

Assisted Living

BUSINESS STRATEGIES, RESIDENT CARE AND NEWS

Assisted Living/October 2007 25

MYTURN

If disaster strikes, will you be ready?



**Don't plan to fail
by failing to plan,
or you'll be sorry**

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No amount of planning can stop a disaster caused by severe weather such as heavy winds or snow, floods, freezing temperatures, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires and earthquakes. However, in the event of an emergency, assisted living facilities can take steps to help ensure continuity of care and comfort of residents, greatly reduce injuries, and minimize property damage and business interruption.

To help ensure the safety and security of all residents, a community should create resident profiles reflecting any special needs and medical conditions; locate and clearly mark available oxygen tanks; store a three-day supply of medical supplies, water and nonperishable food items on-site; and identify evacuation shelters. Also, conduct exercises, drills and

training throughout the year and prepare to shelter in place.

To protect your facility, meet with your property insurance agent to be sure your policy provides enough protection based on potential disasters in your geographic region.

Remember that floods, the most common natural disaster, can be caused by hurricanes, excessive snowmelt, heavy rainfall and even construction. Keep an up-to-date photographic/video record of the facility and equipment and store it off-site.

To protect your operations, create your own "supply chain" of materials and 24/7 service providers. Know who you will contact for board-up materials, generators, data recovery, property remediation and repairs. Establishing these contacts in

advance will save you valuable time and position your facility for the fastest recovery possible.

Also, assemble a list of important e-mails and cell numbers to distribute to key team leaders. Determine a system to communicate with community first responders and emergency resources, as well as family and staff not on site.

Include an emergency response section on your organization's Website to keep employees and family members informed during the emergency and recovery process.

Following a disaster, contact key team leaders and a property damage expert to assess the damage, coordinate the insurance claims process, and begin remediation. Don't forget to photograph all damage to document the original condition of the loss. ■