

Emergency Operations Plan

ASHFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Approved 12/13/2018

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1. Statement of Purpose and Executive Summary

The purpose of the Plan is to enhance the Ashford Housing Authority's ability to effectively prepare

For and respond to emergencies and disasters by establishing policies and procedures that facilitate the:

- Protection of life and property
- Effective use of Ashford Housing Authority resources
- Effective and timely communication between staff, residents, and local emergency services and support agencies
- Identification of vulnerable residents requiring specialized assistance
- Rapid return to normal operations

The Ashford Housing Authority (AHA) will establish an emergency preparedness committee comprised of seven Tenants, the Executive Director and Maintenance staff. The Committee will meet monthly at first until a complete plan is developed; bi-annually henceforth for review and training. The Executive Director shall cause an After Action Review (AAR) to be completed after any incident involving implementation of any component of the Plan. The Committee will review the AAR to measure the effectiveness of the response and take action on any recommended updates to the Plan. Should modifications to the Plan be warranted, the Executive Director shall draft recommendations for changes to the Plan and present same for approval by the Board of Commissioners.

The Plan shall be reviewed no less than annually by the Emergency Preparedness Committee and reauthorized by the Ashford Housing Commission and a record made thereof. Any changes to the Plan should be reviewed by the local Emergency Management Director (EMD) to ensure alignment and coordination with local resources, best practices, and local, state and federal requirements. Any modifications to the Plan shall be presented to the Ashford Housing Commission for review and approval.

An "emergency" is any unplanned event that poses a threat of injury or death or risk of damage or destruction to property and infrastructure. Emergencies include disasters, generally defined as large-scale, natural events. In Connecticut, these generally include hurricanes, blizzards, winter storms, flooding and to a lesser degree tornadoes and earthquakes. Sustained power outages can be a by-product of these events. Emergencies also include events caused by humans such as fires, explosions, hazardous materials incidents, radiological incidents, active shooter(s), civil unrest or widespread illness.

Each municipality in Connecticut maintains a designated EMD; additionally, each municipality is required, under Connecticut General Statute 28-7, to have, consistent with guidelines established by the State, an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This Plan is intended to augment, and not supplant the local EOP. In the event of an operational conflict between the Town of Ashford EOP and the Ashford Housing Authority Emergency Plan, the Town of Ashford's EOP shall control. It is therefore essential that the Plan is reviewed by the local EMD to ensure proper alignment and coordination in the event of an emergency.

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2. Assumptions/ Responsibility and Control

- The Ashford Housing Authority is vulnerable to emergencies as defined above.
- An emergency may occur at any time, with or without warning.
- An emergency may require the rapid deployment of resources, some of which may not be under the control of AHA.
- The Ashford Housing Authority must remain ready to respond quickly to emergencies.

The Executive Director of the Ashford Housing Authority is tasked overall responsibility for emergency operations consistent with this Plan and shall designate appropriate staff to discharge as directed specific aspects of the Plan. The Executive Director shall designate a suitably experienced and trained staff member to act in the event the Executive Director shall be unavailable.

3. Implementation and Training

The successful implementation of the Plan depends on the Housing Authority staff understanding the Plan and their respective roles in it. Training on the Plan will take place bi-annually in June and January or whenever a substantive change to the Plan occurs. Designated staff members should be trained in, or at a minimum be familiar with, the *National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS)*. Additionally, a fundamental understanding of the municipality's EOP and the resources available therein will be beneficial.

The Housing Authority will ensure that residents are aware of the existence of the Plan and residents should also be made aware of the notification protocols established to alert residents in the event of a disaster or other emergency. Each January the Committee and ED will hold an information session on emergencies with residents.

4. Communication and Contact Information

The Plan should, at all times, contain current contact information for all staff reasonably expected to have a role in Plan implementation. Primary and secondary phone numbers should be maintained and responsibility assigned for designated personnel to initiate contact in the event of Plan implementation. Group email can facilitate the dissemination of official information.

Additionally, current contact information for local emergency service directors, EMD's, social service providers, health department, relief agencies, and service providers such as fuel suppliers should be maintained. ***Non-public and personal contact information should be treated as confidential.***

5. Residents needing Accommodation or Assistance

Information on residents who may require specialized assistance in an emergency should be maintained. This information and emergency contact information is furnished **voluntarily** by residents. This can include, but not be limited to, residents who have physical disabilities, or require ongoing medical therapy such as oxygen.

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6. Command Center

The Command Center should be located in a structure suitably constructed for continued operations under severe conditions and should be equipped with standby generator power. To the extent possible, ample workspace, communications infrastructure, restrooms, and staff respite areas should be contemplated within the Command Center.

AHA Command Center will be located on the first floor in the main office.

7. Pre-emergency Considerations

It is essential that Housing Authority staff maintain a vigilant state of readiness – including up-to-date contact information and resident files – along with a sound working knowledge of the Plan to allow for a coordinated and competent response to these types of emergencies.

The Executive Director will establish a meeting schedule with the Committee responsible for activities within the Plan. The local EMD can be invited to participate to enhance coordination efforts.

Other emergencies, particularly some weather events, afford advance notifications and forecasts of impending events. These advance notifications and forecasts must be used to prioritize and prepare for the event. Depending on the length of preparation time afforded, the Executive Director/designee should use this pre-event time to confirm assignments of staff responsible for the following activities:

Staffing and Resident Outreach

- a. Ensure that all staff contact information is current and confirm availability of staff within the time frame of the event.
- b. Ensure individual staff is aware of their assigned responsibilities pre-event, during, and post event.
 - Staff should be prepared for extended work hours consistent with policies. Change of clothes, toiletries, required medications, phone chargers, and ample food should be contemplated.
 - Staff should prepare their own family and home for an extended absence of the staff member.
 - Ensure that ample bottled water is available for staff throughout the event
 - For a potentially prolonged event, arrangements should be made for sheltering and providing meals to staff.
- c. Ensure that staffing and protocols related to the operation of the Command Center are understood.
- d. Coordinate with the local EMD to identify potential areas of concern relative to the specific type of event.
 - Ensure the evacuation protocols, including transportation to shelters, are clearly identified.
- e. Ensure that all resident files and emergency contact information are updated.
- f. Ensure that all residents potentially requiring specialized assistance are identified.

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- g. Outreach to residents who should be encouraged to make contact with family or other “in case of emergency” contacts to confirm availability to assist if needed.
- h. Notification to residents of recommended pre-event steps and notification procedures relative to the event.
 - Residents should be advised of evacuation protocols.
 - Distribution and posting of event-specific information should take place via website. Community room boards, email or other means typically used in resident engagement.
- i. Ensure that petty cash is available to purchase necessary supplies should power outages disable credit cards transactions.

Preparation of Physical Plant and Equipment

- a. Review existing preventative maintenance plans and update/address outstanding items.
- b. Accomplish high-priority repairs subject to worsening or posing enhanced risk during the event.
- c. Safely stow and secure outdoor items that could pose a projectile hazard during the event.
- d. Ensure all emergency lighting and exits signs are in working order.
- e. Ensure that all necessary hand tools and equipment are inspected and ready to use and located for easy deployment.
- f. Ensure the emergency generator is tested for proper working order and fully fueled. Refueling protocols and fuel deliveries from a supplier should be arranged.
- g. Ensure that other power equipment, e.g., snow blowers, tractors, chain saws, etc. are in proper working order with ample fuel supplies and spare parts.
 - Ensure that related safety equipment, e.g., eye protection, hearing protection, headgear, and safety gloves needed for power equipment is readily available in sufficient supply.
 - Staff assigned to outdoor activities should wear high visibility vests, shirts, or jackets to aid in safety and identification.
- h. Ensure that supplies needed for emergency response, e.g., flashlights/batteries, salt/sand, sandbags, tarps, plywood, basic lumber framing etc. are readily available in ample supply.
- i. Ensure that the emergency medical supplies and fire extinguishers are ready for use.
- j. Ensure that all telephone equipment and cellular telephones are in good working order and that staff is furnished with an up-to-date telephone list including a list of all staff, Command Center and related numbers, and local emergency contact numbers. To ensure coordination of effort, staff should be instructed that, to the extent possible, all contact with external agencies be coordinated through a designated person at the Command Center. In the event of a true emergency, staff should call 911.
- k. Ensure that all two way radios and weather radios are tested and ready for use.
- l. Ensure that charging locations for cellular telephones, with related power supplies and cords, are identified.

Information and information systems

- a. Ensure all sensitive electronic equipment is properly protected from power surges.
- b. Ensure all computerized data is properly backed up. The Housing Authority should routinely be doing a backup of data on a set schedule.
- c. Ensure critical paper records are secure and safe from flooding.

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8. Plan Activation Considerations

The Executive Director, or in the absence of the Executive Director the person designated to act in his/her absence, shall be authorized to activate the Plan. Upon the activation of the Plan, the Executive Director or designee shall direct all staff to be contacted and assembled for direction and deployment. The Executive Director or designee shall:

- Activate the Command Center
- Maintain a roster of all staff reporting to work, including cellular phone and assigned radio, if any.
- Maintain a log of each staff member's designated responsibility
- Coordinate to the extent needed with the local EMD, emergency services, and local government and other service agencies.
- Maintain responsibility for public information and media releases
- Monitor potential hazards to residents, particularly those identified as potentially requiring specialized assistance.
- After the event, when safe to do, carefully and completely document and photograph any damage or injury caused by the event.

9. Evacuation Protocols Considerations

Evacuation of residents may be ordered by the Town of Ashford Fire Department or the Ashford Emergency Management personnel or may be of necessity due to damage to the facility rendering it hazardous or uninhabitable. Coordination of and responsibility for transportation of residents ordered evacuated is the responsibility of the Town of Ashford. Should an evacuation be ordered or become necessary, the Executive Director or designee should:

- Identify and record title and name of the official initiating the evacuation.
- Identify residents who may require specialized assistance and/or specialized transportation.
- Notify residents of impending evacuation as soon as possible, with input from the official who will initiate the evacuation; ensure necessary medical equipment, prescription medications, walkers, etc. are prepared to accompany the residents.
- Ensure that a log is maintained of each resident evacuated and the location to which they were evacuated.

10. Recovery Considerations

Once deemed safe to do so, the Executive Director or designee shall coordinate a return to normal operations. This should include:

- Identifying and isolating immediate hazards such as downed or compromised utility lines, compromised sidewalks or parking areas, broken doors and windows, etc.
- A physical inspection of each unit to ensure suitability for return of the resident(s). Damage should be carefully documented and photographed. If the emergency qualifies for federal disaster relief, specific reporting requirements apply.
- Maintain a log of residents returning to the facility.
- Coordinate with local authorities and service agencies to find alternate housing as needed.
- Identifying and posting available counseling and recovery resources for residents and staff.
- Notify insurance carrier and oversight agencies such as CHFA, and DOH promptly regarding damage.

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11. After Action review and Documentation Considerations

The Executive Director should complete a written After Action Review (AAR) of the Housing Authority response to the emergency. The AAR should include:

- A summary of the emergency, including type, date, duration, and total staff responding and total staff hours expended.
- A detailed accounting of injuries and damages/loss of Housing Authority facilities, vehicles, and equipment.
- An analysis of the effectiveness of the plan in response to the emergency with specific identification of gaps and deficiencies and recommended plan adjustments to remediate those gaps and deficiencies. The AAR should be forwarded to the Committee for consideration and further action.

Reviewed on January 13, 2020 by the Emergency Committee

Reviewed on January 11, 2021 by the Emergency Committee