

# Long Term Care Facilities Evacuation Tips

## Background

Flooding often has the potential for the need to evacuate Long Term Care (LTC) facilities. Moving residents from a LTC facility is challenging under normal operations let alone disaster / crisis situations.

## Why this is an issue

When moving residents from a LTC facility, many will have difficulties with movement, communication, and are entrenched in daily routines. Alteration of routine and moving to unfamiliar environments leaves the potential for increased injury and psychological distress. Moving residents should be accomplished in an organized, calm fashion whenever possible to decrease the possibility of these concerns.

## Tips on Organized Evacuations

- Consider having separate entrance and exit routes for people needing to come into the facility and another one strictly for sending residents out. This minimizes any confusion due to too many people in the traffic pattern and allows for a more calm environment.
- When evacuating residents consider holding response doing the transport at the exit door and bring the residents to them. In this way there will be less confusion on the floors and staff can tell the residents as they move them to the exit what is happening. This also assists the transition for the residents and increases the chances for a calm transition.
- At the exit point, facility staff can transfer the residents after they have documented where the resident is going, given any paperwork to the agency transporting, obtain an estimated ETA when the resident will arrive and placed some type of physical marker on the resident such as a wrist band, or lanyard. In addition, whenever possible also transport any necessary medications, any adaptive devices such as wheelchairs, canes, walkers, glasses, and hearing aids. These items will more fully allow the resident to transition and feel safe.
- Again when possible, send any durable medical equipment as receiving facilities often may not have much in reserve and this would be useful
- Documentation and tracking is critical. Sending facilities need to have lists of residents they have sent to other facilities and receiving also will need to make lists along with any special cares required for residents.
- Medical information is also imperative. Whenever evacuating, receiving facilities will need to know the resident's medical history and any special needs that pertain to any given resident. Send the medical record whenever possible.
- Transporting agencies will also need to maintain records of whom they took and where they took them. This documentation will be needed at some point.
- The sending facility will want to obtain a probable ETA from transport personnel and do a follow up call to the receiving facility to ensure that the resident in fact arrived.
- If transporting by bus, a roster of residents needs to be kept. For the safety of the residents, medical staff need to be on the bus to provide support as needed.

## Transport Safety Concerns

Residents, who need oxygen transported with them in order to maintain saturation, should be transported in an ambulance. In other disaster settings where residents were transported in alternate methods, injury and death has resulted. While some residents may seem able to be transported and carry their oxygen bottles, it is never a good idea to do so, unless the resident is in imminent significant danger where they are.

## Family Communications

Family members of residents will need notification and information. The sending facility, whenever possible, should consider having staff maintain contact with family members. If family is present during the evacuation period, a separate center within the facility should be established and routine briefings given to family members. This also lends credence to the maintenance of a separate entrance door away from the exit.



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