
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
CHILD CARE LICENSING
HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS TIPS**

“Preparation through education is less costly than learning through tragedy.”

Max Mayfield- Director of the National Hurricane Center

Preparations:

- Create family emergency plan/contact list with home, cell and work numbers- establish an emergency contact , someone who lives out of the affected areas
- Keep cash on hand as ATM's will not work if there is no electricity
- Fuel and service vehicles
- Charge all electronics including cell phones and laptops
- Fill sinks , bathtubs and large containers with water as an extra supply for washing and/or flushing
- If using generators/grills, be sure to have sufficient ventilation
- Review working condition of emergency equipment, such as flashlights and battery-powered radios
- Frequently listen to radio or watch TV for official bulletins of the storm's progress
- Turn off propane tanks
- Unplug small appliances
- Turn refrigerator to its coldest setting and keep closed
- *Leave immediately, if told to do so*

Supplies:

- A 3-5 day supply of water, five gallons per person
- A 3-5 day supply of non-perishable food, restaurants and stores will be closed if there is no electricity- carry a cooler w/ plenty of water and food once you return to work
- Battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries
- Prescription medicines and special medical needs
- Disposable cleaning cloths, such as "baby wipes" to use in case bathing facilities are not available
- Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, hand sanitizer and etc
- One change of clothing and shoes per person
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- First Aid Kit, including rubbing alcohol
- Extra set of car keys
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members

Office Reminders:

- Update phone trees for staff- include addresses, phone numbers, direct connect numbers (if available), include emergency numbers and plans
- Lower and fully close all venetian blinds
- Turn off all equipment
- Where possible, move computer related equipment away from windows, disconnect from electrical supply and cover with plastic bags
- Remove all loose items from desktops and place in file cabinets or desk drawers, this applies especially to files and loose papers
- Secure personal belongings and valuables, as these are not covered by state liability insurance
- Close all interior and exterior office doors



Specific to Child Care:

- Keep updated list of facilities/homes with addresses, phone numbers in a waterproof container
- Remind facilities/homes to keep plenty of water on hand for staff and children
- Keep in touch with agencies- School Readiness, R&R's- They can be very helpful in trying to locate owners/staff and if you are working as a team, there is no duplication of services
- Keep blank inspection forms on hand
- Be sensitive to staff and providers, both may have lost personal property/businesses
- Create a tracking system to keep up with the status facilities/homes regarding openings/closures prior to the hurricane season. Please use this tracking system and forward to Central Office (in development of system, keep in mind there may be no electricity) The department is in the business of serving families and children of Florida and we need to be able to share this information with our customers.

Post Disaster Roles and Responsibilities of Child Care Licensing Staff

- Inspections
 - ◆ Onsite inspections are required prior to Reopening any damaged child care facility or family day care home.
 - ◆ Rule 65C-20.010 (3) (b), FAC, Family Day Care Standards, requires the operator to notify the licensing agency after a fire or natural disaster.
 - ◆ Rule 65C-22.004 (2) (d), FAC, Child Care Standards, requires the operator to notify the licensing agency after a fire or natural disaster.
- Inspections Should Include at a Minimum:
 - ◆ Ensure structures are sound (Documentation should clearly reflect "at this time", as conditions can diminish as time passes.)
 - ◆ No live wires
 - ◆ No open sewage
 - ◆ In the event that potable water is not available, bottled water may be allowed temporarily until the water supply may be restored.
- Flexible but prudent application of the standards should be considered during times of emergencies and crises.
 - ◆ waive square footage requirement (possibly drop down to 20-15 square feet per child, allowing 15 sq. ft. per child for those centers that have a good history of compliance with health and safety standards)
 - ◆ temporarily allow providers to combine their children and staff into one center/home, depending on individual situations.

NOTE: This may not work in all cases. When considering this option, counselors should assess each case on an individual basis, taking into consideration, the history of the provider, the availability of additional staff, the size of the home/facility, the ages and the number of the children that are going to be affected, etc.

Environmental Health advises providers who are considering operating over capacity as a result of a disaster, to be mindful that there is no guarantee that there won't be any damage to the septic systems, especially since the septic system is all due to the excessive rain and flooding. If the homes/facilities take or additional children and staff, they should be very conservative with their water usage without cutting back on hygiene needs. Providers should watch for signs of gurgling, sewage on the ground, slow drainage, and have the septic system pumped if these symptoms are noticed.

- Notification
 - ◆ Mandatory Parent Notification: Provider must inform parents in writing, of alternate short-term placement (initial notification may be by phone).
 - ◆ Report to Central Office status of homes/facilities on the tracking system that is designed prior to the hurricane season.
 - ◆ If Licensing staff are unable to report to work, remind them, prior to the storm, to call in as soon as possible to report that they are safe and what, if any, damage they have sustained.

**Licensing counselors may assist providers with creating a form letter to notify parents.*
- Other Agency Notification:
 - ◆ Licensing counselors should contact the local R&R agency to assist with locating alternate placement
 - ◆ Licensing counselors should work with the local fire department and environmental health unit to coordinate safe alternate placement

Note: Keep in mind that subsequent to the storm, staff and children may experience fatigue, acting out behavior and the like. Seek the assistance of Mental Health Professionals in your area, if necessary.



Let Common Sense Prevail, Keeping in Mind the Health & Safety of the Children!