

A Guide to Help Child Care Programs

EMERGENCIES & DISASTERS

PREPARE • RESPOND • RECOVER



*Developed by Child Care Aware® of North Dakota
a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota*

Table of Contents

About This Guide	1
Technology Tools	2
Assisting Those with Special Needs	3
Preparing to Evacuate	4
Preparing to Shelter-in-Place	5
Communication Plan	7
Reunification Plan.....	8
Recovery Plan	10
Types of Emergencies and Disasters	
Bomb Threat	12
Custody/Unauthorized Persons	13
Explosion on Site	14
Fire Emergencies	16
Flood	18
Intruder/Hostage Situation.....	19
Leaks and Spills	22
Missing Child.....	24
Threatening Message	25
Thunderstorm	26
Tornado	27
Utility Disruption	29
Key Terms	31
Resources	33

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Updated 2/20/18

About This Guide

This guide is a basic reference to help home-based and facility-based child care settings prepare and respond to a variety of disasters and emergency situations.

This guide does not cover every conceivable situation, but does offer basic information and links to child care licensing rules and required forms to help you prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies and disasters that are most likely to occur in or near an early childhood setting in North Dakota.

Contact a Child Care Aware of North Dakota Early Childhood Consultant or an emergency response agency in your local area if you have questions or need additional information. www.ndchildcare.org | 800-997-8515



Start With a Plan

You will be better equipped to respond to an emergency or disaster if you gather key information, assign roles, and assemble the supplies you will need before hand.

Child Care Aware of North Dakota has developed a **Child Care Emergency Planning Template** and a **Ready-to-Go File Template** help you.

Completing this plans will help you implement response actions outlined in this guide.

Child Care Emergency Plan

This planning guide includes the key procedures, descriptions and **RECOVER** from an emergency or disaster.

Child Care programs are also required to complete [SFN 517 Child](#)

PREPARE

Facility Information

License Number	
Address/City/State	
Telephone	
Email	

Capacity and Enrollment (update monthly)

Facility Capacity		
Infant Capacity		Infant Enroll
		Toddler Enroll
		Preschool Enroll
		School Age Enroll
		Total Enrollment
		Avg. Monthly Enrollment

Emergency Phone Numbers




Resources marked with this symbol can be downloaded at: <http://ndchildcare.org/providers/emergencies-disasters.html>

Technology Tools

Cell phones and the internet can provide:

- Real-time updates from emergency personnel about changing conditions
- Two-way and one-way mobile communication when access to traditional landline phones is not available
- Paperless access to phone numbers, data, and vital information needed during and after a disaster or emergency

Here are some ways to enhance the usefulness of your technology tools:

- **Update contact list regularly.** Remember to include contact info for utility services, your evacuation site, and others that you may not typically call but would need to contact during an emergency or disaster. Keep a printed copy in your **Ready-to-Go File**  in case your digital list becomes inaccessible.
- **Create a group list.** Groups make it easy to share information with specific individuals such as staff and parents.
- **Use text and social media.** Texting and messaging via social media sites such as Twitter can sometimes get your message out faster and more efficiently.
- **Keep devices charged and have a landline back up.** Carry charger(s) with power pack(s) and maintain access to a landline phone in case digital service is not accessible.



Disaster and Emergency Apps

You can download an app and register to receive warnings and updates from a variety of sources:

- City and county emergency management services
- Local TV and radio stations
- National Weather Service mobile.weather.gov/
- North Dakota Public Alerts www.nd.gov/publicalert/

Assisting Those with Special Needs

Some individuals may need special assistance during an emergency response or evacuation due to:

- **Mobility barriers** for infants who cannot yet walk and children or adults who have a temporary or on-going disability that limits their ability to walk without assistance from another person or mobility aid such as a wheelchair or crutches
- **Medical conditions** that require a person to carry equipment such as an oxygen tank, nebulizer or other respiratory aids
- **Cognitive/emotional barriers** that affect a person's ability to cope with the noise, confusion, and disruption of their regular routine during an emergency

Ways to accommodate individuals with special needs

- Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place sites that are wheelchair accessible (Note accessible routes to these sites on the [Evacuation Map](#) 🔄)
- Equipment for evacuation of non-ambulatory children (e.g., evacuation cribs, wagons, strollers with multiple seats, wheelchairs)
- Equipment to decrease visual/auditory stimulation for those who have difficulty with unfamiliar or chaotic environments (e.g., pop-up tents, head phones)
- Access to electricity or a generator if needed for special needs equipment

Items to take with you when sheltering-in-place or evacuating

- Current health care plan for those with special needs
- Specialized equipment to carry out directives of the health care plan
- Supply of medication and a way to transport and store if refrigeration is needed (e.g., a cooler with ice)
- List of child's doctors and specialists including contact information
- Special foods if noted on care plan

Revise staffing assignments if extra assistance is needed

- Consider reassigning staff members to assist in the evacuation or relocations of individuals with special needs during an emergency

Keep in mind that needs for assistance may change

Ask yourself if there are any new or temporary barriers that would limit mobility of children and staff if you had evacuate the building today:

- A staff member sprained her ankle and is walking with crutches for two weeks
- A 4-year-old broke his leg and has limited mobility while in a cast for six weeks
- The infant room just enrolled two more children
- A boy with autism has recently developed a fear of sirens

Preparing to Evacuate


An evacuation is necessary when it is no longer safe to remain inside the building. If available, comply with evacuation orders of emergency personnel who are on the scene or giving instructions via phone, text message, or emergency broadcast channels.





Where to evacuate to can vary based on:

- **Location:** Is your facility located in town or in rural setting? Is there a safe meeting place on the premise or within walking distance?
- **Outside conditions:** Are conditions outside the building dangerous due to extreme cold, flooding, or an intruder who might follow you out of the building?
- **Transportation options:** Is it possible to walk to an off-premises evacuation site? If not, are there enough vehicles to transport all the children and adults?

Notify Your Licenser

Child care programs must have an [Evacuation Disaster Plan SFN 517](#)  on file with their licenser. Programs need to report closings/relocations to the licenser within 24 hours and also notify Child Care Aware of North Dakota.

Tips to Help You Get Out Quickly and Safely

- Consider keeping infants and non-ambulatory children on the main level to make it faster and easier to exit the building during an emergency by using rolling evacuation cribs, wheelchairs, strollers, or other wheeled equipment.
- Prepare for power outages. Have working flashlights available to light your way, especially if your child care is located in a room or basement without access to natural light.
- Compare and coordinate evacuation plans if your child care shares space with another group, such as a church or business. Discuss ways to enlist the help of individuals who occupy the shared space. Have all building occupants participate in your child care emergency/disaster drills so they are prepared to assist as needed.
- Children and staff are your first priority during an evacuation, but also plan for the evacuation of pets. Make sure your pet's ID tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to their collar. Include proof of immunizations in your [Ready-to-Go File](#)  and needed pet supplies in your [Emergency Supply Kit](#) .

Preparing to Shelter- in-Place

There will be times when it is best to take shelter where you are. The safest shelter-in-place option will vary depending on the emergency/disaster. Sometimes it is best to be on a lower level, other times it is best to be on an upper floor of a building.



Where to Seek Shelter-in-Place

- **Go to lowest level**
 - during severe weather such as a tornado or thunderstorm
 - if violent activity is happening outside near your location
- **Go to the highest level**
 - during chemical events such as a hazardous material spill or gas leak in which fumes sink
 - if there are rising flood waters and you are not able to evacuate
- **Go to safest area**
 - if there is an intruder or violent person in the building
 - if movement inside the building is limited due to damage to the structure

Consider these space features:

- **No windows:** Interior rooms such bathrooms, closets, storage rooms or basements are good options when taking shelter during a tornado or when hazardous fumes are present outside
- **A door:** Ideally one that is sealable using plastic and tape if hazardous fumes are present outside or can be locked if taking shelter from an intruder
- **Water:** Sinks and toilets can be used while sheltering in place, but use bottled water for drinking
- **Enough space to accommodate all children and staff:** Consider designating additional areas inside the building if space in one area is limited
- **No access to outside air:** Seal windows,vents and electrical outlets with plastic and tape during an emergency and turn off fans to reduce circulation if hazardous fumes are present outdoors
- **Child safe:** Childproof the space as you would in other areas of your child care facility (e.g., electrical outlet covers, cabinet latches, hazards of out reach)



Resources marked with this symbol can be downloaded at:
<http://ndchildcare.org/providers/emergencies-disasters.html>

Shelter-in-Place Supplies

Consider storing all or some of these supplies in the shelter-in-place space so you don't have to transport them during an emergency.

- **Emergency supplies** **First Aid Kit** 📄 **Emergency Supply Kit** 📄
Check expiration dates regularly (e.g., food and water) and replace when necessary
- **Pack 'n Play or gate** if you care for infants
- **Blankets/sleeping bags** for warmth/comfort or for placing on the floor to provide soft/clean surface for children to sit or play on
- **Comfortable seating** such as pillows, bean bags, mattress, etc.
- **Play activities/materials** to keep children occupied while waiting in the area
- **Alternate light source** in the event you lose power (e.g., flashlights and batteries)




Reading books, doing finger plays or singing songs will help ease children's anxiety and keep them occupied when sheltering-in-place.



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Communication Plan

Communication is a critical component of an emergency plan. Consider the following as you complete your [Child Care Emergency Planning Template](#) 

Who needs to know?

- **Staff:** How will you notify and update your staff and building personnel as an emergency situation evolves?
- **Parents:** Inform parents when they enroll their child in your program about how you will communicate with them on a daily basis and during an emergency.
- **Community:** Designate a person to provide information to the community and be a contact for the media.

When to Call 911

- If alone, make sure all children are safe before calling 911.
- If there are other adults available, appoint one person to call 911 while another adult attends to children's safety.
- Be prepared to provide the operator with as much information as possible about the nature of the emergency and your exact location so they can respond quickly.

What methods will you use?

Communication methods will vary depending on the emergency/disaster. Use staff and parent handbooks to explain the methods of communication you plan to use.

- **Face-to-face meetings:** Meetings are useful when planning a response to a pending emergency (e.g., flood), gathering input, and answering questions.
- **Telephone:** Have a plan for who will call 911, who will place and field calls to and from parents and media, and who will set up and manage a telephone tree.
- **Electronic text messages and email:** These tools are useful during fast changing emergencies. Notify staff and parents that important messages will be sent electronically so they know to monitor their inboxes.
- **Website and social media:** Good methods for informing the general public of conditions before, during and after an emergency response.

What information do they need?

- **What has happened:** State the basics of the situation.
- **What is happening now:** Be specific, but brief.
- **What they need to do:** Do they need to pick up their child or wait?
- **When will they know more:** Send out timely updates.



Reunification Plan

It is important to have a way to identify children in the event they get separated from caregivers and are unable or too frightened to give information to emergency personnel.

- **Communicate your plan.** Tell parents how you plan to reunite them with their children and the location of planned evacuation sites.
- **Create an ID card for each child.** ID should include a photo of the child and key information such as their name and contact information of their parent or other authorized person.

Tips for Helping Children Cope

- **Conduct monthly emergency drills.** Children will be better prepared to cope with the stress of an actual emergency if they've practiced evacuation and sheltering procedures ahead of time.
- **Redirect attention.** Close window blinds and calmly redirect children's attention if a threatening person, a hazardous event, or stormy weather conditions are viewable through windows at their level.
- **Be honest.** If a situation is uncertain say, "I don't know how long it will be, but know that we are going to keep you safe."
- **Provide a comforting item.** Offer children a blanket, a toy, a snack, or a sip of water to help take their mind off the situation.
- **Express your feelings.** Being overly stoic or hysterical can be frightening to children. Sharing your feelings appropriately by saying, "I am feeling scared too," helps a child understand that their feelings are valid.
- **Give hugs.** Deep pressure hugs are very calming and can help release a child's tension during a stressful situation.
- **Acknowledge fears and reassure.** Avoid brushing off a child's anxiety with phrases like "it will be fine" or "don't worry". Instead allow children to express what they are feeling and provide assurances based on their specific fears.
- **Play a game, sing a song, or draw a picture.** Something as simple like clapping hands as you sing, doing a finger play, or inviting them to scribble on a piece of paper can relieve anxiety and help children connect to a routine they know best - PLAY!
- **Get back to a normal routine.** Things may seem overwhelming, but getting back to a normal routine as soon as possible helps children feel less helpless. Giving children a safe, age appropriate clean-up task will give them a sense of accomplishment after a traumatic event.

Recovery Plan

Programs that have a **Child Care Emergency Plan** in place tend to recover more quickly after a disaster.

Getting “back to normal” as soon as possible after a disaster reduces stress and the loss of potential income.

Here are some steps to take after a disaster to restore continuity of operation. When safe:



- **Do a walk through to assess conditions inside and outside.** Note the condition of your building and equipment. Take pictures of damage due to water, wind, or fire, and loss or damage to equipment and materials. Seek the advice of your insurance agent, a licensed structural engineer or building inspector if there is damage to your building or the safety of the structure is compromised.
- **Contact your county licenser.** North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) rules require that child care providers report emergency closings and relocations to their licenser within 24 hours. Because county workers are often called out of the office to help during emergency, DHS also requests that child care providers report closings and relocations to Child Care Aware of North Dakota at 800-997-8515.
- **Contact your insurance agent.** Maintaining an up-to-date **Inventory** of furniture, equipment, and supplies will help you file an accurate claim.
- **Check in with staff and families.** The stress of a disaster can impact the psychological and physical well-being of children and adults. Develop reasonable expectations for staff and children after a disaster when coping ability is low and frustrations are high.
- **Arrange for help with repair and clean-up.** Develop a “go to” list of contractors, utility service providers, and cleaning services as part of your emergency plan. Knowing who to call will save you time and stress after a disaster.
- **Consider alternatives.** If needed, arrange to relocate your child care business to an alternate location or help families locate temporary options if you need to suspend care for a time.



FEMA

Recovery recommendations after a disaster can vary depending on the event and the scope of damage. Visit the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) website <https://www.fema.gov> or local emergency offices for more information about recovery responses for your location.



Types of Emergencies and Disasters



Bomb Threat	12
Custody/Unauthorized Persons	13
Explosion on Site	14
Fire Emergencies	16
Flood	18
Intruder/Hostage Situation	19
Leaks and Spills	22
Missing Child	24
Threatening Message	25
Thunderstorm	26
Tornado	27
Utility Disruption	29

Bomb Threat

Written Threat

- Handle or touch a written bomb threat that is on paper as little as possible
- Save a written bomb threat that is electronically transmitted via email, text, etc.
- Do not reply to a written threat
- Call 911 and provide information about the threat
- Contact facility director

Phoned Threat

- Engage caller in a conversation for as long as possible or until emergency personnel arrive
- Take note of caller's phone number and information so you can share it with emergency personnel
- Tell designated staff to call 911 on a different phone line
- Provide emergency personnel with information about the threat



Evacuate out of the area when instructed to do so by emergency personnel

- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) ↻
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) ↻
- Secure all children and adults in vehicles if it is not possible to walk to the safe meeting place
- Assist children and adults who need help during evacuation
- Take attendance to account for all children and adults
- Locate anyone who is unaccounted for and secure them in vehicle
- Transport children and adults to the designated safe meeting place



When you arrive at the safe meeting place

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Notify families
- Remain in the safe meeting place until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave

Custody/Unauthorized Persons

Child care programs need to keep a written record on file that lists the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up a child. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update that information and provide supporting court orders if custody terms change.



Engage the unauthorized person in a conversation using calm actions and a respectful, neutral tone of voice

- Prevent the unauthorized person from seeing or talking with the child. Do not ask the child to identify the person.
- Do not share any information about individuals who are authorized to pick up the child.
- If the person insists on taking the child, ask them to provide a photo ID and wait in an area away from children while you contact the authorized parent/guardian. (See *guidance for Intruder/Hostage Situation on page 19 if person turns violent*)
- If needed, walk the unauthorized person to the door and ask them to leave by using a soft, non-threatening voice.
- Write down information about the incident after the unauthorized person has left the building:
 - Description of what happened
 - Person's name and a physical description (e.g., what they look like, the clothes they are wearing)
 - Description of vehicle, license number and direction the vehicle was heading if they leave

Call 911 if the person refuses to leave

Don't Get Caught in the Middle of a Custody Dispute

To avoid misunderstandings, request that the authorized parent/guardian provide official court documents that verify custody terms when a child is enrolled and that they update this information if terms change.

A child care provider has the right to ask a person to leave the premises if they become disruptive. Providers can also refuse to continue caring for a child if parents try to put staff in the middle of a domestic dispute.

Tom Copeland - Legal and Insurance Guide





Explosion on Site

If Exits are Accessible



Evacuate to the designated safe meeting place outside the building

Take these items with you if it is safe to do so:

- Attendance Sheets
- **Ready-to-Go File** 
- **Emergency Supply Kit** 
- Move children and adults out of the building via evacuation routes
- Assist children and adults who need help during evacuation
- Tell adults and children who are able, to cover their mouths and noses with a piece of clothing, a towel, or a mask if there is excessive dust or fumes in the area



After all are gathered in the outside safe meeting place

- Call 911
- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Report persons not accounted for to emergency personnel
- Notify families
- Remain in the outside safe meeting place until emergency personnel say that it is safe to leave

If Trapped in Building



Identify safest area in the building away from hazard

Keep in mind that you may not be able to use the designated safe room if that area has been damaged.

- Take these items with you if it is safe to do so:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) ↻
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) ↻
- Move children and adults to safest area
- Assist children and adults who need help to move to safest area
- Tell adults and children who are able, to cover their mouths and noses with a piece of clothing, a towel, or a mask if there is excessive dust or fumes in the area



After all have gathered in the safest area

- Check attendance to account for children and adults and note any persons who are missing
- Use a flashlight to illuminate the space as needed. **DO NOT USE MATCHES, LIGHTERS or CANDLES**
- Keep children from moving around to prevent dust from circulating
- Provide first aid and reassure children as needed
- Tap on the floor, pipes or wall to alert others of your location
- Remain in the safest area until emergency personnel say it is safe to leave

After you exit the building

- Notify families

CAUTION! Devices Can Spark An Explosion

- Do not light a candle, match or lighter
- Do not turn any electrical switches or engines on or off
- Do not use a cell or landline phone inside the building



Evacuate immediately if an explosion has caused a fire.

See guidance for Fire Response on page 16.

Fire Emergencies



Activate Alarm

- Use designated method available at the facility



Evacuate the building when smoke/fire alarm sounds

- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) 📁
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) 📦
- Use [Evacuation Map](#) 📍 to move children and adults out of the building
- Assist children and adults who need help during evacuation
- Touch exit doors with back of hand before using
 - If cool & clear, exit and close door behind you
 - If cool, but not clear, use alternate exit route
 - If hot, use alternate exit route
- Tell children and adults who are able to crawl low to floor to reduce exposure to smoke
- Tell children and adults who are able to cover their mouths and noses with towels or clothing (wet if possible) to avoid smoke and heated gasses from getting into their lungs
- Help person to STOP, DROP and ROLL if clothes catch on fire

Keep Alarms in Working Order

Test smoke alarms monthly and change batteries at least yearly to ensure their alarms will work when needed.




After all are gathered in the safe meeting place

- Call 911
- Clear access for emergency vehicles
- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Report children and adults not accounted for to the emergency personnel
- Once outside, stay outside
- Provide first aid and reassure children as needed
- Notify families
- Remain in the safe meeting place until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave



Conduct Monthly Fire Drills

North Dakota licensing regulations require that home, group and center child care facilities conduct monthly fire evacuation drills in accordance with the local fire department's guidelines.

Occurrence of these monthly drills should be noted on a [Fire Drill Log](#) 

Here are some tips to help you conduct a successful drill:

- Make drills a learning activity, not a scary experience. Teach children learn how to respond appropriately and not to hide under a bed or in a closet if a fire occurs.
- Schedule drills on different days of the week and at different times (nap time, meal time, play time etc.). This ensures that all full- and part-time children and staff have opportunities to learn fire escape routes from various areas in the child care facility.
- Coordinate drills to include all building occupants if you share space with a church or another business.
- Vary the drill experience by blocking an emergency exit so staff get experience using alternate routes.
- Consider keeping infants and non-ambulatory children on the main level to make it faster and easier to exit the building. Practice using rolling evacuation cribs, wheelchairs, strollers, or other wheeled equipment to evacuate several children at a time.
- Turn off lights to simulate power outages that often occur during a fire. Have working flashlights available especially if your child care is located in a room or basement without access to natural light.
- Notify parents when they pick up their child that drill took place.
- Discuss after-action findings to assess the effectiveness of the drill. Modify the procedure as needed and communicate changes to staff so they are prepared for the next drill or actual emergency.

Flood



Monitor conditions

- Monitor the weather app on your cell phone or listen to television, radio, or NOAA Weather Radio for condition updates
- Prepare to transport children and adults
- Arrange care for pets in the child care facility



Prepare Your Facility for Rising Waters

If time allows and it is safe to do so, take these steps to prepare your building and property during a flood emergency:

- Move records and valuable equipment to higher ground
- Forward records to a computer outside the area
- Store chemicals out of reach of flood waters
- Turn off gas and electric power sources
- Secure outdoor equipment
- Plug drains



Evacuate out of the area when instructed to do so by emergency personnel

- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) 
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) 
- Notify families that you are evacuating
- Assist children and adults who need help during evacuation
- Take attendance to account for all children and adults
- Locate anyone who is unaccounted for and secure them in vehicle
- Transport children and adults to designated evacuation site
- Do not drive through flooded areas, turn around if possible



After all arrive at evacuation site

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Notify families and licenser that you've arrived at evacuation site
- Remain at the evacuation site until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave

Intruder / Hostage Situation



Alert staff that an intruder is present

- Use a predetermined coded announcement such as, “*Trudy, please bring me the RED folder,*” that staff will understand but does not alert an intruder that you’ve sounded an alarm.
- Call 911 if it is safe to do so



Engage with intruder using calm, respectful, neutral tone of voice and actions

- Prevent or delay the intruder from gaining access to the children and adults by taking intruder to an area away from others
- Walk the intruder to the door and to ask them to leave using a soft, non-threatening voice
- If they exit the building, write down information about the incident
 - Description of what happened
 - Description of the intruder (e.g., what they look like, the clothes they are wearing)
 - Description of vehicle, license number and direction the vehicle was heading if the intruder leaves

If it develops into a hostage situation - do not resist

- Follow hostage taker’s directions
- Remain calm and polite with hostage taker

Know Who is in Your Building

Staff should question unfamiliar individuals in the building:

- Ask the person, “May I help you?”
- If they say they are there to pick up a child, ask to see photo identification and verify that they are authorized.
- If they ask to talk with staff, have them to wait in an area away from children. If possible, do not leave them unattended.
- Ask them to leave if they don’t have a reason to be there.
- Call 911 if person refuses to leave.



Run, Hide, Fight

A lockdown or lockout is the most common response to an intruder or hostage situation. Other options include:

- **RUN** away if it is safe to do so
- **HIDE** children and staff under furniture or in closets
- **FIGHT** as an absolute last option using nearby objects as weapons (scissors, bats) to aggressively fight off an intruder

Remember, the safety of the children should always be the top priority.

Lockout

If an intruder is OUTSIDE the building or there is an unsafe situation developing nearby



- Lock all exterior doors and windows, close blinds, cover windows
- Keep children away from windows and doors
- Maintain a calm atmosphere and continue regular activity within the building/classroom to avoid alarming children
- Keep children inside and do not allow outside access until director or emergency personnel director announce the end of the lockout

Lockdown

When an intruder is INSIDE the building and poses a threat to children and staff



- Turn off lights and audio/video equipment
- Stay where you are in the building or determine the safest area available – note that the building’s designated safe room may not be the best choice if it puts you in the vicinity of the intruder
- Lock all doors and windows, close blinds, and remain quiet
- Take these items with you if possible:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#)
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#)
- Assist children and adults who need help moving to safest area



After all are gathered in the safest area available

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Make a list of anyone who is missing or is being held hostage
- Have everyone sit quietly on the floor away from doors and windows
- Turn cell phone to vibrate mode
- If possible, write down information to give to emergency personnel:
 - Description of what happened
 - Description of the intruder (e.g., physical features, clothing)
 - If it is a hostage situation, consider if there are any possible connections between the hostage taker and the hostages
- Remain in safest area until the director or emergency personnel announce the end of the lockdown

Leaks and Spills

The location and type of gas leak or hazardous material spill will determine your response to this type of emergency. Follow the directives of emergency personnel as to whether it is best to shelter-in-place or evacuate.

If Directed to Shelter-in-Place



- Move children and adults who are outdoors to inside the building
- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#)
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#)
- Move children and adults to the designated safe room away from doors and windows
- Cover nose and mouth with a piece of clothing, a towel, or a mask if fumes are present
- Assist children and adults who need help
- Use plastic and tape to seal windows, doors, vents, and electrical outlets in the room
- Turn off fans and heating/air conditioning systems

Supply Tip

Keep an ample supply of packing tape, plastic sheeting, towels and masks in the designated safe room to block out hazardous fumes when sheltering in place.





After all are gathered in the designated safe room

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Report children and adults not accounted for to emergency personnel
- Provide first aid and reassure children as needed
- Use wet towels to cover cracks under doors if needed
- Tell children and adults who are able, to cover their mouths and noses with a mask, piece of clothing, a towel (wet if possible) if there is a risk of fumes filtering into the safe room.
- Notify families
- Remain in the safe room until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave



If Directed to Evacuate Out of the Area



- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - **Ready-to-Go File** 
 - **Emergency Supply Kit** 
- Secure all children and adults in vehicles
- Assist children and adults who need help during the evacuation
- Take attendance to account for all children and adults
- Locate anyone who is unaccounted for and secure them in vehicle
- Transport children and adults to the evacuation site as directed by emergency personnel



After all arrive at the evacuation site

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Notify families and licensor that you've arrived at evacuation site
- Remain in the evacuation site until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave

Missing Child



Alert others that a child is missing

- Ask caregivers/teachers to account for children in their care by gathering and keeping them together in their classrooms or as a group if outside
- Notify the family
- Call 911
- Provide a photo of the child and all other information requested by law enforcement
- Notify your child care licenser
- Contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children 24-hour hotline at 1-800-THE-LOST



Search for the child

- Review activities before disappearance and retrace steps.
- Search inside the facility: classrooms, bathrooms, closets, etc.
- Search outside the facility: playground equipment, outbuildings, hiding places, etc.
- Search vehicles on the property: cars, vans, buses, etc.
- Notify family and law enforcement when child is found.



Threatening Message

Written Message



- Handle or touch a written threat that is on paper as little as possible
- Save a written threat that is electronically transmitted via email, text, etc.
- DO NOT reply to written threat
- Call 911 and provide information about the threat
- Contact facility director

Phoned Message

- Engage caller in conversation for as long as possible or until emergency personnel arrives
- Record caller's phone number and information
- Tell designated staff to call 911 using a different phone line, and provide information about the threatening message
- Contact facility director



Evacuate to designated safe meeting place if instructed to do so by emergency personnel

- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) 
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) 
- Secure all children and adults in vehicles
- Assist children and adults who need help during evacuation
- Take attendance to account for all children and adults
- Search for anyone who is unaccounted for
- Transport children and adults to designated safe meeting place



After all arrive at the safe meeting place

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Notify families
- Remain in the safe meeting place until emergency personnel tell you that it is safe to leave



Thunderstorm

Severe Thunderstorm Watch

A WATCH means that weather conditions favor the development of thunderstorms in or near the watch area. Use this time to make preparations to reduce risks.



Monitor Conditions



- Come inside when lightning is seen or thunder is heard
- Monitor the weather app on your cell phone or listen to television, radio, or NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates
- Prepare to take shelter by moving Attendance Sheets, the [Ready-to-Go File](#) , and [Emergency Supply Kit](#)  to the designated safe room (See *Preparing to Shelter-in-Place* on page 5)

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

A WARNING means that a severe thunderstorm is nearby and the warning area is in the path of the storm.



Shelter-in-Place

- Take these items with you:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) 
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) 
- Move children and adults to the designated safe room
- Assist children and adults who need help moving to the safe room
- Move away from windows and glass
- Move away from materials and furniture that could fall
- Unplug electrical devices



After all are inside the safe room

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Reassure children as needed
- Notify families
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio if available for weather updates
- Remain in the safe room until weather updates indicate that the storm has passed
- Call 911 if damage or injury has occurred



Tornado

Tornado Watch

A WATCH means that weather conditions indicate that a tornado is possible in or near the watch area. Use this time to make preparations to reduce risks.



Monitor conditions



- Monitor the weather app on your cell phone or listen to television, radio, or NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates
- Prepare to take shelter by moving Attendance Sheets, the [Ready-to-Go File](#) , and [Emergency Supply Kit](#)  to the designated safe room (See *Preparing to Shelter-in-Place on page 5*)

Tornado Warning and Active Tornado

A WARNING means that a severe thunderstorm is nearby and the warning area is in the path of the storm.



Shelter in Place

- Take these items with you if they are not already in the safe room:
 - Attendance Sheets
 - [Ready-to-Go File](#) 
 - [Emergency Supply Kit](#) 
- Move children and adults to the designated safe room
- Assist children and adults who need help moving to the safe room
- Move away from windows and glass
- Move away from materials and furniture that could fall



After all are inside the safe room

- Check attendance to account for children and adults
- Provide first aid and reassure children as needed
- Notify families
- Monitor the weather app on your cell phone or listen to NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates
- Remain in the safe room until weather updates indicate that the storm has passed
- Call 911 if damage or injury has occurred

Conduct Tornado Drills

North Dakota licensing regulations require that home, group and center child care facilities conduct tornado drills during the tornado season and note them on a [Tornado Drill Log](#) 📄

Here are some tips to help you conduct a successful drill:

- Conduct drills once a month during the tornado season.
- Schedule drills on different days of the week and at different times (nap time, meal time, play time etc.). This ensures that all full- and part-time children and staff will know what to do in the event of a severe storm.
- Coordinate drills to include all building occupants if you share space with a church or another business.
- Practice taking children downstairs if your safe room is on a lower level. If alone, keep infants/toddlers secure in a Pack 'n Play or gated space if you need to make multiple trips between levels to retrieve all children.
- Staff and children, except non-mobile infants, should wear shoes to protect their feet in the event that the storm causes structural damage.
- Practice protective positions:
 - Have older children crouch low with head down, face toward floor, and hands covering their head. Children older than one year may use helmets to protect their head.
 - Adults should hold infants and shield their heads. If there are not enough adults available, secure infants with safety straps in car seats and supervise closely.
 - Have children and adults use blankets to protect themselves from falling debris.
- Notify parents when they pick up their child that a drill took place.
- Discuss after-action findings to assess the effectiveness of the drill. Modify the procedure as needed and communicate changes to staff so they are prepared for the next drill or actual emergency.

Utility Disruption

Loss of Electricity



Act to restore electricity

- Reset circuit breakers or replace fuses. Contact electrician if repairs are needed
- Report outage to the electric company
- Report outage to the director



Adapt the environment

- Use a back-up generator if available, making sure to comply with safety guidelines of the appliance
- Use natural light or provide emergency light such as flashlights as needed. **NO NOT USE CANDLES**
- Contact families of children who use special equipment that requires electricity (e.g., nebulizers, motorized wheelchair) to pick up their children if equipment does not have a battery backup or before the battery power is used up
- If outage occurs during meal or snack time, serve foods that do not require heating with a stove or microwave



Close the facility when the indoor temperature falls below 64 degrees F or rises above 85 degrees F

- Notify families
- During cold weather, use blankets or extra clothing to keep children and adults warm
- Move children and adults into one room to conserve warmth during extreme cold
- During hot weather, limit physical activity and offer drinking water while waiting for children to be picked up
- Use an alternative system if security and sign in/sign out systems are powered by electricity
- Contact your county extension office for food safety guidelines to determine if refrigerated or frozen food is safe to eat after a power outage

Loss of Natural Gas/Propane



Act to restore gas supply

- Turn off gas off at the source
- Contact gas company to report the outage



Adapt the environment

- If outage occurs during meal or snack time, serve foods that do not require heating if gas stove is used for cooking



Close the facility when the indoor temperature falls below 64 degrees F or rises above 85 degrees F

- Notify families
- During cold weather, use blankets or extra clothing to keep children and adults warm
- Move into one room to conserve warmth during extreme cold
- During hot weather, limit physical activity and offer drinking water while waiting for children to be picked up



Loss of Water Supply



Act to restore water supply

- Report loss of water to the city/county water authority
- Report outage to the electric company if the loss of water supply is due to loss of electricity to the water pump



Adapt the environment

- Use emergency drinking water supply for hydration, hygiene, and food preparation



Close the facility if the water supply will not be restored for an extended period

- Notify families of closing



Key Terms

72 Hour Emergency Supplies: Essential items that individuals or programs would need for the first three days after a disaster.

Advisory: A notice that highlights special weather conditions that are less serious than a warning. They are for events that may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, the conditions could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

After Action Findings: Documented results of what in your emergency plan worked and did not work after an incident happens. These findings are used to improve your plan and procedures.

Care Plan: A document that provides specific health care information, including any medications, procedures, precautions, or adaptations to diet or environment that may be needed to care for a child with chronic medical conditions or special health care needs.

Communication Procedure: The timing and method (e.g., verbal, written, electronic, phone) for sharing of information between two or more people.

Continuity of Operations: An effort to ensure that normal business operations and child care services carry on during emergency or disaster situations.

Disaster: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.


Drill: A type of exercise that is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single specific operation or function in a single agency. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or test new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills.

Emergency Disaster Plan: A simple set of emergency procedures that includes, at a minimum, parent/guardian contact information; medical information for each child; emergency services contact information; how to accommodate the needs of each child; and procedures for shelter-in-place, evacuation, and reunification.

Emergency Personnel: Includes organizations and individuals who assume an emergency management role. Also known as first responders or response personnel.

Emergency Supply Kit: Items to help you survive during and after an emergency, including food, water, and other supplies.

Evacuation: The organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of children, personnel, and visitors from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas.



Evacuation Site: A safe location that shelter people in transition due to an emergency.

Excessive Heat: When the outdoor heat index values meet or exceed a daytime high of 89° F.

FEMA: The Federal Emergency Management Agency is the Nation's lead emergency management and preparedness agency.

Flood: A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from overflow of inland or tidal waters, unusual or rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters, or mudslides/mudflows caused by accumulation of water.

Hazard: A natural, technological, or human-caused source or cause of harm or difficulty.

Lockdown: The action you take when a perceived danger is INSIDE the building.


Lockout: The action you take when a perceived danger is OUTSIDE the building.

NOAA Weather Radio: A radio with a special receiver to receive information from the network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information from the National Weather Service.

Non-Ambulatory: Not able to walk.

Preparedness: Comprehensive planning for each phase of an emergency. A sound emergency preparedness plan helps your program respond appropriately and quickly to circumstances that occur.

Prevention: Actions taken to avoid an incident or to intervene to stop an incident from occurring.

Ready-to-Go File: Essential documents that are pre-assembled and ready to grab and go in an emergency or disaster. See [Emergency Planning Template](#) 

Recovery: The act or process of returning to a normal state after an emergency or disaster.

Relocation: Moving to a place away from your facility in an emergency.

Reunification: A process to ensure that children are safely reunited with parents or legal guardians when an emergency occurs.

Safe Meeting Room: A predetermined location WITHIN THE BUILDING where children and staff are deemed safe from emergency.

Safe Meeting Place: A predetermined area located OUT OF THE BUILDING where staff and children meet and stay during emergency.

Shelter-in-Place: A procedure to keep you safe by remaining inside. It involves selecting an interior room or area in which to take refuge. Where you shelter depends on the type of hazard or threat.

Threat: Natural, technological, or human-caused occurrence, individual, entity, or action that has or indicates the potential to harm life, information, operations, the environment, and/or property.

Thunderstorm: A storm with thunder and lightning, often accompanied by rain or hail.

Tornado: A violent, rotating column of air that extends between, and is in contact with, the ground and a cloud.

Warning: A notice issued when a hazardous weather event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property (e.g., *tornado warning, thunderstorm warning, winter storm warning*).

Watch: A notice used when the risk of a hazardous weather event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so (e.g., *tornado watch, thunderstorm watch, winter storm watch*).

Winter Storm: A weather event resulting from low temperatures that can include extreme low temperatures, strong winds, and precipitation like snow, sleet, and ice.

Resources



All resources noted with this symbol are updated as new information is added or revised. You can download the most current version of these resources at:
<http://ndchildcare.org/providers/emergencies-disasters.html>



Disasters and emergencies often require a team of emergency personnel with specialized skills.

