

SEVERE WEATHER

Definitions:

Watch -- Conditions are favorable for a thunderstorm or tornado to develop. Flash flooding may occur as a result of the storm.

Warning -- A thunderstorm or tornado has been sighted. If a siren sounds, stay inside and take cover.

Procedure:

1. Account for all patients and staff on duty. Make sure everyone is indoors.
2. Close all windows and pull all curtains at Home. In the office, make sure that windows are locked and secured.
3. Keep patients away from windows.
4. Contact staff in the field and instruct them to take cover indoors.
5. Notify patients if a visit will be canceled due to weather conditions.

If there is a tornado warning, further precautions need to be taken:

6. Have patient move to an interior room without windows or a bathroom.
7. Have flashlights and a radio on hand in case of power outage and to monitor weather updates.
8. Stay calm and provide reassurance to the patient.
9. If not at patient's home, call patient to determine condition and if help is needed.
10. Do not travel until the storm has passed and the warning has been lifted.
11. In the event that flooding occurs, notify your Emergency Response Coordinator (see phone numbers below), if evacuation of patient is necessary.

Regional Emergency Response Coordinators by State

Massachusetts	978-688-4357
New Hampshire	800-852-3792
Maine	207-324-1111

Hurricane

If a hurricane is approaching, precautions need to be taken to ensure the safety of patients and staff.

Definitions:

Watch – Issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 48 hours.

Warning – Issued when hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours or less.

Procedure:

1. Notify all patients and physicians that the Agency services will be suspended when a Hurricane **Warning** is in effect.
2. If available, consider admitting expectant Hospice patients into Respite Care at hospital prior to storm approach.
3. Notify your Emergency Response Coordinator if evacuation of patient is necessary.
4. Notify your Emergency Response Coordinator that services have been suspended.
5. Provide patients with a call in number to verify when Hospice services have resumed.
6. Close and lock office.
7. Provide staff with call in number for re-scheduling services.
8. Notify your Emergency Response Coordinator that services will resume on stated day and time and that surge patients may be accepted (see phone numbers in chart below).
9. If evacuation is prolonged, Hospice should attempt to provide hospice services to patients in shelters within treatment region.

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Winter Storm

The following winter storm safety precautions have been established for all staff to follow during blizzards, heavy snow, freezing rain, ice storms, or sleet.

Precautions:

1. Contact patients at start of storm and stay in touch throughout the storm, if it is prolonged.
2. Notify patients if scheduled visits cannot be made due to severe weather.
3. Confirm that patients have emergency equipment and adequate supplies and ***medications*** on hand, as well as flashlights and a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, if possible.
4. Make sure an emergency food supply and bottled water are available.
5. Check to see that emergency power supply (generator) and heating system are working.
6. Recommend having extra blankets and heavy clothing available, if needed.
7. Notify your Emergency Response Coordinator if evacuation of a patient is necessary.
8. Monitor weather forecasts and bulletins and relay updates to staff and patients.
9. Stay indoors, traveling only if necessary. If you must go outside, make sure you are properly dressed, and fully covered. Limit travel to daylight hours and along assigned routes, if possible.
10. If snow removal is necessary to access patient homes or your vehicle, be careful to avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts added strain on the heart.