



# Texas Health Care Association

## *Hurricane Tools*

[www.txhca.org](http://www.txhca.org)

## **DISASTER PLAN WITH NO EVACUATION**

*By Meera Riner, Nexion Health*

This plan is necessary for preparation in the event of a disaster. It is strongly recommended that facilities located in non-evacuation zones take all possible measures to secure the building(s) against wind damage. Buildings fail and interior destruction occurs when winds or wind-driven debris breach the integrity of the building. This can happen through doors, windows, and roofs when buildings are not properly protected against wind damage. Each facility should be structurally evaluated to determine the safest areas. Window, door and roof retrofitting measures should be considered where appropriate.

### **Securing a Facility**

To begin when a Hurricane Watch is issued, and includes, but is not restricted to:

- Installing shutters. Ensure they are installed according to the manufacturer specifications.
- Plywood coverings. A minimum of ½” thick and anchored at least 1.5” deep every 12 inches.
- Braces behind doors. This takes pressure off latches. Double doors with pins top and bottom are especially vulnerable.
- Hardening a specific area of the facility. This would become the “*place of last refuge*.” This should be an area with minimal outside exposure, structurally the strongest part of the building, usually in the center.

### **Power Supply**

Ensure you have back up power in case of power loss- consider a rental generator, adequate fuel for generator etc.

### **Floor Coverage**

All available personnel from each shift are asked to report to the nursing home to be present for the allotted period of time before, during, and after the hurricane. This decision will be made by the Administrator, or their designee, as to the length of time that coverage is necessary. Adequate staffing ratios will be maintained at all times.

### **Tubs**

All tubs will be filled and all pitchers filled with water. Assign Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Housekeeping staff to be responsible for this task.

## **Personnel Pool**

The personnel pool consists of all personnel not specifically assigned duties, or who have completed their duties and are available. They will report to the designated area and await further instructions.

## **Business Office! Purchasing/Storeroom**

Insure that all essential and emergency supplies are available as indicated by the Medical Director and the Director of Nursing. Provide 24 hour communication coverage for the switchboard or command post. Safeguard all resident files and company records. Be sure you perform a complete data backup prior to the storm's onset.

## **Driver-Messenger**

Assist in transportation services as needed. Check fuel, oil, and water levels for each vehicle. Other programs will also provide vehicles and drivers. After the storm, learn what routes to the hospital are open in case you have to transport individuals needing hospital care.

## **Points to Remember at the Time of the Hurricane**

- Function as normally as possible, continuing the routine work schedule, as this helps to keep people calmer.
- Keep yourself as quiet and as calm as possible so that the feeling of security is passed on to the residents.
- Check residents frequently.
- Keep activities up so residents are not only thinking about the storm.
- Check windows and door areas at frequent intervals.

The department heads or designated key people are to inaugurate proceedings to adequately care for the safety and comfort of the residents during this period.

## **During the Hurricane**

Maintain resident care to the highest level possible; encourage normal routines as circumstances allow.

- Be especially alert for leaking water or gas, broken windows, fire hazards, and electrical wires.
- Do not go outside of the building. After the first part of the storm passes, there may be a lull in the storm, but the rest of the storm usually follows shortly after the first impact. Monitor the local media on radio to await the all clear.
- Staff is to be given rest periods on a rotating schedule. Do not allow staff to not take breaks.
- Maintain communications with command post and all occupied areas of the facility.

## **After the Hurricane**

- Evaluate resident status changes and needs. This is especially important if power is lost.
- Do not touch loose or dangling wires.
- Do not step in pools of water where such wires may be grounded.
- Remove boards from windows as appropriate to reduce the growth of mold.
- Make a thorough check of the facility and report all findings to the command post, i.e. broken windows, broken water lines, etc. Make repairs as necessary.
- If water supply was interrupted during the storm, do not empty emergency water containers until advised by authorities that your regular water service is potable.
- Return to normal scheduling of activities as soon as possible to promote meaningful engagement and interactions.
- Give a thorough situational briefing to on-coming staff. Relieve those on duty through shift rotations.