

Facility Name Here  
Facility-Based Exercise

Communications Exercise

**DATE**

# Background

Effective November 16, 2017, the new rule Emergency Preparedness Requirements for Medicare and Medicaid Participating Providers and Suppliers was implemented and is applicable to all 17 provider types, with a degree of variation based on inpatient versus outpatient, long-term care versus non long-term care.

The Emergency Preparedness Requirements for Medicare and Medicaid Participating Providers and Suppliers regulation outlines four core elements:

- Risk Assessment and Emergency Planning
- Communication Plan
- Policies and Procedures
- **Training and Testing**

# What does the rule say about testing your plan?

**Testing.** The RHC/FQHC must conduct exercises to test the emergency plan at least annually. The RHC/FQHC must do the following:

- (i) Participate in a full-scale exercise that is community-based or **when a community-based exercise is not accessible, an individual, facility-based**. If the RHC/FQHC experiences an actual natural or man-made emergency that requires activation of the emergency plan, the RHC/FQHC is exempt from engaging in a community-based or individual, facility-based full-scale exercise for 1 year following the onset of the actual event.
- (ii) Conduct an additional exercise that may include, but is not limited to following:
  - (A) A second full-scale exercise that is community-based or individual, facility-based.
  - (B) A tabletop exercise that includes a group discussion led by a facilitator, using a narrated, clinically-relevant emergency scenario, and a set of problem statements, directed messages, or prepared questions designed to challenge an emergency plan.
- (iii) Analyze the RHC/FQHC's response to and maintain documentation of all drills, tabletop exercises, and emergency events, and revise the RHC/FQHC's emergency plan, as needed

# Today's Exercise

- ▶ **Operations-based Exercises** validate plans, policies, agreements and procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify resource gaps in an operational environment.

Types of operations-based Exercises include:

- **Drill:** A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity (e.g., a fire department conducts a decontamination drill).

# Exercise Purpose & Goals

## ▶ Purpose

- Evaluate your response actions against the facilities current emergency response plan.

## ▶ Goals

- Measure the time needed to perform a call-down of staff and/or patients during an office closure, in accordance with this facilities Emergency Operations Plan/Communications Plan and other standard operating procedures.
- Reveal planning weaknesses in this facilities Emergency Operations Plan – specifically the Communication Plan.
- Identify current capabilities to contact staff and patients in the event of an office closure.

# General Ground Rules

- ▶ The exercise will be conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein systems and processes, not individuals, will be evaluated.
- ▶ A scenario will be presented. Utilizing the facilities Emergency Operations Plan – Communications Plan, respond accordingly.
- ▶ Participants will react to the information and situations as they are presented, in the same manner as if this had been a real event.
- ▶ All exercise communication will begin and end with the phrase “This is a drill.” This is a precaution taken so anyone overhearing the conversation will not mistake the exercise play for a real-world emergency.
- ▶ If a real emergency occurs that affects the exercise, the exercise may be suspended or terminated.

# Equipment/Materials Needed

- ▶ Facility Emergency Operations Plan/Communication Plan
- ▶ Access to communication devices
- ▶ Call-down Script
- ▶ Call-Down Documentation
  - Used to capture the time the call down was initiated and the time completed.
- ▶ Hot Wash Documentation Tool

# START OF EXERCISE



# Scenario

11:45 AM

A police officer just arrived to your facility notifying your office manager that a construction crew was working in the area and ruptured a gas line. The gas company is currently working to repair the rupture, but all businesses in the area are being told to close for the remainder of the day.

# END OF EXERCISE

# Other things to consider

- ▶ This event is taking place around lunch. Have some of your staff left the building for lunch? How would you communicate with them?
- ▶ Who would you notify outside of your facility that you are closing? Another local hospital/clinic? LDH/Health Standards? The local Office of Emergency Preparedness?
- ▶ What do you tell patients currently at the facility?
- ▶ Do you already have scripts developed that would be used? Are they targeted for the intended recipient? (staff, patient, etc)
- ▶ Would you have enough staff in the office to contact both employees and patients?
- ▶ What if you were having a communication problem. What would your back-up method be?

# Hot Wash

1. What strengths in your emergency plans did this exercise identify?
2. What weaknesses in your emergency plans did this exercise expose?
3. What unanticipated issues arose during the exercise?
4. What gaps were identified?
5. What are some high-priority issues that should be addressed?
6. What are some new ideas and recommendations for improvement?

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# Sample Call-Down Script

Edit based on the facility type, staff or patient being called, and event type

## STAFF

This is a call-down drill being conducted by [facility name]. We are closing the facility for the remainder of the day. Report back to work at your regular time on the next business day.

*Again, this is only a drill.*

## PATIENT

**DO NOT REALLY CALL PATIENTS.** Staff can look at the list of patients expected for the remainder of the day and estimate 1-2minutes per patient call.

# Call-Down Documentation

Call-Down Date	Time Call-Down Initiated	Time Call-Down Completed	% of Staff Contacted	# of Patients Contacted*

## Canceling Appointments:

**\*DO NOT CALL PATIENTS DURING THE EXERCISE.**

Look at the patient schedule for the remainder of the day and for the next business day.

Estimate 2 minutes for each patient call.

## Notifying Staff:

Using the communication method identified in your EOP, notify staff of the office closure.

**\*START ANY COMMUNICATION WITH THE PHRASE “THIS IS AN EXERCISE - NOT A REAL EVENT”**

Calculate the time it took to contact ALL staff.