Environmental Emergencies/Fire Safety

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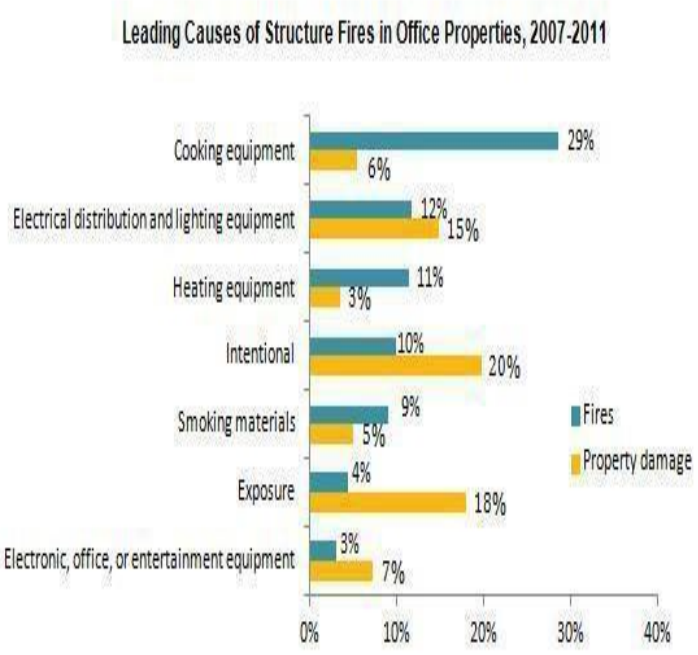
The potential for fire and environmental emergencies exists 24 hours a day and every situation is potentially life-threatening. Knowing what to do before, during and after can prevent injuries and even death.

Main Causes of Fire

From the National Fire Protection Association, the main causes of residential fire in 2015 were:

Appliances & equipment: Cooking; heating; washing machines & dryers; air conditioners and fans; and more
Arson and juvenile fire setting: Children playing with fire and intentional fires
Candles
Chemical and gases: Natural gas and LP-gas home and non-home fires; spontaneous combustion
Electrical and consumer electronics
Fireworks
Holiday: Christmas trees, holiday lights and decorations
Household products: Mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture
Lightning Fires and Lightning Strikes
Smoking materials

More than one in every four office property fires (29%) was caused by cooking equipment, but these fires accounted for just 6% of the direct property damage experienced by office properties. Fires that were intentionally set caused the largest share of direct property damage (20%), while causing 10% of office property fires. Electrical distribution and lighting equipment was the second leading cause of office property fires (12%) of fires, while causing 15% of direct property damage



Fire Protection and Preparation

Most people caught in a fire could escape without injury if they knew the facts about fire and knew what to do in case of a fire. Most fires can be avoided and injuries prevented by inspecting for and reporting unsafe conditions, maintaining a safe environment, and by regular practice of fire drills.

The best protection from fire is:

Having an escape plan and practicing fire drills

Training in use of fire extinguishers

Having a working fire/smoke detection system

Your absolute FIRST PRIORITY in a fire is to evacuate the premises. NO attempt should be made to fight a fire unless it is very small and contained. Use fire extinguishers only on small, contained fires, to fight your way out of a fire, or to rescue someone. If the fire covers a large area, is not contained, or has spread to the walls and ceiling do not try to fight the fire. Get out!

TIME is the most important factor. Any delay in evacuation increases the danger. Do not waste time by looking for the source of the fire or trying to fight the fire. At the sound of the alarm, immediately start evacuating.

Closing the doors helps contain smoke and fire. It gives people more time to evacuate. If you can, close the doors on your way out. Do not waste time going back to close doors.

Smoke inhalation is the most common cause of injury and death. Smoke rises to the ceiling. Cover mouth and nose with a wet cloth if possible and STAY LOW.

Get outside to a pre-planned location that will be out of the way of emergency vehicles.
Call the fire department from outside the building.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are good practice to remind everyone of the importance of immediate and safe fire evacuation. Fire drills should be held often enough that everyone is proficient in evacuating the premises. Practice to the point of three minutes or less for evacuation.

Fire Prevention Tips

1. Have a designated smoking area and strictly enforce the smoking policy. Use an outdoor smoking receptacle
   for cigarette butts instead of cans with sand or water. Empty the receptacle at least once a month.

2. Electrical wires overheat when outlets or extension cords are forced to carry too much electricity. Do not overload outlets and use outlet surge strips instead of extension cords.

3. Flammables such as gasoline, paints, paint thinners and many cleaning fluids are flammable and should be used and stored with extreme caution. Gasoline should never be stored in the house.

4. Papers, clothing, boxes, etc. should not be stored near the furnace or hot water heater.

5. Do not leave cooking food unattended. Stove tops and ovens should be cleaned after each use or as needed.
   If a stove fire occurs DO NOT put water on the fire. Cover the burning area with a pan lid and turn off the burner. Evacuate the building if the fire is not small and contained. Call the fire department from outside the building.
6. Make sure televisions, microwave and refrigerator are at least 3 inches away from the wall.
7. Have furnace checked annually before use.
8. Clean out areas of clutter.

Smoke Emergencies

Smoke, not flames is the real killer in a fire. Most fire victims are poisoned by toxic fumes. The most dangerous is carbon monoxide. As little as 1.26% in the air can knock a person unconscious after two or three breaths and can kill the person in two or three minutes. Other gases deaden the sense of smell so the person cannot even smell the smoke. Even if a person notices smoke, they may have breathed so much smoke that they may fall unconscious before escaping. Every building must have a working smoke detector to alert occupants to the first signs of smoke.

Where there is smoke, there is real danger. Stay close, within 1 to 2 feet to the floor. The safest way is to crawl. If there is a fire, do not stand if you are seated. Get to the floor and crawl to the nearest exit.

If you see or smell any hint of smoke or fire, evacuate the building immediately and call the fire department from outside.

Never open a door without first checking to see if it is warm. If the door is warm to the touch, try to escape through a window. If you cannot escape by window, stuff a rug, clothing, or other fabric around the cracks of the door.

Open the window at the top and bottom. Break the window out if necessary. The smoke will escape at the top of the window and allow you to breathe fresh air at the bottom of the window. Make noise, yell, and wave a cloth to attract attention. Wait to be rescued and do not jump unless there is no other choice.

No matter how insignificant a fire may seem, if it starts to spread, evacuate immediately. Call the fire department from outside the house. Everything in the building can be replaced. People cannot be replaced.

Smoke Detectors

Chances of surviving a fire are twice as good with a smoke detector. For the safety of everyone in the building, make sure alarms and smoke detectors are regularly checked and cleaned and batteries are replaced on a regular basis. Develop a schedule to check and clean alarms and smoke detectors and replace the batteries.

TEST all of the smoke detectors at least once a month CLEAN the smoke detectors at least once a year REPLACE batteries twice a year

Fire Extinguishers

Unless a fire is very small, use a fire extinguisher only to fight your way out of a fire or to rescue someone.

To use a fire extinguisher:

1. Hold the fire extinguisher firmly and pull the ring/pin at the handles
2. Stand no closer than 10 feet away from the fire and aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
3. Sweep back and forth at the base of the fire until it starts to go out
4. Move closer to the fire as it gets smaller

Fire extinguishers last only 8 to 10 seconds! If the fire cannot easily be contained, evacuate and call the fire department from outside.

Environmental Emergencies

Power Outage

Call the power company or if available, use the web browser on your phone to find out when the power will be restored.

Candles are not recommended due to risk of fire. Use flashlights or battery powered lanterns.

Read and follow the manufacturer's guidelines before operating a generator and never use it inside the building or other enclosed areas. Generators emit carbon monoxide which can be deadly in enclosed areas. Fatal fumes can build up, and fans, open doors or windows do not provide enough ventilation for fresh air. Even with using a generator outside, it is recommended to have a battery-powered carbon monoxide detector in the area as a precaution. When it is time to refuel the generator, let it cool for at least two minutes before refilling it. Gasoline and vapors are extremely flammable.

Turn off or disconnect appliances and electronics that were in use when the power went out. The power might return with momentary surges or spikes that can damage the equipment. Leave one light on so that you know when the power returns.

Use a hand-crank or battery-powered radio to listen to important announcements and take the advice of local experts. In severe cases, the authorities may be evacuating the area.

Extreme Heat

People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to properly cool themselves by sweating. Under some conditions, sweating alone isn't enough to cool the body. In these cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. A very high body temperature may damage the brain or other vital organs.

There are some factors can affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly and this prevents the body from releasing heat quickly. Other factors include older age, infants and very young children, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, some prescription drugs and alcohol use.

People with mental illnesses who use medication need to stay hydrated during periods of extreme heat since their medications make them susceptible to heat stroke, and they are more likely to develop certain types of medication toxicities. People with mental illnesses die from heat strokes every summer because they and/or their

caregivers may not be aware of the dangers. Additionally, people with mental illness may not have access to air conditioning and may be socially isolated.

Tips on Preventing and Managing Heat

Drink more nonalcoholic fluids regardless of activity level. If the doctor limits the amount of fluid a person can drink or if the person is on a diuretic, ask the doctor how much water the person can drink while the weather is hot.

Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar. These cause you to lose more body fluid. Be cautious with very cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps.

Stay indoors and if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. Even a few hours can help a person's body stay cooler when having to go back into the heat.

Electric fans will not prevent heat-related illness when the temperature is in the 90's. Move to an air- conditioned place.

If a person must be in the heat:

- Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours
- Talk to the doctor before drinking sports beverages if on a low-sodium diet
- Rest in shady areas
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and sunglasses ○ Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing ○ **NEVER** leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle

Any one at any time can suffer from a heat-related illness. Some people are at greater risk than others. Check frequently on:

- Infants and young children
- People aged 65 and older
- People who have a mental illness
- Those who are physically ill, especially people with heart disease or high blood pressure

Hot Weather Health Emergencies

Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the person's sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs of heat stroke include:

High body temperature – above 103° orally

Red, hot, dry skin

Rapid, strong pulse

Throbbing headache

Dizziness

Nausea

Confusion

Unconsciousness

If you see any of these signs, call 911 immediately while you quickly begin cooling the person. Every minute counts.

Put the person in cool water up to the neck or cool with a cool water spray.

Stop cooling the person once behavior is normal again. Continued cooling can lead to hypothermia.

If the person is fully conscious, give them small sips of water. If the person is unconscious, becoming unconscious or cannot drink, keep cooling the person and wait for advanced medical help to arrive. Stay on the line with 911 for instructions.

Heat Exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after prolonged exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. People most susceptible to heat exhaustion are the elderly, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Signs of heat exhaustion include: Heavy sweating

Paleness

Muscle cramps

Tiredness Weakness Dizziness

Headache

Nausea or vomiting

Fainting

The person's skin may be cool and moist; their pulse rapid and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is not treated right away, it may progress to heat stroke. Call 911 immediately if symptoms are severe or become worse, the person has heart problems or the person has high blood pressure.

Get the person to a cool environment. Give cool, nonalcoholic beverages, help the person rest in a comfortable position, and cool the person with cool, wet cloths, a cool shower or bath.

Some medications increase the risk of heat-related illnesses. Read the information that comes with the medication or talk with the pharmacist about the medication and increased risk of heat-related illnesses.

The following weather emergency Information is from Federal Emergency Management Agency. Go to www.fema.gov for more information.

Thunderstorms and Lightning

BEFORE A STORM

Have disaster supplies on hand:

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries and sign up for weather alerts to be sent to your cell phone
- First aid kit
- Essential medicines
- Sturdy shoes

Make sure that everyone knows how to respond after a storm is over:

- Everyone should learn how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water
- Everyone should understand when to call for an ambulance, police, and fire department, and where to go for public emergency information.

Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings

A *severe thunderstorm **watch*** is issued by the National Weather Service when the weather conditions are favorable for a severe thunderstorm to develop. This is the time to locate a safe place in the building and to watch the sky and listen to the radio or television for more information.

A *severe thunderstorm **warning*** is issued when a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. When a severe thunderstorm warning is issued everyone should go to a safe place, turn on a battery-operated radio and wait for the "all clear" by the authorities.

Develop an emergency communication plan.

Here are some tips from the Federal Communications Commission:

Limit non-emergency phone calls. This will minimize network congestion, free up "space" on the network for emergency communications and conserve battery power if you are using a wireless phone;

Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to use it only to convey vital information to emergency personnel and/or family;

For non-emergency calls, try text messaging. In many cases text messages will go through when your call may not. It will also help free up more "space" for emergency communications on the telephone network;

If possible try a variety of communications services if you are unsuccessful in getting through with one. For example, if you are unsuccessful in getting through on your wireless phone, try a messaging capability like text messaging or email. Alternatively, try a landline phone if one is available. This will help spread the communications demand over multiple networks and should reduce overall congestion;

Wait 10 seconds before redialing a call. On many wireless phones, to re-dial a number, you simply push "send" after you've ended a call to redial the previous number. If you do this too quickly, the data from the phone to the cell sites do not have enough time to clear before you've resent the same data. This contributes to a clogged network;

Have charged batteries, a power bank, and car-charger adapters available for backup power for your wireless phone;

Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers in your phone; If in a vehicle, place calls while the vehicle is stationary;

Have a family communications plan in place. Designate someone out of the area as a central contact, and make certain all family members know who to contact if they become separated;

If you have Call Forwarding on your home number, forward your home number to your wireless number in the event of an evacuation. That way you will get incoming calls from your landline phone;

After the storm has passed, if you lose power, try using your car to charge cell phones or listen to news alerts on the car radio. But be careful – don't try to reach your car if it is not safe to do so, and remain vigilant about carbon monoxide emissions from your car if it is a closed space, such as a garage;

Tune-in to broadcast and radio news for important news alerts.

DURING A STORM

If indoors:

Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage or injury. Take light objects inside.

Listen to a battery operated radio or television for the latest storm information.

Do not handle any electrical equipment or telephones because lightning could follow the wire. Televisions are particularly dangerous at this time.

Avoid bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity. Stay away from windows.

If outdoors:

Attempt to get into a building or car.

If no structure is available, get to an open space and squat low to the ground as quickly as possible. (If in the woods, find an area protected by low clump of trees--never stand underneath a single large tree in the open.) Be aware of the potential for flooding in low-lying areas.

Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees, fences, telephone lines, or power lines or any metal objects.

Stay away from rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water.

If you are isolated in a level field and you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike), bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. A position with feet together and crouching while removing all metal objects is recommended. Do not lie flat on the ground.

If in a car:

Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road away from any trees that could fall on the vehicle. Stay in the car and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rains subside.

Avoid flooded roadways.

AFTER A STORM

Check for injuries:

A person who has been struck by lightning needs medical help immediately. Call 911. If the victim is burned, provide first aid while waiting for advanced emergency help to arrive. Look for burns where lightning entered and exited the body. If the strike causes the victim's heart and breathing to stop, give cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until medical professionals arrive and take over.

Report downed utility wires. Drive only if necessary. Debris and washed-out roads may make driving dangerous.

Tornadoes

When a tornado is coming, you have no time to delay. Advance planning and quick response are the keys to surviving a tornado.

BEFORE A TORNADO

Designate an area in the building as a tornado shelter, and practice having everyone in the building go there in response to a tornado threat.

Know the difference between a "tornado watch" and a "tornado warning".

Tornado Watches and Warnings

A *tornado watch* is issued by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. This is time to remind everyone where the tornado shelters are located, and listen to the radio or television for updates.

A *tornado warning* is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. When a tornado warning is issued, you have no time to wait. Take shelter immediately.

DURING A TORNADO

If indoors:

Go at once to a windowless, interior room, storm cellar, basement, or lowest level of the building.

If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or a smaller inner room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet.

Get away from the windows.

Stay away from corners because they tend to attract debris.

Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on to it.

Use arms to protect head and neck.

If in a mobile home, get out and find shelter elsewhere.

Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways, or shopping malls.

If outdoors:

If possible, get inside a building.

If shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building and be aware of the potential for flooding.

Use arms to protect head and neck.

If in a car:

Never try to out drive a tornado. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift up a vehicle and toss it through the air.

Get out of the vehicle immediately and take shelter in a nearby building.

If there is no time to get indoors, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle. Use arms to protect head and neck. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

AFTER A TORNADO

Help injured or trapped persons. Give first aid when appropriate.

Don't try to move the seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.

Turn on radio or television to get the latest emergency information.

Stay out of damaged buildings.

Use the telephone only for emergency calls.

Leave the buildings if you smell gas or chemical fumes.

Take pictures of the damage--both to the building and to its contents--for insurance purposes.

INSPECTING UTILITIES IN A DAMAGED BUILDING

Check for gas leaks--If you smell gas, hear a blowing, or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from outside. If you turn off the gas for any reason, a professional must turn it back on.

Look for electrical system damage--If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.

Check for sewage and water lines damage--If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap.

FLOODS AND FLASH FLOODS

BEFORE FLOODS

Self Determination in Compliance with SCCMHA Effective 2022

Find out if you are in a flood prone area from your local emergency management office or Red Cross chapter. Ask whether the property is above or below the flood stage water level and learn about the history of flooding for your region.

If you live or work in a frequently flooded area, stockpile emergency building materials. These include plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber nails, hammer and saw, pry bar, shovels, and sandbags.

Have check valves installed in building sewer traps to prevent floodwaters from backing up in sewer drains.

As a last resort, use large corks or stoppers to plug showers, tubs, or basins.

Plan an evacuation route

Contact the local emergency management office or local American Red Cross chapter for a copy of the Community Flood Evacuation plan. This plan should include information on the safest routes to shelters.

Individuals living in flash flood areas should have several alternate routes.

DURING FLOODS

During a flood watch

Listen to a battery-operated radio for the latest storm information.

Have a supply of bottled water on hand in case the drinking water becomes contaminated.

Bring outdoor belongings, such as patio furniture, indoors.

Move valuable household possessions to the upper floors or to safe ground if time permits.

If you are instructed to do so by local authorities, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.

Be prepared to evacuate.

If Indoors:

Turn on battery-operated radio or television to get the latest emergency information.

Get your preassembled emergency supplies. If told to leave, do so immediately.

If Outdoors:

Climb to high ground and stay there.

Avoid walking through any floodwaters. If it is moving swiftly, even water 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet.

If in a Car:

If you come to a flooded area, turn around and go another way.

If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

DURING AN EVACUATION

If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Evacuation is much simpler and safer *before* flood waters become too deep for ordinary vehicles to drive through.

Listen to a battery-operated radio for evacuation instructions.

Follow recommended evacuation routes — shortcuts may be blocked. Leave early enough to avoid being marooned by flooded roads.

AFTER FLOODS

Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede. Listen to a radio or television and don't return to the building until authorities indicate it is safe to do so. Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage. Stay out of buildings if floodwaters remain around the building.

When entering buildings, use extreme caution

Wear sturdy shoes and use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.

Examine walls, floors, doors, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.

Watch for loose plaster and ceilings that could fall.

Take pictures of the damage— to both the house and its contents for insurance claims.

Look for fire hazards

- Broken or leaking gas lines.
- Flooded electrical circuits.
- Submerged furnaces or electrical appliances.
- Flammable or explosive materials coming from upstream.

Throw away food, including canned goods that have come in contact with floodwaters.

WINTER STORMS

A major winter storm can be lethal. Preparing for cold weather conditions and responding to them effectively can reduce the dangers caused by winter storms.

BEFORE A WINTER STORM

Self Determination in Compliance with SCCMHA Effective 2022

The primary concerns at home or work during a winter storm are loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day. In either place, you should have available:

Flashlight and extra batteries
Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
Water and extra food that require no cooking or refrigeration
Extra prescription medicine
Baby items such as diapers and formula
First-aid supplies
Fire extinguisher, smoke alarm; test smoke alarms once a month to ensure they work properly
Extra pet food and warm shelter for pets
Review generator safety. You should never run a generator in an enclosed space

Be familiar with winter storm warning messages.

Make sure there is a usable snow shovel available and have rock salt on hand to melt ice on walkways and kitty litter to generate temporary traction.

DURING A WINTER STORM

If indoors

Stay indoors and dress warmly.
Conserve fuel by lowering the thermostat to 65 degrees during the day and 55 degrees at night. Close off unused rooms.

Listen to the radio or television to get the latest information.

If Your Heat Goes Out

Close off unneeded rooms to avoid wasting heat. Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
Close blinds or curtains to keep in some heat.
Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Drink lots of water and other non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks to prevent dehydration.
Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and subsequent chill.

If outdoors

Dress warmly.

Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Layers can be removed to prevent perspiration and chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellant. Mittens are warmer than gloves because fingers generate warmth when they touch each other.

Stretch before you go out. If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. Also take frequent breaks.

Cover your mouth. Protect your lungs from extremely cold air by covering your mouth when outdoors. Try not to speak unless absolutely necessary.

Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse. Be aware of symptoms of dehydration.

Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.

Wind Chill

"Wind chill" is a calculation of how cold it feels outside when the effects of temperature and wind speed are combined. Go to www.weather.gov to use the wind chill calculator, see current watches and warnings for anywhere in the U.S. and to learn more about weather and weather safety.

Winter Storm Watches and Warnings

A *winter storm watch* indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area. A *winter storm warning* indicates that severe winter weather conditions are definitely on the way.

A *blizzard warning* means that large amounts of falling or blowing snow and sustained winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours.

Frostbite and Hypothermia

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure that can permanently damage its victims. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, or nose and ear lobes are symptoms of frostbite.

Hypothermia is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness, and exhaustion.

If frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, call 911 then begin warming the person slowly until medical help arrives or you are given instructions by medical personnel. Warm the person's trunk first. Use your own body heat to help. Arms and legs should be warmed last because stimulation of the limbs can drive cold blood toward the heart and lead to heart failure. Put person in dry clothing and wrap their entire body in a blanket.

Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim something with caffeine in it (like coffee or tea) or alcohol. Caffeine, a stimulant, can cause the heart to beat faster and hasten the effects the cold has on the body. Alcohol, a depressant, can slow the heart and hasten the ill effects of cold body temperatures.

Resources and References:

www.fema.gov www.weather.gov http://www.nfpa.org/public-education www.redcross.org

Security Management QuickFacts

The Security Management Plan is an interdisciplinary plan primarily involving the Customer Service /Office of Recipient Rights and the Environment of Care Committee, and necessitates involvement of Directors, Supervisors, and staff in creating a secure work environment. The Security Management Plan addresses the safety of consumers, visitors, staff and property, as well as complies with state, federal and local codes/laws and the requirements of accrediting agencies.

Orientation and Training

It is the policy to train all employees in the Security Management Plan annually. Employees learn how to avoid conflict with volatile people, react to physical threats and maintain a secure working environment.

Workplace Security

If you need emergency assistance call 911. Alert the Fiscal Intermediary police have been called.

Workplace violence

Workplace violence is not tolerated. The General Standards of Conduct describes the zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. Employees who exhibit any type of violent behavior will be subject to corrective action up to and including discharge. Violent behavior includes, but is not limited to:

Bringing firearms, knives, explosives, or any other weapon onto consumer property with the one exception being sporting firearms kept locked in an employee vehicle.
Fighting, assaultive behavior, or any other related actions.
Threats of violence, whether verbal or non-verbal, or menacing or intimidating gestures. Threats of actual violent actions performed as a "joke".

It is the obligation of every employee to immediately report any threat of violence against any co-worker, supervisor, director, consumer, or any other individual by a fellow worker to the Fiscal Intermediary. Failure to report another's threat of violence will be subject to corrective action up to and including discharge.

QuickFacts Takeaway: There is a zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. Threats of violence, even those that are considered a "joke" will be taken seriously.

Assaultive behavior

When confronted by an angry person:

Use a calm voice, talk slowly and softly.
Use empathy and express your understanding of how they feel.
Be aware of your surroundings and plan your method of escape if the situation escalates. Keep your body angled away from the angry person and angle your body toward the door.
If you are attacked—fight back by releasing all of your energy to push by the attacker and out of the door.
Scream for help as you are fighting your way to the door.

QuickFacts Takeaway: Try to keep the person talking. Use empathy and talk in a calm soft voice. Do not challenge the person or argue. If you think the person is about to physically attack, running away is your best course of action. Scream for help as you use all of your energy to push your way out of the door.

Weapons

Use or possession of guns, knives, or other potentially dangerous instruments is prohibited on premises by an employee or staff.