

POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONCERNING EMERGENCY/CRISIS SITUATIONS

I. PURPOSE

This policy and procedure is implemented in order to assure compliance with Regulations: Title 175 Chap. 3 004.15, Title 205 014.01D and 015.05.

II. AUTHORITY

This procedure has been implemented with the approval of the agency and/or its designee.

III. PROCEDURAL DIRECTIVES

A. Definitions:

Any of the following sudden, unexpected situations calling for immediate action is considered an emergency/crisis.

1. Serious illness or injury
2. Fire or severe weather
3. Loss of heat (cold months only)
4. Missing/run-away individual(s)
5. Death of an individual supported by the agency

B. Release of Information Relating to an Emergency/Crisis:

The Chief Executive Officer will be directly responsible for release of information about any emergency or crisis to the media and/or public. Staff are to refer any requests for information from the media to the Chief Executive Officer.

C. Serious Illness or Injury:

1. Definition:

- a. serious illness includes the sudden appearance of such symptoms as unconsciousness, passing/coughing blood, hyperventilation, etc.
- b. Serious injury includes wounds requiring stitches, suspected broken bones, concussion, sprains, and other more dangerous injuries.

2. Staff Response:

- a. Provide immediate first aid. Secure immediate assistance for the individual. If staff can safely transport the individual to an emergency room, they should do so. If an employee does not have access to a vehicle, or would have to leave other individuals unattended while transporting the sick/injured person, or if moving the person could cause further injury, she/he should call for an ambulance. When calling, be sure to report the address, nature of the problem, and your name.
- b. As soon as professional help has been contacted, staff are to notify his/her immediate supervisor (Support Supervisor or, in his/her absence, the Area Director). The management person contacted will notify the Area Director. The individual's Services Coordinator will be notified Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or as soon as is possible the next business day. These telephone numbers are to be available at all telephones in each agency facility.
- c. The management person contacted will check the individual's emergency data and notify the person(s) listed as an emergency contact.
- d. If the individual's life is at risk, the Chief Executive Officer shall be notified promptly.
- e. Staff will complete an Incident Report documenting the circumstances of illness/injury as soon as possible.

D. Fire and Severe Weather:

1. Definitions:

- a. Fire includes any flame which cannot be easily extinguished immediately; it also includes any time smoke detectors are triggered and the cause is not immediately obvious (such as burned toast)
- b. Severe weather includes tornadoes, high winds, large hail, and damaging lightning.

2. Staff Response:

a. Fire

- i. When a fire is discovered, staff are to immediately trigger the fire alarm (if available) and evacuate all individuals from the building. Be sure to check bedrooms and bathrooms for individuals who do not choose to evacuate.
- ii. Fire extinguishers are to be available at exits from each facility. They are to be used to assist in evacuation **ONLY**....staff are not expected to fight fires with them.
- iii. Once outside, staff will gather all the individuals up-wind of the building (out of the smoke) or at a predetermined area and do a head count. Staff will NOT re-enter the building to search for missing individuals if this would leave evacuated individuals unattended or if the employee's life is put at risk by re-entering.
- iv. Staff will go to a neighboring building and request the use of a telephone to call the fire department. When calling, be sure to give the address and caller's name. Staff should ask if the individuals could temporarily shelter in the building.
- v. When fire fighters arrive, staff will give them information as to where the fire started, who may still be inside and where, etc. Individuals are **NOT** to re-enter the building until approved to do so by a fire official.
- vi. Staff should notify the Area Director as soon as possible. The Area Director will coordinate temporary living arrangements for displaced individuals, if needed.

b. Severe Weather

- i. When a *Severe Thunderstorm Watch* or *Tornado Watch* is issued, staff will keep a radio or television tuned to a local news station for weather updates. The storm shelter area will be checked by staff to be sure that a working radio and flashlight are

available, along with a first aid kit and enough blankets to cover all persons present. If staff are in the community with individuals, they should make sure they know where to find a storm shelter quickly.

- ii. When a *Severe Thunderstorm Warning* or *Tornado Warning* is issued, staff will immediately conduct all individuals to the designated shelter area. All present should listen for updates on the radio. The blankets should be available to be draped over everyone present for protection from wind-blown debris. No one should leave the shelter area until an "all clear" is announced by authorities.
 - iii. If a facility is damaged by severe weather, staff will inspect it and document all noticeable damage. If the damage results in the risk of fire (electrical sparking, leaking gas, etc.), the building is to be evacuated and the fire department notified. Damage should be reported to the Area Director promptly.
3. After any fire or weather emergency which results in injury or property damage, the Support Supervisor will prepare a report documenting the following: address, date, time, persons involved, suspected cause, actions taken by staff, and resulting damage.
4. Designated shelter areas should be located on the lowest floor of the facility, away from windows and external doors, preferably in the center of the building. A tornado kit with radio, flashlight, first aid kit, and blankets will be available.
5. Fire drills will be conducted at least six times per year on a bimonthly basis in all facilities so that individuals and staff learn to evacuate calmly and efficiently. Fire drills will be held January through December. In residential facilities, at least two of the drills will be conducted during the hours the residents are asleep to promote cooperative responses when the residents are roused from their sleep. Tornado drills will be conducted monthly April through September. The ***Emergency Evacuation Reporting Form*** will be used to document these drills. (See *Policy and Procedure Concerning Safety/Sanitation*)

E. Loss of Heat:

In the event that heat is lost, individuals may be evacuated to another service site. This should be considered if the building's internal temperature drops low enough that persons present are chilled even when dressed warmly. Each area program shall have a course of action to follow in such circumstances documented in the **Emergency Plan**, unique to that program's facilities and community resources. (See III-H)

F. Missing/Run-away Individual(s):

The employee, discovering that an individual is unaccounted for, will immediately:

- a. Check the facility and the immediate area
- b. Notify the Support Supervisor
- c. Notify the Area Director
- d. Prepare an Incident Report

The Support Supervisor (or the Area Director in the absence of the Support Supervisor) will:

- a. Organize a search, using agency staff
- b. Notify the individual's Services Coordinator
- c. Notify law enforcement agencies if the person has not been located within a reasonable time; also notify the person's family/guardian at this point and maintain these communications until the situation is resolved. If the individual has not been located within a few hours, the Area Director will brief the Chief Executive Officer about the situation.

G. Death of an Individual Supported by the Agency:

1. Death of an individual While under the Jurisdiction of the Agency:

- a. The person discovering the death will immediately contact the rescue unit and the Area Director. The Area Director will notify the Support Supervisor, Services coordinator, and the Chief Executive Officer.
- b. The Area Director will notify the next of kin or person who functions in that capacity.
- c. In accordance with regulations, the Area Director shall notify the coroner or medical examiner. Within twenty-four hours, or no later than the first working day following the death, the Area Director must telephone the Protective Services Coordinator at Nebraska State Health and Human

Services. A review form will be sent to the Area Director to submit within ten working days.

- d. With the permission of next of kin or legal guardian, an autopsy may be performed by a qualified physician so selected as to be free of any conflict of interest. An autopsy should record a provisional diagnosis within 72 hours, if feasible. The complete protocol will be made part of the record within three months. The family will be informed of the findings, if they so desire.
- e. A copy of the death certificate shall be placed in the individual's Unit File.
- f. An internal report shall be prepared for the Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible.

2. Death of an Individual While Outside of Agency Jurisdiction:

- a. When a death occurs outside of the agency's jurisdiction (i.e., hospital, family home), the Area Director, upon becoming aware of the death, will immediately notify the appropriate Support Supervisor, Services Coordinator, and the Chief Executive Officer.
- b. Within 24 hours, or no later than the first working day following the death, the Area Director must telephone the Protective Services Coordinator of the State Health and Human Services. A review form will be sent to the Area Director to submit within ten days.

H. Emergency Plan:

1. Composition:

Each twenty-four hour setting (both residential and day services) will have a manual entitled **Emergency Plan**. The manual shall, **at minimum**, contain the following:

- a. Policy and Procedure Concerning Emergency/Crisis Situations
- b. Area specific plan in the event of loss of heat (specific to the locale)
- c. Emergency Evacuation Reporting Forms (blank)

- d. Documentation showing when staff have been oriented to the manual.

2. Availability:

A complete manual will be available in each of the area program's facilities. Additionally, floor plans shall be posted in each facility, on each floor, clearly showing:

- a. Emergency exits
- b. Fire extinguisher locations
- c. Fire alarm pull stations
- d. Fire alarm control panel locations
- e. Evacuation routes
- f. Storm shelter location

3. Familiarity:

- a. New staff will read this manual as part of their initial orientation to the facility. The Support Supervisor will make sure that the employee signs off as having read the manual.
- b. The Support Supervisor will review the manual with all employees annually and provide documentation of this review.

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