

# Emergency preparedness plan update

Nothing ever stays the same. That’s why it’s important to take time to update your facility’s Emergency Preparedness Plan at least every year. You never know when an emergency will occur. An up-to-date plan will make sure you, staff, children, and their families will be able to take quick action to keep everyone as safe as possible.

**Step 1** — Locate the most recent facility Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**Step 2** — Begin a careful review of the plan. Think about changes in your community, the child care facility, staff, children, and families. All these can affect the way an Emergency Preparedness Plan is written and implemented. Follow the steps below to help you consider changes.

## Part 1: The community

Consider your community	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Are there new businesses or industries? Do any of them use or transport dangerous chemicals or materials?		
Has a new jail, halfway house, or other facility opened that could be a risk to children’s security?		
Has the completion of new roads introduced potential safety or security problems to your child care facility?		
Have environmental factors changed that could place your child care facility at greater risk for fire, flooding, or other natural disasters?		
Do you plan to use the same relocation facility? If so, contact that facility to make sure Agreements of Assistance are current. If not, choose a new relocation facility and write an Agreement of Assistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the Notice of Relocation sign to show the name and address of relocation facility.</li> <li>• Attach new maps and written directions to the new relocation site.</li> </ul>		
<i>* All changes made to the plan should be recorded, dated, and shared with staff.</i>		

Consider your community	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
<p>Do you plan to use the same transportation providers? (If applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If so, contact them to make sure Agreements of Assistance are current.</li> <li>Develop new Agreements of Assistance for new transportation providers.</li> </ul>		
<p>Are there new road construction projects or road closings that would hinder or change emergency relocation plans?</p>		
<p>Has the center's address changed since the original plan was written?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If so, verify that the Emergency Management Agency office and other emergency personnel provide service to the new location.</li> <li>Talk with local Emergency Management Agency office and other emergency service providers to review and note changes that were made to the emergency plans for your municipality (borough, city, township, and county).</li> <li>Give updated plans to local Emergency Management Agency office and other emergency service providers.</li> <li>Have emergency agencies sign upon receipt of updated plan.</li> </ul>		
<p>Other community-related changes to consider:</p>		

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**Great tips from center directors:**

- Choose relocation facilities carefully. One center found the relocation facilities they chose agreed to supply food and water for the children in case of an emergency, so the center does not have to transport food and water if they are evacuated.
- Do you have a map and written directions to your relocation sites? A local Emergency Management Agency recommended to one center director to have written directions **and** a map drawn to show how to get from the center to the emergency relocation facility. Transportation providers can follow the directions or the map, whichever is easier for them to use.
- Check back with the relocation facility several times a year. Do they have new staff? Have any of their policies changed? Make sure there are no misunderstandings before an emergency occurs.
- Make a sign to tell parents to pick up their children at the relocation site, and to remind them where it is. Keep it with your Emergency Preparedness Plan. In case an emergency occurs, the sign will be ready to pull out and hang on the door as you leave.

## Part 2: The child care facility

Consider your child care facility	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Has the facility's name changed?		
Has the facility's address changed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is an address change, is the facility located in the same county as when the original plan was written?</li> </ul>		
Has the telephone number changed?		
Have normal operating hours changed?		
Review and update the roster of staff and volunteers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the procedure changed to keep the roster updated?</li> </ul>		
Have you started or completed any construction projects at your facility that change indoor or outdoor shelter spaces or assembly areas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, review criteria for selection of "closest shelter" and "interior shelter."</li> </ul>		
Check the Center Emergency Kit to make sure it is complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the procedure changed to keep the kit contents updated?</li> <li>• Do batteries, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, or other items need to be replaced?</li> <li>• Does the kit contain toys, diapers, and food for infants and toddlers (if applicable)?</li> <li>• Does the kit contain medication, special food, or other necessities for children with chronic medical conditions and/or children with special needs?</li> </ul>		
Check expiration dates on food stored for emergency use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and replace food that will expire within a year.</li> </ul>		
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Consider your child care facility	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Replace stored water with fresh water every six months.		
Do the fire extinguishers need to be filled or replaced? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you considered contracting with a company to check and service fire extinguishers?</li> </ul>		
Does your center transport children? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you included plans to follow in case of a vehicular accident?</li> </ul>		
Is your center located in a school or other public building? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you aware of the emergency plan for the rest of the building?</li> <li>• Make sure your emergency plan meshes with the plans for the rest of the building.</li> </ul>		
Other facility-related changes to consider:		

*\* All changes made to the plan should be recorded, dated, and shared with staff.*

**Great tips from center directors:**

- Is your Emergency Preparedness Plan in a form that can be found and used quickly and easily? One center keeps their plan in a colorful binder with plastic slip-in pages. The color of the binder makes it easy to find. Pages stay intact and it's easy to make changes by pulling out a page and slipping a new one into the plastic sleeve.
- How do you plan to use the Center Emergency Kit? One center makes sure each classroom has a "field trip backpack" to transport a first aid kit and child and adult staff emergency information whenever they leave the center. In an emergency, staff take their classroom backpacks with them. A large center emergency kit may contain nonperishable snacks, canned formula and diapers, toys, games, and books to engage children for several hours. One center recommends using a new trash can on wheels or a large suitcase with wheels to easily store and transport the kit.

### Part 3: Paid and volunteer staff

Consider paid and volunteer staff	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Who is in charge if the director is absent?		
Who is in charge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning of the day?</li> <li>• At the end of the day?</li> </ul>		
Who will instruct visitors if they are in the center when an emergency occurs?		
Are staff listed to provide emergency transportation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure this information is current.</li> </ul>		
Develop or review and update emergency records on all paid and volunteer staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the procedure to keep these records updated?</li> </ul>		
Place copies of emergency records for paid and volunteer staff in Center Emergency Kit.		
Is there a supply of critical medication, such as insulin, epinephrine injectors, etc., on site for staff who need it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are important medications for staff and volunteers kept?</li> <li>• Check the dates of stored medications, and use and replace them before they expire.</li> </ul>		
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Consider paid and volunteer staff	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Which staff members have first aid training? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do staff at the center know who has first aid training?</li> </ul>		
Hold a meeting with staff to discuss and review the facility's Emergency Preparedness Plan and its implementation.  The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) requires that each staff person receive training on the Emergency Preparedness Plan at the time of initial employment, on an annual basis, and within one week after an update is made to the plan.		
How will new staff who are hired after the staff meeting learn about emergency preparedness procedures?		
Other staff-related changes to consider:		
<i>* All changes made to the plan should be recorded, dated, and shared with staff.</i>		

**Great tips from center directors:**

- Keep a list of the staff's cell phone numbers with their emergency contact information. One center had this experience: In an emergency, a local agency evacuated some of the children from the child care center to a site that wasn't part of the center's Emergency Preparedness Plan. Staff contacted each other via cell phones to find the missing children and staff.
- Practice, practice, practice. The best way to ensure that staff and children will be able to react quickly and calmly during an emergency is to practice the procedures until everyone is comfortable with them.

## Part 4: Children and families

Consider children and their families	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Review and update children’s emergency records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the procedure changed for keeping these records updated throughout the year?</li> </ul>		
Review and update parental permission forms to transport children in case of emergency.		
Place a copy of updated children’s emergency records in the Center Emergency Kit.		
Review and send a letter to parents that describes the emergency plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep a dated copy of the letter on file to document annual parent notification.</li> <li>Consider parents with limited English and/or limited literacy skills. Does the letter need to be translated into other languages or simplified to make it easier to understand?</li> </ul>		
How is the letter distributed to parents who enroll children after the initial letter was sent?		
How will updates to the facility Emergency Preparedness Plan be conveyed to parents?  (The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requires that child care facilities provide an annual letter to parents that explains updates made to the plan.)		
Have parents review, sign, and date the Child Pickup Authorization form if no changes are necessary. If changes are needed, give parents a new form to complete.		
Review the plan to contact parents when an emergency situation arises. Do changes need to be made?		
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Consider children and their families	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Review the plan to inform parents that an emergency has ended, and to instruct parents where and how to pick up children.		
Review and update the Parent/Guardian and Emergency Contact roster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the procedure changed for keeping this roster updated?</li> </ul>		
Is there a supply of critical medication, such as insulin, epinephrine injectors, etc. on site for children who need it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the dates of stored medications so they are used and replaced before they expire.</li> </ul>		
Each child should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A change of seasonally appropriate clothing</li> <li>• A blanket</li> </ul> Each infant should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra diapers (one-day supply)</li> <li>• Extra formula (one-day supply)</li> </ul>		
How will children with special needs be accommodated in case of an emergency?		
How will the needs of infants and toddlers be accommodated (if applicable)?		
How will the needs of children with chronic medical conditions be accommodated in an emergency?		
Review the plan for contacting parents when an emergency situation arises. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about contacting parents in multiple ways: telephone calls, e-mail, text messages.</li> <li>• Do changes need to be made?</li> </ul>		
<p>* All changes made to the plan should be recorded, dated, and shared with staff.</p>		

Consider children and their families	Changes to be made to the plan*	Date completed
Other children and family-related changes to consider:		
* All changes made to the plan should be recorded, dated, and shared with staff.		

**Great tips from center directors:**

- Keep one copy of the emergency contact information for staff, volunteers, and children with you, so it can be accessed in an emergency without entering the center. One center director discovered a gas leak as she was coming to work at an after-school program. She was able to get her file of emergency contact information before the building was evacuated. She now keeps a copy of the emergency contact information with her in case of an emergency that would prevent her from entering the building to access the file.
- While it's important to share emergency plans with parents, one center cautions against alarming them. Keep your written information and discussions calm and matter-of-fact. Talk about your plan as safety policies you are following to keep children safe in case an emergency occurs.

**Final notes:**

- In Pennsylvania, reviews and/or updates to Emergency Preparedness Plans are required to be done within a one-year period from the date the plan was written, updated, or reviewed.
- Make sure all reviews and updates to the Emergency Preparedness Plan are documented and dated. Keep a dated record of all changes made to the plan.
- Keep a dated copy of the parent notification letter to document when it was sent.
- Sign and date the plan after updates are made.
- Send a signed, dated copy of all updated plans to the appropriate county emergency management agency (EMA).
- Post the most current emergency plan in a conspicuous location: one that is easy for staff, parents, and DHS certification inspectors to see.