e) Every facility should also establish a manually operated backup warning system.
- f) During the watch, store portable equipment, outdoor furniture, etc., inside the facility away from shelter areas.
- g) During the warning, secure or store articles which may act as missiles.

- h) If there is insufficient time to take shelter,
  - (1) Go to the inside wall of a room away from windows.
  - (2) Sit or crouch on the floor next to an inside wall or get under tables or other furniture by sitting or lying prone on the floor, face down.

### C. Flooding

Because of its vast network of rivers, creeks, and streams, the State is considered to be flood prone. Flooding may be caused by heavy rains, fast snow melts, or dam failures. When this occurs, the natural waterways can become raging torrents capable of great destruction.

#### 1. Warning:

Except in the case of flash flooding, the onset of most floods is a relatively slow process with the buildup taking several days. Progressive situation reports are available from the NWS and the River Forecast Center district office of the NOAA.

- a) Flash flood watches are issued by the NWS to the public by radio/TV stations. A watch means that flooding MAY occur.
- b) Flash flood warnings are issued by the NWS to the public by radio/TV stations when flooding is actually occurring. Many municipalities have local flash flood warning systems to assist in the dissemination of this information.

#### 2. Preparation

- a) Know what a forecast river height means as it relates to the facility. Helpful information includes:
  - (1) Knowledge of how elevations relate to river gauges from which a forecast is prepared.
  - (2) Know whether or not the facility is in a flood plain.

#### 3. Response

- a) Evacuate children to shelters.
- b) Shut off water at mains so contaminated water will not back up into facility supplies.

### D. Winter Storms

The dangers of winter storms are the intense cold, snow, ice, breakdown of transportation due to road conditions, and disruption of electrical power. These conditions may incapacitate an area, making transportation difficult and disrupting utility service.

#### 1. Warning

Snow and ice storm watches and warnings are issued by the NWS. When such weather threatens, monitor a local radio/TV station for bulletins.

#### 2. Preparation

- a) Establish procedures for securing the facility against damage to utilities (frozen water pipes, etc.).
- b) Prepare the facility's vehicles for emergency travel on ice and snow (tire chains, etc.).
- c) Check emergency and alternate utility sources. Possibly the greatest hazard in severe weather is the loss of electrical power and thus heat and light. You may want to have a gas-powered generator or an alternate source of heat.
- d) Prepare to extend operations in case parents can't travel to pick up their children.

#### 3. Response

- a) Conserve utilities by maintaining the lowest temperature consistent with health needs.
- b) Take pre-determined measures to secure the facility against storm damage, prevent bursting pipes, etc.

### E. Hazardous and Radioactive Materials

Many types of hazardous substances including radioactive materials are shipped daily across the state. Municipal EMCs and fire departments maintain information concerning extremely hazardous and radioactive materials that are stored, used, or manufactured in the area. Accordingly, facility emergency planners should coordinate with these municipal officials.

#### 1. Warning

Warning of a hazardous or radioactive material incident is usually received from the fire or police department or the EMA when such an incident occurs close to or on facility property.



## 2. Response

- a) Determine whether it is safer to shelter occupants or to evacuate the facility.
- b) If it's necessary to evacuate the area, move crosswind; never directly into or against the wind which may be carrying fumes. Upon reaching a point of safety, take a roll call.
- c) Occupants must not return until the emergency services personnel have declared the area to be safe.

## F. Earthquakes

Parts of the State have experienced minor earthquakes. Individuals who have experienced them can attest to the fact that even a mild one can be frightening. This is particularly so if one is not informed of the precautions to take.

### 1. Warning

Earthquakes generally occur without warning. Seismologists can identify areas where earthquakes are most likely to occur, but cannot yet predict the exact time and place.

### 2. Preparation

- a) Secure standing objects such as bookcases and water heaters, especially if there is potential for them to fall and hurt someone.
- b) Provide earthquake safety information to parents and staff members.

### 3. Response

#### a) During the shaking

- (1) Keep calm - do not leave the location. Assess the situation, and then act. Remember, falling debris is the direct cause of most injuries and deaths.
- (2) If indoors - stay there.
  - (a) Take cover under desks, tables or other heavy furniture.
  - (b) Take cover in interior doorways or narrow hallways.
  - (c) Stay away from windows and beware of falling objects.
- (3) If outdoors - stay in the open.

- (a) Move away from the building, if possible.
  - (b) Avoid downed utility poles and overhead wires.
- b) After the shaking stops
- (1) Evacuate - Move to open areas away from the building.
  - (2) Do not re-enter the building until authorities have checked it for possible structural damage, leaking gas lines and other utility disruptions.
  - (3) Take a roll call to account for everyone.
  - (4) If a radio is available, listen for news bulletins.

#### G. Unexpected Utility Failures

Unexpected utility failures or incidents are common occurrences and may happen at any time. An undetected gas line leak may require only a spark to set off an explosion. Flooding from a broken water main may cause extensive damage to the property and facility and cause power failures. An electrical failure may result in the loss of refrigerated food supplies and medicines, or create a severe fire hazard.

##### 1. Warning

In this context, the "unexpected" means that there will be no warning.

##### 2. Preparation

- a) Identify the possible effects that the loss of each utility may have on the facility. As an example, loss of electricity might affect the heating and cooling system.
- b) Keep an accurate blueprint of all utility lines and pipes associated with the facility and grounds.
- c) Develop procedures for an emergency shutdown of utilities.
- d) Maintain a list of phone numbers, including night and day emergency reporting and repair services, of all serving utility companies.
- e) Minimize threats of failure through the use of good maintenance practices.

##### 3. Response

- a) Gas Line Break/Leak

- (1) Evacuate the facility immediately.
- (2) Notify maintenance staff, manager, local utility companies, and police and fire departments.
- (3) Shut off the main valve.
- (4) Do not re-enter the facility until emergency officials say it is safe.

b) Electric Power Failure

- (1) Notify the electric company.
- (2) Notify the maintenance staff.
- (3) If there is a danger of fire, evacuate the facility.
- (4) If an electrical short is suspected, turn off power at the main control point.

c) Water Main Break

- (1) Call the facility maintenance personnel.
- (2) Shut off the valve at the primary control point.

H. Terrorism and Other Potentially Violent Situations

It is an unfortunate sign of the world in which we live that there are persons who desire to cause damages similar to the damages caused by natural disasters. Sometimes, the reasons are personal, and directed against the family of one of the children in your center, or it could be simply faceless terrorism. Generally a terrorist will inflict damage in order to disrupt the way we do things or to gain attention for his/her cause. The results of these actions are hard to predict, but they are seldom all that different from the results of severe weather or of a hazardous materials release. An important thing to remember is that any terrorist action is illegal, and local police will need to be notified whenever any criminal, suspicious, or potentially terrorist activities occur.

1. Warning

Most acts of violence happen without warning.

2. Preparation

- a) Consider the ways that your facility is viewed in the community and the reaction in the media should a terrorist act occur.

- b) Active coordination with local law enforcement will give you a better idea of the vulnerability of your facility to terrorist attack and law enforcement's role in the response to suspicious activity.
  - c) Be aware of what's going on in the world. The federal Department of Homeland Security tries to communicate the level of threat by using a color-coded system (called the Homeland Security Alert System (HSAS)). Governmental, public, and private facilities should watch for changes in the color codes and adjust their activities accordingly. The American Red Cross has defined a series of checklists for schools. These have been adapted for child care centers (Attachment A). They are presented to you as an example. Review these to see how you can implement them at your facility.
  - d) Be vigilant, constantly on the lookout for unusual persons or things such as:
    - (1) Unusual unsolicited deliveries
    - (2) Suspicious items left around the outside of the facility
    - (3) Individuals "hanging around" for no apparent reason
  - e) Enforce facility security. Restrict visitors to only public areas. Ensure that all visitors are identified and appropriately cleared before they enter the facility.
3. Response: Response to the consequences of a terrorist or violent act will depend on the hazards presented.
- a) Armed Intruder - Call for help. Try to get the children to safety, either through a facility-wide lockdown, or by moving them to a locked safe room. If it is feasible, quickly take them outside the building to safety. DO NOT try to confront the intruder and make him/her even more violent. Try to remain calm and to calm down the intruder.
  - b) Hostage situation - Call for help. Don't endanger yourself or any of the other children by trying some sort of rescue. Pay attention to the captor(s), try to get details of what they want, and accommodate them. Provide as much information as possible to the police when they arrive.
  - c) Bomb - any unknown package could be a bomb. If you have any reason to believe that it is, EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY and let the experts deal with it. There can be no possible value in unnecessarily endangering yourself or members of your staff.

- d) Bomb threat - usually the threat comes via phone. Keep a checklist (Attachment B) near the phone to get the details from the caller that might help find the device, pin down when it's supposed to explode, and possibly figure out who the perpetrator is.
4. Bear in mind that the criminals/terrorists may have multiple attacks planned. They might use an explosion to get you to evacuate, and be waiting to take children hostage once you get them outside. This is the reason that we do not give the details of our emergency plans to anyone who doesn't need to know. It's also a good idea to check to see if the "coast is clear" before you try to move the children.
- I. Radiological Emergencies due to Nuclear Power Plant Incidents

Pennsylvania is host to five nuclear power plants. Because of the political sensitivity and the attention given to safety surrounding them, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires that each plant have specially-developed offsite emergency response plans for everyone within ten miles of the plant. These plans are maintained by county and local emergency management agencies. The requirements of your facility should be no different than the requirements placed on it by the natural or technological hazards discussed above. If you are within ten miles of a nuclear power plant (or if you THINK you are) contact your EMA office to ensure that your plans fit into the larger plans that are maintained for the entire Emergency Planning Zone around the plant.

J. Other Threats

Consideration must also be given to the possibility of other potential disaster situations to which the facility may be vulnerable. As an example, it is likely that children will be affected by heat in the summer. Less likely is the threat of tidal wave or volcano. Planners must consider all possible situations while concentrating on those which are most likely to occur.

## VII. Suggested Weblinks

There is an abundance of websites available to provide assistance. We recommend the following (note, content on some of these websites changes. Articles on emergency planning may no longer be available.):

- a) The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency – [www.PEMA.state.pa.us](http://www.PEMA.state.pa.us)
- b) The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics - [www.paaap.org](http://www.paaap.org)
- c) The American Red Cross – [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- d) The Federal Emergency Management Agency - [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- e) The National Association of School Psychologists - [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)
- f) [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- g) [www.knowledgelearning.com](http://www.knowledgelearning.com)



# ATTACHMENT A - HSAS MEASURES

## **Homeland Security Advisory System Recommendations for Child Care Centers**



<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>
<p><i>Red</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately</li> <li>• Close center if recommended to do so by appropriate authorities</li> <li>• 100% identification check (i.e.-driver's license retained at front office) and escort of anyone entering the facility)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Orange</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions</li> <li>• Prepare to handle inquiries from anxious parents</li> <li>• Discuss children's fears concerning possible terrorist attacks (Consider The Red Cross "Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with terrorism and Tragic Events" material)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Yellow</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to the proper authorities</li> <li>• Review emergency plans</li> <li>• Ensure all emergency supplies are stocked and ready</li> <li>• Send a reminder of emergency procedures home with children</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>ELEVATED</b> Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete recommended actions at lower level</i></li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Conduct safety training/emergency drills following the written emergency plan</li> <li>• Review the communication plan to be sure that phone numbers are updated</li> <li>• Continue exercising and training for emergency response</li> </ul>
<p><i>Blue</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complete recommended actions at lower level</i></li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Conduct safety training/emergency drills following the written emergency plan</li> <li>• Review the communication plan to be sure that phone numbers are updated</li> <li>• Continue exercising and training for emergency response</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: blue; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>GUARDED</b> General Risk of Terrorist Attacks</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop written emergency plans to address all hazards including plans to maintain the safety of children and staff as well as an emergency communication plan to notify parents in times of emergency.</i></li> <li>• Disseminate relevant information to families of children, staff and faculty.</li> <li>• Ensure selected staff members take CERT, CPR/AED or first aid courses</li> </ul>
<p><i>Green</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop written emergency plans to address all hazards including plans to maintain the safety of children and staff as well as an emergency communication plan to notify parents in times of emergency.</i></li> <li>• Disseminate relevant information to families of children, staff and faculty.</li> <li>• Ensure selected staff members take CERT, CPR/AED or first aid courses</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: green; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>LOW</b> Low Risk of Terrorist Attacks</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop written emergency plans to address all hazards including plans to maintain the safety of children and staff as well as an emergency communication plan to notify parents in times of emergency.</i></li> <li>• Disseminate relevant information to families of children, staff and faculty.</li> <li>• Ensure selected staff members take CERT, CPR/AED or first aid courses</li> </ul>

Your local American Red Cross chapter has materials available to assist you in developing preparedness capabilities. This material has been adapted from ARC 1465(Rev. 8-2002), a publication of the American National Red Cross.

# **ATTACHMENT B - BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST**

## **Bomb Threat Checklist**

Time of Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Receiving Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**Exactly what did the caller say? (*Information to be obtained as accurately as possible*)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Ask the caller:**

1. When is bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is it right now? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it look like? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of bomb is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What will cause it to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

### **About the Caller**

Gender of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Race of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Age of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's Voice (e.g., calm, angry, slow, crying, accent, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Was voice familiar? If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Background Sounds: (e.g., street noises, voices, motors, machinery etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Threat Language (e.g., well-spoken, foul, irrational, incoherent, taped): \_\_\_\_\_



## **ATTACHMENT C GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS TOOLKIT**

**Assembly Area:** A safe area to gather children and staff outside the building and away from danger, prior to transport or departure to a Relocation Facility.

**Basic Emergency Plan:** The “Public Part” of your Emergency Plan which must be posted and can be shared if requested. This part provides the overall assignments and concepts, but doesn’t go into a lot of detail.(The first five pages of the document).

**Checklists:** The second portion of your Emergency Plan; describes procedures in a checklist format to provide a guide in an orderly means to react to specific events during emergencies. (not to be shared publicly).

**Checkpoints:** Specific “stations” in the Child Care Center where staff is posted to assure all children and staff are evacuated from the building.

**HVAC:** Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning

**Human Caused Disaster:** Some examples, but not limited to: Fires, Nuclear Accidents, Hazardous Materials Incidents, Power Outage, Terrorist or Criminal Activities.

**Incident Commander:** The individual in charge at an emergency event. This term is used commonly by the emergency services (fire, police, ambulance services, etc.)

**Local Emergency Officials:** May be from the local municipality in which the Child Care Center is located, the county, an adjoining or close municipality or Pennsylvania State Police. For purposes of this plan includes Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement as well as a Local Emergency Management Coordinator (LEMC).

**Municipality:** The local government where the child care facility resides. Counties are also municipalities, but locally, it is often better to refer to the Borough, Township, or City (This does not mean the post office that is mentioned in your mailing address).

**Natural Disaster:** Some examples, but not limited to: Flooding, Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms, Hurricanes, Tornados.

**NOAA Weather Radio:** NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) activated electronic receiver from which automatically turns on to deliver weather advisories, watches, warnings or other all hazards emergency warnings or directions.

**Notice of Relocation:** A document or placard posted to advise of evacuation to a relocation facility. It is suggested that this posting use a code for the actual location so as to not reveal the actual location of the children.

**Protective Action:** The decision to: evacuate (close in), relocate (distant), shelter in place, or lock down

**Relocation Facility, Center, or Shelter:** These terms are interchangeable. The alternate building or site your child care facility will evacuate to in the event of an emergency or disaster.

**Close In:** May be with-in walking distance or a short distance from your original site

**Distant:** Requires motorized transportation resources to move at least 10 miles from your original site

**Shelter in Place:** Remain indoors, close all doors, close and lock all windows, turn off any equipment or HVAC that brings in air from outside, gather those outdoors back inside, remain indoors until an “all clear” is given.

**Supporting Documents:** The third portion of your Emergency Plan; should have documentation that supports your child care facility during emergencies. Some examples may be but are not limited to: A staff roster with contact numbers, copies of agreements with relocation facilities, transportation resource information, parent contact roster, etc.

**Utilities:** Could be water, gas, electric, telephone any single utility or combination there-of.