



# Emergency Preparedness for Self Determination Staff

*Macomb County Community Mental Health*

# Fire Safety: Top 10 causes of household fires

## 1. Cooking Equipment

- Pots and pans can overheat and cause a fire very easily if the person cooking gets distracted and leaves cooking unattended. Always stay in the room, or ask someone to watch your food, when cooking on hotplates.

## 2. Heating

- Keep portable heaters at least one metre away from anything that could easily catch fire such as furniture, curtains, laundry, clothes and even yourself. If you have a furnace, get it inspected once a year to make sure it is working to safety standards.

## 3. Smoking in bedrooms

- Bedrooms are best to be kept off limits for smoking. A cigarette that is not put out properly can cause a flame, as the butt may stay alit for a few hours. It could burst into flames if it came into contact with flammable materials, such as furniture. Did you know that fires started in the bedroom or lounge make up 73% of all house fire fatalities?'

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## 4. Electrical Equipment

- An electrical appliance, such as a toaster can start a fire if it is faulty or has a frayed cord. A power point that is overloaded with double adapter plugs can cause a fire from an overuse of electricity. A power point extension cord can also be a fire hazard if not used appropriately. Double check the appliances and power points in your home.

## 5. Candles

- Candles look and smell pretty, but if left unattended they can cause a room to easily burst into flames. Keep candles away from any obviously flammable items such as books and tissue boxes. Always blow a candle out before leaving a room. Did you know that in Perth last year 34 house fires started as a result of candles?<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Flammable Liquids

- If you have any flammable liquids in the home or garage such as petrol, kerosene or methylated spirits, keep them away from heat sources and check the label before storing. Be careful when pouring these liquids.

# Fire Safety: Top 10 causes of household fires

## 7. Faulty Wiring

- Homes with inadequate wiring can cause fires from electrical hazards. Some signs to see if you've bad wiring are: 1) Lights dim if you use another appliance; 2) For an appliance to work, you have to disconnect another; 3) Fuses blow or trip the circuit frequently. Have a licensed electrician come and inspect your house, or contact your landlord if you have any of the above occurrences.

## 8. Barbeques

- Barbeques are great for an outdoor meal, but should always be used away from the home, tablecloths or any plants and tree branches. Keep BBQs regularly maintained and cleaned with soapy water and clean any removable parts. Check the gas bottle for any leaks before you use it each time.

## 9. Lighting

- Lamp shades and light fittings can build up heat if they are very close to light globes. Check around the house to make sure. Lamp bases can become a hazard if they are able to be knocked over easily, and so should be removed if they are. Check that down lights are insulated from wood paneling or ceiling timbers.

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## 10. Curious Children

- Kids can cause a fire out of curiosity, to see what would happen if they set fire to an object. Keep any matches or lighters out of reach of children, to avoid any curiosity turned disaster. Install a smoke alarm in your child's room and practice a home escape plan with your children and family in case there was a fire. Teach kids understand the “stop, drop, cover and roll” drill as well as knowing their address if they needed to call 911.
- In the event of a grease fire, a person could extinguish it by putting baking soda in the pan (may have a brief flare up at the start, putting a lid on the cooking pan with the grease fire, or a fire extinguisher.
- NEVER USE WATER TO EXTINGUISH A GREASE FIRE

# Fire Safety: Necessary Elements for Fires

- The fire triangle identifies that three components must be present for a fire to take place: Heat, Fuel, and Oxygen.



- A fire can be extinguished by removing one of these elements: shutting of the gas to a fire removes the fuel, or putting a lid on a the pan that has a grease fire removes the oxygen.

# Fire Safety: Use of Fire Extinguisher

- When using a Fire Extinguisher, you want to think of the **PASS** acronym.

**P**ull the safety pin

**A**im at the base of the fire and not the top of the flames

**S**queeze the handle to spray the solution

**S**weeping motions across the base of the fire

There are different types of fire extinguishers and it is suggested that you have one that is for criteria A,B,C (this should be identified on the label)

# Fire Safety: Protection Plans

- Whether you provide services within a licensed setting or someone's private residence, it's important to have and know the evacuation plan in the event of a fire. You should also account for any unique circumstances (mobility, anxiety, restlessness) when creating/designating a shelter area.
- As a service provider, you should help the individual you are working with to understand how to safely get out of the building and where everyone is to meet (designated meeting spot).
- In environments where multiple people may be living or gathering, it is important to know how to set off a fire alarm in order to alert others to evacuate the building.



# Fire Safety: Fire Drills and Safety Enhancements

- If you are in a licensed facility, then you are required to execute fire drills at a frequency outlined by licensing requirements.
- If you are in a person's private residence, then it is advisable that you execute a fire evacuation drill every season.
- It is highly recommended that you consider two evacuation routes for every room in a building. This is a proactive strategy to allow people to understand how to safely evacuate the building when the primary evacuation route is not safe to pass.
- Getting as low to the ground as possible helps by:
  - Increasing visibility
  - Avoiding smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide that is produced by the fire
  - Avoid hot air that can be deadly at standing height

# Additional Fire Safety Information

- It is recommended that smoke detectors be tested at minimal on an annual basis and educate individuals to not remove the batteries from a smoke detector.
- Another overlooked, but heavily advisable action a person can take in the event of a fire is closing the door to an area you are trapped in (because the exit path is too dangerous) or the room the fire is in.
- By closing the door, you create a temporary barrier between the area with fire/smoke and where people are. This can help increase safety when evacuating a building as well as chance of survival.

# Additional Fire Safety Information

- You should know that fire spreads much faster than you think and safely evacuating everyone should be the priority and not fighting a fire.
- Routinely monitor and assess the 10 common areas for Household fires to make sure safety can be optimized.
- It is recommended that battery operated smoke detectors have their batteries changed 1-2 per year and be tested at minimum on an annual basis.
- There are also smoke detectors that also detect carbon monoxide leaks.
- The National Fire Protection Association recommends that a smoke detector should be on each floor of a residence, inside each bedroom. An example a home with two levels and 3 bedrooms would have 5 total smoke detectors.

# Knowledge Check

The following are appropriate steps for putting out a grease fire in a pan

- A) Pour water into the pan
- B) Pour baking soda into the pan
- C) Use a fire extinguisher
- D) Put a lid on top of the pan
- E) Answers B, C, and D are appropriate

# Knowledge Check Answer

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# Knowledge Check

The acronym you should think of when utilizing a fire extinguisher is PASS, which stands for

- A) Point, Angle, Squeeze, Sweep
- B) Pull, Angle, Squeeze, Sweep
- C) Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Spray
- D) Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep
- E) None of the above

# Knowledge Check Answer

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# Weather Emergencies: Tornado Safety

- Tornadoes can strike anywhere, at any time, but most occur in the late spring and summer months, in the late afternoon or early evening hours.
- When a **Tornado Watch** is issued, it means that conditions are present where a tornado could result in a geographic area. Time to get prepared and gather your emergency kit.
- When a **Tornado Warning** is issued, it means that a tornado has been sighted or detected on radar. **TAKE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!**



# Weather Emergencies: Tornado Safety

- Whether you are in a licensed facility or a personal residence, there should be an identified shelter area that staff and consumers should move gather.
- When selecting a shelter area, you should consider a room that is absent from windows and towards the middle of the building structure. When possible, take shelter in the basement instead of a room on the ground floor. You should also account for any unique circumstances (mobility, anxiety, restlessness) when creating/designating a shelter area.
- All individuals should protect/cover their head when taking shelter.

# Weather Emergencies: Tornado Safety

- When out in the community, you will want to take note of where the designated shelter areas are in stores or restaurants.
- When driving, you want to get to a building as soon as possible and get to the designated shelter area.
- If you are on the road and do not have access to a building for shelter, you should pull off to the side of the road and climb into a ravine area.
- Do not stop on the road at an overpass. You will create additional safety risk and the overpass will act as a wind tunnel.

# Knowledge Check

A tornado warning for your area means that a tornado has been sighted or detected on radar, but does not require you to take shelter immediately.

- True
- False

# Knowledge Check Answer

A tornado warning for your area means that a tornado has been sighted or detected on radar, but does not require you to take shelter immediately.

- True
- False

# Knowledge Check

In the event of a tornado, an appropriate shelter area for everyone to go is:

- A) The basement of a private residence
- B) An area with a lot of windows so you can see when the storm is over
- C) The most centered area of the building when a basement is not available
- D) Both A and B

# Knowledge Check

In the event of a tornado, an appropriate shelter area for everyone to go is:

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- B) An area with a lot of windows so you can see when the storm is over
- C) The most centered area of the building when a basement is not available
- D) Both A and C

# Weather Emergencies: Floods

- Floods can occur for a variety of reasons: overflow from waterways, rain, snow, breach of man made or natural barriers.
- Floods can occur slowly or extremely fast (flash flood).
- It can cause damage to buildings, power outages, transpiration problems, or even land slides.
- Be aware if you or the place you work at are located within a known flood zone.

# Weather Emergencies: Floods

- If the local government or law enforcement order an evacuation of an area, you should follow their directions and vacate the area until they announce it is safe to return.
- In the event of a flash flood, you should immediately seek shelter in a high area.
- If you come across a flooded area, you should avoid it at all cost. Do not try to cross it in any manner (driving, swimming, walking) as the current and other material (raw sewage, chemicals, electricity, etc.) in water make it unsafe.
- 6 inches of fast moving water can knock you off your feet and one foot of moving water can sweep away cars.



# Weather Emergencies: Floods

- Avoid playing, showering or utilizing the water (cooking or drinking purposes) until it has been announced that it is safe to do so. The water may be contaminated and result in illness or death.
- When cleaning up the home after a flood it is advised that you wear rubber gloves and boots to protect yourself.
- If possible, safely turn off the power as well as be aware that animals may have entered your home during a flood.

# Weather Emergencies:

## Thunderstorms

- Thunderstorms are very common weather condition that you will encounter and creates a number of safety concerns ranging from building damage, electrocution, power outages, fires, and even flooding.
- It is advised that any outdoor activities be stopped and shelter be taken in a sturdy building or automobile during any thunderstorm.
- It is advised that the utilization of water for hygiene purposes be limited during thunderstorms as a result of electrical shock possibly being experienced.



# Weather Emergencies: Thunderstorms

- You should unplug all electrical devices that are plugged into an electrical outlet. An electrical surge could occur and at minimum damage devices if not cause injuries to individuals.
- You should also **NOT** utilize any landline phones for a similar reasons.
- Avoid seeking shelter under trees or having contact with metal objects during thunderstorms as well because of lightning strikes.
- Always avoid down power lines (stay at minimum 35 feet away) and report it to the appropriate entity if known, if unknown contact 911.

# Knowledge Check

During a thunderstorm, it is recommended that you take the following actions

- A) If engaging in outdoor activities, immediately go inside a building or car
- B) Unplug all electrical devices
- C) Avoid seeking shelter under a tall tree
- D) All of the above

# Knowledge Check Answer

During a thunderstorm, it is recommended that you take the following actions

- A) If engaging in outdoor activities, immediately go inside a building or car
- B) Unplug all electrical devices
- C) Avoid seeking shelter under a tall tree
- D) All of the above

# Weather Emergencies: Winter Storms

- Winter storms present a number of potential emergencies which include utility problems, safe driving, and even medical emergencies.
- Be prepared for utility failure by:
  - Heating failure can happen and you should ensure that you can stay warm by layering clothing, wrapping up with blankets, having alternative options for light, and keep the blinds/shades closed to keep cold area from freely entering.
  - Also be aware of how your employer wants you to respond if your facility/residence loses power. It's not advisable that you stay in an environment that does not heat. You may need to access warming centers or hotels in order to keep everyone safe and warm.

# Weather Emergencies: Winter Storms

- Be prepared continued:
  - Avoid driving and being outside unless absolutely necessary as it increases the chances of accidents, car trouble, slip and fall injuries and other dangerous and unnecessary situations.
  - Pay extra attention to individuals that have circulatory issues as well and encourage individuals to not over-exert themselves with physical activities.
  - Be aware that frost bite and hypothermia can occur very quickly with extreme cold temperatures or more mild temperatures for winter.
  - Be ready to provide First Aid and seek emergency medical attention when needed.

# Utility Failure: Gas Leaks

- There are 3 recommended ways that you could become aware of a gas leak:
  - **Look** for discolored vegetation, blowing dirt, or continuously bubbling water in areas of buried gas lines.
  - **Listen** for a hissing sound
  - **Smell** for the distinct rotten egg odor.
- Gas companies add a chemical called mercaptan to the gas as a safety measure, which resembles a rotten egg odor.



# Utility Failure: Gas Leaks

- If you smell gas, you and the individual should immediately vacate the building.
- You should never try to locate source of a gas leak.
- Also avoid using or having any contact with items that can result in a spark. This includes lighters, matches, cigarettes, flashlights, light switches, and phones.
- Do not call the gas company or 911 until you are a safe distance away (at minimum across the street).
- Do not reenter the home for any reason once everyone is out safely. Only reenter the building once authorities have instructed that it is safe to do so.

# Knowledge Check

You should take the following action(s) in the event of a possible gas leak

- A) Look for the possible source of the gas leak
- B) Immediately have everyone leave the area
- C) Call the gas company and 911 from inside the building with a suspected gas leak so they can tell you how to look for the source of the leak.
- D) None of the above

# Knowledge Check Answer

You should take the following action(s) in the event of a possible gas leak

- A) Look for the possible source of the gas leak
- B) Immediately have everyone leave the area**
- C) Call the gas company and 911 from inside the building with a suspected gas leak so they can tell you how to look for the source of the leak.
- D) None of the above

# Utility Failure: Heating and Air Conditioning Failure

- Routine maintenance and servicing of your furnaces and air conditioning units can help ensure both machines work appropriately and possibly reduce costly repairs that aren't caught early.
- If you are aware that temperatures are going to be at dangerous levels and the person does not have a working furnace or AC unit, then staff should support them in identifying possible alternative living situations that can be utilized for the time being (natural supports).

# Utility Failure: Heating

- See if the person would prefer to go to an alternative warm environment.
- **Do not utilize the stove or oven to generate heat! Space heaters may be appropriate in personal residence, but not in licensed settings.**
- If a person will be without heat for a short period of time and they prefer to stay at home, they can combat the cold by doing some of these techniques:
  - Stay in the center of the building and avoid exterior walls and windows.
  - Close the blinds to have a barrier
  - Wear warm clothing and possibly layers as appropriate and safe.
  - Have extra comforters/blankets available
  - Minimize the opening of doors leading to the outside or garage.

# Utility Failure: Air Conditioning

- Explore if the individual would like to go somewhere in the community with Air Conditioning or designated cooling centers.
- If a person will be without air conditioning for a short period of time and they prefer to stay at home, they can combat the heat by doing some of these techniques:
  - Stay in the center of the building and avoid exterior walls and windows.
  - Close the blinds to have a barrier
  - Minimize the opening of doors leading to the outside or garage.
  - Wear appropriate clothing
  - Stay hydrated and consume plenty of water
  - Utilize damp wash clothes or facial towels to cool the head and neck areas. Misting bottles could also be used.

# Utility Failure: Power Outages

- Never approach or attempt to drive over a down power line. The line may still be live and result in severe injury or possible death.
- Down power lines that are live do not always produce a visible (sparks or movement) signs that they are live.
- If you see a down power line, contact the appropriate utility company and call 911. If possible make sure animals and any other individuals do not approach it (especially children).

# Utility Failure: Power Outages

- Unplug all electrical devices in the event of a power surge arises when power is restored.
- Minimize the opening and closing of freezers and refrigerator units.
- Move refrigerated and frozen items that are likely to be desired from the appliance(s) and store them in a cooler with ice.
- Utilized battery operated lighting devices (flashlights, lanterns, etc.) for light. Do not use candles or other fire based sources for lighting purposes.





# Utility Failure: Power Outages

- Heating and cooling units may not work without power.
- If it is known that power will not be restored for a significant amount of time (day or more) then the person should explore other temporary living options until power is restored, especially in extreme temperatures.
- Check all refrigerated or frozen foods for being spoiled before consumption.



# Utility Failure: Water Shortage

- Be aware of boil water advisories that could be issued for your area.
- Have a 3 day supply of water on hand for each person. One gallon per person each day at minimum.
- Be certain to utilize approved filtration devices when directed/recommended (Flint Residents)

# Utility Failure: Phone Outages

- If a landline is not working appropriately, then utilize a cell phone to contact the phone system provider.
- If a cell phone is not responding or allowing you to make calls, attempt the following strategies:
  - Turn the phone off and then back on
  - Try a hard restart (follow manufacturers directions)
  - Make sure you have update software
  - Contact the cell phone company
- In situations where there are a lot of people gathered in one area (sporting events, concerts, etc) you may find that your phone does not work.

# Safe Driving

- It is important that any vehicle is safe for transporting individuals that you provide services to. Take the following steps before driving:
  - Get routine oil changes
  - Have tires rotated as needed and ensure tread depth does not go below 4/32nds measurement.
  - Ensure tires are inflated to the identified pressure based on plaque on the door.
  - Ensure all lights and turn signals work
  - Ensure the heat and cooling components are working.
  - Have a window scraper, jumper cables, and emergency kit (blankets, hats, gloves, etc.)
  - Make sure there is full tank of gas
  - Adjust mirrors
  - Have everyone buckle up

# Safe Driving

- When Driving be sure to:
  - Not use your cell phone
  - Utilize turn signals and hazard lights
  - Drive according to road conditions and speed limits
  - Do not engage in tail gating or incidents of road rage
  - Try to stay in the right lane so you are able to get off the road quickly in the event of an emergency.
  - Avoid driving in dangerous weather conditions.
  - Make note of any mechanical issues that you observe while driving (grinding brakes, vibrating steering wheel, noises when turning, issues starting the car, or hard shifting).

# Poisoning

- Poisoning is the ingestion of a toxic substance.
- Poisons can be swallowed, breathed in, or can enter the body through the surface of the skin.
- The average home is loaded with potentially hazardous substances like:
  - Medications
  - Cleaning products and room deodorizers
  - Rubbing alcohol
  - Toiletry products
  - Plants

# Poisoning

- Licensing regulations require that “Poisons, caustics, and other dangerous materials shall be stored and safeguarded in nonresident areas an in non-food preparation storage areas.
- Accidental poisonings can be prevented by labeling containers accordingly and educating consumers about which products are dangerous.
- All chemicals should be stored in their original container.
- Know your worksites protocol for poisonous materials and educate consumer’s on it too.

# Poisoning

- Lock up all medications
- Clean out old medicines regularly. Dispose of them according to your worksite protocol.
- Read and heed directions and caution labels.
- Avoid bringing any outside substances into the program (including essential oils)
- Don't store medicines, cleaning agents or pesticides near food.
- Have the number for poison control posted throughout the home and by phones. (1-800-222-1222)
- Obtain first action step from Poison Control and **DO NOT** just induce vomiting as it could cause more harm than good.
- Utilize personal protective equipment (gloves, goggles, CPR masks) when providing first aid or CPR.
- If someone has poison in their eye or on their skin, **flush with water** until help arrives. If the substance is in the eye, you may have to hold the eye open to flush it.



# Bomb Threats

- Bomb threats can be presented by disgruntled employees (past or present), former recipients of services, or anyone in the community.
- Since the source of the threat can vary, it's essential that the individual that receives a phone call or in person bomb threat obtain as much information as possible.
- Do not touch any notes or documents that present a potential threat as it may have to be investigated by authorities.

# Bomb Threats and Information to Gather

- It's essential that you remain calm and obtain as much information as possible like:
  - Gender
  - Possible suspected age (based on phrases)
  - Accents
  - Background noises
  - Possible reason for the threat
  - Phone numbers
  - All information is important information.

# National and State of Emergencies

- If the governor or mayor issue a State of Emergency for your area, then you should adhere to directions that are provided.
- You will receive a text alert in the event that the President of the United States issues a National State of Emergency for your area. This alert system was tested in 2018.



# Emergency Preparedness and Documentation

- It is important that any service program or staff member be sure to execute emergency preparedness drills at the frequency outlined by licensing, accreditation body, or contract stipulation.
- Documenting that drills were executed in accordance with the requiring body and the results of the drill are a way to support that they are being done.
- Documentation can also guide staff members in determining and considering modifications that can improve the results or address possible barriers that arose when the drill was ran.



# Emergency Preparedness and Documentation

- In the event that one of the outlined types of emergencies does arise, you should always be sure to keep the individuals you provide services to remain safe.
- Staff should be sure address any physical injuries that a person experiences with skills covered in First Aid or CPR, as well as psychological and emotional care.
- Any actions taken by staff should be clearly documented in the service notes, which may include making the environment safe by cleaning up debris and making the environment safe for individuals to return.

# Knowledge Check

In the event of one of the identified emergencies taking place, staff should

- A) Document all the actions taken to ensure the safety and well being of the individuals they provide services to.
- B) Execute the emergency action plans that have been put in place by their employer
- C) Not worry about documenting the actions taken because everyone knows how to respond to these emergencies.
- D) Both a and b

# Knowledge Check Answer

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# How can you be prepared???

- It is extremely beneficial to be prepared for a variety of environmental emergencies that you may encounter living in your community. Below is a link to ready.gov that has a number of resources that can assist you and your loved ones in being prepared when an emergency arises.
- <https://www.ready.gov/plan>