



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

June 14, 2024

AL TSA: AFH #2024-024
AL TSA: ALF #2024-018
AL TSA: CCRSS #2024-019
AL TSA: ESF #2024-019
AL TSA: ICF/IID #2024-013
AL TSA: NH #2024-028

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILDFIRE

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

As we enter the wildfire season, it is critical that you take steps to safeguard your facilities and residents now. With warmer spring temperatures, drought, and a lowered snowpack, there are predictions that the northwest expects worse-than-average for wildfires.

Wildfires can be unpredictable and devastating. The purpose of this letter is to offer guidance on actionable steps you can take and important considerations to include in your planning for protecting vulnerable populations.

Defend Your Facility from Wildfire:

- Keep trees limbed up at least 10 feet, with a minimum of 5 feet between branches.
- Trim vegetation so the fire department can have access to your facility.
- Keep vegetation "low and green."
- Remove flammable materials within 30 feet of your facilities foundation and outbuildings. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your building, deck, or porch.
- Regional Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may be able to assess your facility at no cost: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/WildfirePrevention>.

Staying Alert on Conditions

- Sign up with local Emergency Management office notifications.
- Download the FEMA App.
- Sign up for National Weather Service briefings.
- Follow local Emergency Management, Healthcare Coalition, Fire Department, and Law Enforcement on Social Media.
- Follow local news through TV, radio, and internet.
- Make sure DSHS has your information up to date.
- Interagency Coordination Center and the WatchDuty app may have local fire conditions.

Communications Plan

- Test your communication plan leading into the summer months.
- Make sure that staff, volunteers, family members of residents, service providers, and physicians are included in the plan.
- Maintain contact with local & state emergency services, regulators, ombuds, and the healthcare coalition.
- Test primary and secondary means of communication.

- Maintain method for sharing information and medical documentation in the event of an evacuation.

Evacuation Planning:

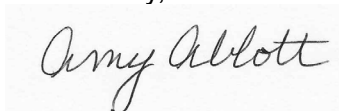
- Keep track of the weather and fires near you and listen to instructions from local authorities.
- You may not get an official notice to evacuate.
- Be ready to leave if local authorities advise or if you feel that you are in danger.
- Familiarize yourself with local evacuation levels (1-2-3 or Ready-Set-Go).
- Maintain evacuation go-bags for residents including, but not limited to:
 - Face sheet with information.
 - Essential medical supplies.
 - Change of clothing.
 - Activity supplies.
 - Incontinence supplies.
 - Laundry bag with resident name.
- Have a go-bag for the administrator:
 - Laptop.
 - Printer.
 - Patient tracking information.
 - Medications.
- Engage with your local Emergency Management (EM) for mass sheltering locations.
- Have Memorandum-of-Understanding (MOU) in place with other facilities for transfers.
- Engage with healthcare coalitions for resident placement.
- Have plans in place for Infection Prevention and Control measures.
 - Maintain lists for residents requiring IVs and antibiotic therapies.
 - Consider locations, such as hospitals, for specialty cases.
 - Have plan in place for biohazard waste.
 - Maintain Infection Prevention supplies.
- Develop strategies for non-compliant residents.
- Have transportation plans in place:
 - Make sure vehicles are always adequately fueled.
 - Consider all needs, such as oxygen, wheelchair access, etc. Complete assessment to determine numbers of wheelchair accessible vehicles.
 - Have MOUs in place with EMS agencies for BLS, ALS, and Cabulance capabilities.
 - Consider utilizing other long-term care facilities, public transit, and school districts.

Now is the time to test and refine your plans. Conduct an exercise focused on evacuation and wildfires. Validate plans and MOU's. Physically assess potential evacuation sites to ensure they will accommodate your residents. Inventory and purchase supplies.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. Please see the documents on the [Residential Care Services Internet page](#) for specific strategies that you may implement into your emergency plans. If you have any questions, please contact your local RCS Field Manager.

If you have any questions, please contact Richard Freed, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Richard.Freed@dshs.wa.gov, 360-819-7001.

Sincerely,



Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: “Transforming Lives”

References and Further Resources:

Washington State DNR: Defend Your Home from Wildfire

https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_fireprev_home.pdf

California: Wildfire and Evacuation for LTC Settings Resources

<https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/wildfire>

<https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/evacuation>

<https://www.cahf.org/Portals/29/DisasterPreparedness/Evac/EvacuationClientGoKit.pdf>

https://www.cahf.org/Portals/29/DisasterPreparedness/NHICS/FireIRG_2017.pdf

Colorado: Evacuation Functional Annex for Long-Term Care Facilities

https://cdphe.colorado.gov/sites/cdphe/files/HF_Evacuation-Plan-Development-Toolkit.pdf

APIC Infection Prevention for Shelters During Disasters

https://apic.org/Resource/TinyMceFileManager/Practice_Guidance/Emergency_Preparedness/Shelters_Disasters.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/commshelters.html>

CDC Infection Control Guidance for Community Evacuation Shelters

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/commshelters.html>

National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

https://www.nifc.gov/nicc-files/predictive/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf

Emergency Plan Regulatory Requirements:

Adult Family Homes [WAC 388-76-10830](#) Emergency and disaster plan—Required. [WAC 388-76-10225](#) Reporting requirement.

Assisted Living Facilities [WAC 388-78A-2700](#) Emergency and disaster preparedness (g). [WAC 388-78A-2650](#) Reporting fires and incidents.

Nursing Homes WAC [388-97-1740](#) Disaster and emergency preparedness. WAC [388-97-1640](#) Required notification and reporting.

Enhanced Services Facilities WAC [388-107-1600](#) Emergency disaster plan. WAC [388-107-0610](#) Reporting fires and incidents.

Certified Community Residential Supports & Services [WAC 388-101D-0060](#) Policies and procedures.

Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities [42 CFR § 483.475](#) - Condition of participation: Emergency preparedness.