

Communicating during extreme weather

Scenario

A significant snowstorm has been forecast for your area. Snow has started falling heavily, making roads increasingly treacherous. Some staff members who live further away are already concerned about getting home safely, while others scheduled for the next shift are unsure if they can get to work. The administrator has asked all supervisors to enact the extreme winter weather emergency plan.

Instructions

- Gather your communication plan for extreme weather and any other related documentation.
- Read the scenario out loud and discuss the steps you would each take using your communication plan.
- Use the guiding questions and key discussion points to debrief how your communication plan applies to extreme weather events.



Guiding questions

- Using your communication plan, what worked well in this scenario?
- Thinking of last-minute staffing changes, and the safety of staff, residents, clients and visitors, are there concerns, or areas of improvement that should be addressed to improve this communication plan?
- If improvements are needed, who needs to be informed?

Notes to the huddle leader

- Emphasize the importance of a proactive communication plan with assigned roles and responsibilities.
- Emergency preparedness information for the communication plan may include:
 - Pre-established contact chains/ emergency phone tree.
 - Emergency radios.
 - Requirements for life safety systems.
 - Safety measures to ensure the continuing of care and operations.
- Encourage staff to treat this exercise as preparation for a real work scenario. Practice each component as much as it's safe to do so. This is your organization's opportunity to test the effectiveness and identify areas of improvement.
- Amend the scenario to suit your organizational needs, and the communication plan you are testing.
- Ensure any deficiencies are reported to the joint occupational health and safety committee or someone with authority to change the communication plan. .

Learning outcomes

After this huddle, staff should be able to:

- Explain their roles and responsibilities in the existing communication plans for extreme weather conditions.
- Discuss the impact of foreseeable extreme weather scenarios that are likely for your organization's communication plan.
- Practice enacting the communication plan.



