



## Are you Ready?

The Emergency Preparedness Plan for your facility should be complete, up-to-date, and accessible. Is yours?

Health care facilities bear responsibility for anticipating, planning, and preparing for a variety of emergencies that could impact their residents.

The challenge is in creating an effective plan, identifying all factors to be considered, and creating a reliable system for periodic review and testing, emergency drills, and staff training. All a part of regulatory compliance.

Requirements for emergency preparation vary by state and by licensure, but the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Appendix Z may be used as a reference or standard in emergency planning and preparations for health care facilities. Appendix Z defines an emergency preparedness program as "a facility's comprehensive approach to meeting the health, safety and security needs of the facility, its staff, patients, and community prior to, during, and after an emergency or disaster."<sup>1</sup>

An effective Emergency Preparedness Plan allows facilities to safeguard human resources, maintain business continuity, and protect physical resources, in addition to meeting regulatory requirements. Identifying potential hazards and disasters and creating an effective plan is but the first step. Ongoing, periodic reviews, updates, drills, staff education, and reporting is necessary to assure the plan will be effectively executed in the event of an actual disaster.

### Solutions Lie in Software.

RTasks by ResiDex recognizes the challenges inherent in emergency planning and has designed features to assist staff and leadership at care facilities with every stage of emergency preparedness planning, preparation, and response. Using RTasks features, facilities can create essential, detailed documentation that meets the national standard set forth in CMS's Appendix Z. Specifically:

- ✓ **Creation of the Initial Plan**
- ✓ **Auto-creation of policies/procedures that are disseminated to staff**
- ✓ **Customizable Training and Inservice Documentation**
- ✓ **Creation of Memorandum of Understanding > Reports Category: Emergency Preparedness**
- ✓ **Resident-specific emergency readiness - identified plan for sheltering-in-place, evacuation and coordination of care**
- ✓ **Task Management for periodic review and updating of the plan, and scheduling of drills, testing, and training**
- ✓ **Web-based EHR for ease in reporting, sharing of information in evacuation situations**

## A DIY Guide to Emergency Preparedness

The State Operations Manual Appendix Z states that a comprehensive approach “should encompass the elements for emergency preparedness planning based on the “all-hazards” definition and specific to the location of the facility.” The initial step involves completing a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment that is specific to your geographic location and locale. Contact your local or regional Emergency Planning Coordinator for tools and guidance in performing this step.

Once you’ve identified the potential hazards, RTasks can assist in addressing them by walking the user through the creation of an Emergency Preparedness Plan.

- RTasks’ Audits provide the questions; your responses auto-create the Policies and Procedures that can be shared with staff for review and acknowledgement. Topics include:
  - Communication Plan
  - Evacuation Plan
  - Missing Resident Plan
  - Shelter in Place Plan
  - System of Medical Documentation
  - Building / Alternate Source/s of Energy
  - Volunteers in an Emergency
- Those same Policies and Procedures are combined into a comprehensive report – your Emergency Preparedness Plan. This report provides the comprehensive report required for regulatory compliance.
- Arrangements made with others in your community for emergency transportation or housing resources are formalized through Memorandum of Understanding reports.



### Emergency Plan Updates and Maintenance

Appendix Z of the State Operations Manual makes it clear that long-term care facilities must review and update their emergency preparedness plans at least once a year. Without the aid of technology, this can get overlooked or back-burnered. To streamline the review and updating procedures, RTasks allows you to set a next due date for the review of the plan with Dashboard reports reminding you of those required tasks.

Resident needs and evacuation concerns are kept up-to-date as part of the clinical assessment. Doing so means accurate and up-to-date reports are ready with a few clicks of the mouse.

### Ongoing Readiness – Audits and Drills

RTasks’ Task Manager allows you to schedule regular tasks and drills associated with emergency preparedness; testing of fire safety equipment; fire and weather alert drills; and evacuation drills. When assigned as tasks, they provide the reminder – and stay on the task list – until documented complete. The Audit tool allows you to document the test or drill itself, including actions taken, staff present, and any other details or concerns.

### Staff Training - Creating an Effective Response Team

Emergency preparedness training is a critical component of planning and handling emerging events. CMS requires that staff training be documented, reviewed and updated, along with insisting training programs reflect the risks identified in the facility's risk assessment.

Your staff training and inservice attendance can be documented directly in RTasks. With RTasks Learning Management System, you can actually upload a video of your own training - a tour of the facility showing fire extinguishers and pull stations or an active demonstration of how to shelter in place - and upload into the Learning Management System so you can assign and reassign facility-specific staff training at appropriate intervals.

### The Emergency is Now! RTasks Responds

RTasks reports are at your fingertips, including the comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan, Contact and Resource lists that make communication with family, emergency response officials and other key people efficient. If evacuation is imminent, the Evacuation Summary Report details resident-specific equipment needs, evacuation levels and locations.

Remote access to resident records is inherent in electronic health record systems, but for anticipated internet outages, RTasks Vault offers users the ability to log into a unique website portal and gain access to printable versions of MARs, treatment records, resident profiles, and other working documents that can be used to identify resident needs and document care. Paper documents can be provided to receiving facilities in event of an evacuation. You can also grant others access on a need-to-know basis, facilitating the transfer of key information necessary for continuity of care.

### Be ready for the unexpected with RTasks.

RTasks provides the needed assistance for emergency preparedness planning in care facilities of all kinds, and for all emergencies. To keep operations running during disaster, as well as meeting CMS guidelines, it is paramount that a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan be utilized, implemented, and documented. ResiDex Software and the range of RTasks features provides the tools for complete planning, scheduling of emergency tasks, training staff, and assistance during emergencies.

The safety of your residents is in your hands - we can help!

**RTasks by ResiDex is the solution.**

**Schedule a demo today!**

**866.512.8369 opt 1**



## Resources

- 1) *Updated Guidance For Emergency Preparedness-Appendix Z of the State Operations Manual (SOM)*. CMS. (n.d.), from <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfo/policy-and-memos-states-and/updated-guidance-emergency-preparedness-appendix-z-state-operations-manual-som>