

Standards and indicators for emergency preparedness and response

Public Health
Seattle & King County



WHAT'S COVERED:

- Standard #1:** Essential functions/services are identified
- Standard #2:** Changing needs of your clients in a disaster
- Standard #3:** Communication tools to contact internal and external stakeholders
- Standard #4:** Staff is personally prepared to fulfill their role in a disaster
- Standard #5:** Training for the agency's emergency plan
- Standard #6:** Self-sufficiency in the workplace for a minimum of three days
- Standard #7:** Vital information is backed-up and accessible
- Standard #8:** Emergency payment procedures and emergency financing options
- Standard #9:** Partner organization(s) are identified to share support/resources
- Standard #10:** Local emergency responders are familiar with staff and agency
- Standard #11:** Staff is trained on the Incident Command System
- Standard #12:** Physical safety of facility(ies) is/are addressed
- Standard #13:** Facility and staff are prepared for an evacuation

STANDARD #1

Essential functions/services are identified

"Who are you going to be for your clients and community when disaster strikes?"

Organizations that have taken the time to identify which of their functions and services are essential have greater success in handling the disruptions.

1a. The agency has thoroughly assessed their services, client/community needs and internal capabilities. List service(s) you currently provide.

- List your resource limitations.
- Explain what people (clients/staff/stakeholders) expected from you in the past?
- List, specifically, the most important way(s) to be there for your community and clients.
- Prioritize your services: Maintaining operations during an emergency is critical to provide your clients with necessary services. Decide which category the service falls into, to tell you what services absolutely must be maintained in an emergency and which you can return to after the situation has stabilized.
 - Critical Services: Cannot be interrupted or suspended
 - Secondary Services: Services/functions that can be suspended for a short period of time (for example, services that can be suspended for one month)
 - Non-critical Services: Services/functions that can be suspended for an extended period of time

1b. The agency has developed a disaster mission statement that identifies the critical services they would provide or the role they would play in an emergency or disaster.

- Using information from indicator 1a, develop a clear disaster statement that articulates both the critical services you will provide and the specific populations you will serve in the event of an emergency.
- Revisit your disaster mission statement every six months or more frequently if needed (as services change).

1c. Confirm your disaster mission statement with your organization's governing body.

- Note the date your mission statement was reviewed by the governing body somewhere on the agency emergency plan.

1d. Staff, clients and other key stakeholders are aware of the disaster mission.

This is a great way to increase their engagement and awareness of your overall Agency Emergency Plan. Assess what level of information will be useful for your clients regarding services that will still be available in the event of an emergency.

Questions to consider:

- How/when might you make staff, client, and key stakeholders aware of the Disaster Mission Statement?
- How will you assure that staff are trained on the plan and aware of critical services?
- Will staff be asked to move from non-critical services to higher priority ones?
- How will you regularly test/exercise pieces of the plan to make sure staff and the agency are progressing toward their mission?

Key Tools for This Standard

- [Equity and Social Justice Maps](#)
- [U.S. Census Data](#)
- [Search Social Vulnerability Index \(SoVI\)](#)
This is a PDF presentation explaining the Social Vulnerability Index.
- [SoVI Interactive Map](#) – Click “Open” and select “Open in ArcGIS Explorer Online”
- [King County Community Health Indicators](#)
This is a website that provides demographic information (maps, graphs, charts, and other tools) to help assess your community’s needs and capabilities.

STANDARD #2

The agency has a plan for how it will operate during a disaster, and if the agency is unable to operate have a backup plan for how critical services will be addressed.

"How will your agency operations adapt to the changing needs of your clients in a disaster?"

- 2a. The agency has determined which services will be provided in a disaster and which ones will be discontinued.
- Using information from standard 1 indicator a, determine which services on your list are most appropriate to be continued in a disaster.
 - Consider which services you may not be able to continue in a disaster and how this will impact operations.
- 2b. If the agency is not able to operate, have a plan for how it will close down.
- Logistically, think about what may be needed to close down agency location (s)
- 2c. The agency has a process to notify clients if they will not be served at/by the agency.
- Determine how the people you serve will receive critical information about the status of your organization during an emergency (examples: electronic, verbal, in-person, recorded message, sign on door).
 - Determine how you will find out about the condition of the people you serve.
 - Determine how you will deliver critical information to the people you serve in the languages they understand.
- 2d. The safety and care of clients and visitors who are at the agency at the time of a disaster are addressed.
- If feasible, develop a system for knowing who is in your location, including client and visitors, in case there is an emergency.
 - Evacuation plans that assume hearing, comprehension, and mobility mean that a large number of people are excluded.
 - Include information on assisting people with disabilities in evacuation in planning and training.
 - Plan how to communicate with people who are hearing-impaired and/or visually impaired or have other disabilities and those who have limited English proficiency.

2e. There is a notification process to communicate changes in services to key partners and disaster responders:

- Things to consider in the messaging:
 - What hours the agency is open, and if it is closed, when it expects to resume services?
 - If the agency is closed, what the reason is for the closure?
 - How and to whom clients are being referred, if services are not being provided?
 - How the agency will notify key partners that services are resumed, if they had been suspended, and under what conditions?
 - How to contact someone at the agency with questions?
- How will you get the message out?
- Who within your agency will deliver the message?

Key Tools for This Standard

- [ECHO Minnesota](#)
Provides communication tools in multiple languages to public health and safety agencies during a crisis.

STANDARD #3

Multiple communication tools are identified and established in order to contact internal and external stakeholders

"Is there a communication plan in place that addresses internal and external contacts if standard methods of communication are unavailable?"

During emergencies communication is frequently disrupted.

- Phone lines are overwhelmed – the phone system is designed to handle a certain number of calls, when too many people call, the system can't connect all of the calls. This affects landlines and cell phones. The long distance and local calling systems are separate though, so usually it is still possible to receive a long distance call.
- Even when the larger system is functioning, loss of power may disable your phone system because it requires power to operate.
- In major events, communication infrastructure can be damaged: this can include wires, and or cell phone towers.

3a. You have emergency, after-hours contact information for all staff.

- This information is easily accessible for staff both onsite and offsite.

3b. Primary and alternate procedures for communicating with critical staff and key partners are in place.

- Ensure all staff can receive critical information about the status of your organization during an emergency (examples: employee emergency hotline, Web site and/or Intranet, radio or TV news reports, communication tree)
- Establish the following roles:
 - Who approves the messaging (messaging topics include: agency operational status, damage assessment, services offered or changed, funds needed, volunteers needed)? Does s/he have a designated back-up?
 - Who is authorized to communicate the information? Does s/he have a designated back-up? Are they properly trained?
- Are the messages they share consistent?
- Messages and spokespeople should be prepared in advance.

Key Tool for This Standard

- [ECHO Minnesota](#)
Provides communication tools in multiple languages to public health and safety agencies during a crisis.

STANDARD #4

Staff is personally prepared to fulfill their role in a disaster

"Does each of your staff have a disaster plan and kit prepared that addresses personal and family safety beyond your agency?"

An effective emergency plan relies on having your staff and volunteers personally prepared at home, in their cars and at work. After a disaster staff and volunteers who are personally prepared will be more likely to be available to support your agency's services at a time when they are most needed by your clients. Many free resources are available to help your staff and volunteers to be personally prepared.

4a. Staff is identified who are willing and able, and they have been prepared to respond to a disaster.

- Encourage staff and volunteers to make their own disaster plan, build a home disaster kit and get involved in community disaster planning and training. Distribute the following personal preparedness information
- Contact your local emergency manager or the Red Cross to schedule personal disaster preparedness trainings for your agency. Include preparedness training in your next staff /volunteer meeting. Schedule these trainings twice or more each year. Visit the links below for more information.

Key Tools for This Standard

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Zombie Preparedness](#)
This tool was launched in 2011 and quickly gathered buzz for its creative approach to engaging new and diverse audiences. Capitalizing on the popularity of zombies in the media, the CDC's campaign remains an effective educational platform for personal preparedness.
- [Seattle Office of Emergency Management](#)
- [King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

STANDARD #5

Staff and key stakeholders have been trained on the agency's emergency plan

"How will you ensure that your agency's emergency plan is accessible and familiar to staff and key stakeholders?"

An emergency plan can be meticulous and well-written, but won't provide any benefit if the knowledge it contains is shared by only a few within your agency while the document itself collects dust. Staff and key stakeholders should be familiar with the agency emergency plan and regularly exercised on its content.

5a. Staff are trained on the agency emergency plan and new staff are trained as part of their orientation.

- Incorporate training about your agency's emergency plan in new staff orientations. Provide a basic introduction about the plan, and clarify what the new staff persons' role will be in a disaster. Show new staff where they can access copies of the emergency plan and where emergency supplies are located.

5b. The agency emergency plan is accessible to all staff.

- Place a binder with a copy of your agency's emergency plan at the front desk of your agency's facilities and in employee break rooms so that staff can have quick and easy access to the emergency plan.
- Locate a copy of the agency emergency plan off-site to ensure that evacuated staff will have access to a print copy of the emergency plan.
- Maintain an electronic copy of the plan as well, so that as the plan is updated – new updated versions can be: copied to employees, distributed electronically to employees, and/or posted in a prominent location to the agency's website.

5c. The agency emergency procedures are regularly exercised and tested.

- Establish an annual schedule for key staff to conduct exercises to test the agency's emergency plan and the agency's response to a variety of disaster situations with the subjects of these exercises (e.g., a natural emergency such as a flood or earthquake, a biological emergency such as H1N1 flu, and an electrical emergency (power outage, computer virus, etc.), rotating each year. Track trainings using a form such as a Training and Exercise Calendar.

Key Tool for This Standard

- [FEMA: Emergency Planning Exercises for Your Organization](#)
Tabletop exercises developed by FEMA in 2010 as a tool to help agencies advance their organization's continuity, preparedness and resiliency.

STANDARD #6

Staff is prepared to be self-sufficient in the work place for a minimum of three days

"Do all staff have the essentials to survive for 72 hours in the workplace without outside resources/supplies?"

An effective emergency plan relies on having your staff and volunteers personally prepared at home, in their cars and at work. After a disaster staff and volunteers who are personally prepared will be more likely to be available to support your agency's services at a time when they are most needed by your clients. Many free resources are available to help your staff and volunteers to be personally prepared.

6a. Staff are familiar with shelter-in-place and lock-down procedures.

- Staff are aware of shelter-in-place procedures for various emergency scenarios such as:
 - A severe snow or ice storm
 - Civil activity such as a demonstration or protest
 - A large earthquake has extensively damaged bridges and roads
 - Police activity in the immediate area
 - A release of hazardous materials from an accident or a terrorist act.
- Make sure staff know what their role would be and how to communicate with their loved ones that they will not be leaving the building.
- All locations are able to operate independently.
- Provide cross training between job functions to increase the number of people available to accomplish key function in case key personnel cannot be contacted.

6b. Food, water and sanitation supplies are easily accessible.

- Determine a location that can be reached even in the case of structural damage.
- Store supplies in a way that they will survive the disaster – out of areas that can flood, secured in case of earthquake.
- Ensure each of the locations have the supplies, skills, and authority to function independently if contact between locations is lost.

6c. All staff know where emergency supplies are located.

- Put up signs indicating where emergency supplies are and include their location in any new employee tours.
- If you have a map up in your facility showing where exits and bathrooms are, mark the supplies on the map.

- ❑ Safety signage should include emergency supplies, emergency exits, utility shutoffs, and other safety equipment.

Key Tools for This Standard

- Food/Water/Sanitation
[Food and Water in an Emergency \(American Red Cross\)](#)
[3 Days 3 Ways](#) (multiple languages) - Easy to follow guide on personal disaster preparedness
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Zombie Preparedness](#)
This tool was launched in 2011 and quickly gathered buzz for its creative approach to engaging new and diverse audiences. Capitalizing on the popularity of zombies in the media, the CDC's campaign remains an effective educational platform for personal preparedness.
- Workplace Disaster Preparedness
[Red Cross Workplace Preparedness Page](#)
- Shelter in Place
[OSHA Shelter in Place Procedures and Information](#) [Red Cross: How to Shelter in Place](#)
[Boston Marathon: Largest Historical Magnitude of Shelter in Place](#)

STANDARD #7

Vital information is backed-up and accessible

"Is your vital information stored and protected in a secure, accessible location?"

7a. Critical documents, contact information for key employees and the agency emergency plan are included in the agency Go-Kit. Critical documents include

- Agency emergency plan
- Lists of Staff and Board members
- Suppliers/Vendors
- Key Contacts
- Information for Critical Business Functions
- Recovery Location
- Critical Telephone Numbers
- Supplies
- List of Equipment/Vehicles
- Computer Equipment and Software
- Voice/Data Communications
- Miscellaneous Resources

7b. Key staff have a copy of the Agency Go-Kit. At least one copy is stored in an off-site location.

- Ensure the off-site location is accessible in the event of an emergency.

7c. Critical client and billing data, if applicable, is backed up in a secure, off-site location, preferably out of state.

- Create backups for electronic information
- Choose a remote online backup provider.

Key Tools for This Standard

- [How Do You Identify A Vital Record?](#)
- [Tech Soup: Creating Backups for Organizational Information](#) Informative article
- [Tech Soup: Storing Data on the Cloud](#) Informative article
- [Environmental Requirements To Ensure Media Stability](#) Environmental considerations for storing vital records

STANDARD #8

Emergency payment procedures and emergency financing options are established and maintained

"Are you prepared to operate financially without access to electronic systems?"

To fulfill the disaster mission statement, organizations need to be able to pay their staff and suppliers on time.

8a. Backup plans enable key financial procedures and payroll processing to continue.

- Moving towards electronic payroll and payments (encourage this).
- Off-site payroll processing: outsourcing, or agreement.
- Flexible policies: Analyze your policies to see what needs to be changed to allow the creation of payroll and payment solutions on short notice.
- Keep a list of credit cards that your organization maintains:
 - Where are they?
 - What are the limits of each?
 - Who can sign on each?
 - Do they have emergency credit extensions?
- Consider setting up a Line of Credit reserved for use in emergencies
- Be sure your organization is adequately insured for damage incurred by likely disasters in our region.

8b. Emergency contact information is identified for key vendors and suppliers.

- Use critical documents lists as starting points for gathering this information.

8c. Resources are prioritized for procurement.

- Use critical services list and other relevant lists as a starting point.

8d. Procedures are in place to track disaster/emergency expenditures.

- Think about ways to track expenditures without the use of technology.
- Be able to respond to the needs of a disaster and keep track of receipts and time keeping.
- Maintain a level of "petty cash" for emergencies

STANDARD #9

Partner organization(s) are identified to share support/resources in event of a disaster

"Have you identified community assets that can assist your efforts to serve your clients during times of disruption?"

This effort draws on the resources of agencies and businesses that are in geographic proximity of one another to mutually provide assistance when the community needs it the most. Depending on the level of support needed, sometimes an agreement between organizations can be reached informally. A "Mutual Aid Agreement" might be appropriate for more formal arrangements.

9a. The agency has identified and mapped community assets.

- Meet with your agency's management team to brainstorm possible service gaps during times of disruption.
- Determine what extra assistance you might need for continuity of service.
- Identify prospective agencies or businesses that could help assist.
- Identify the assets your agency could share with another agency.

9b. Conversations have been initiated and necessary agreements are in place.

- Collaborate, make a plan, write a mutual aid agreement or informally agree to synergize assets to serve the community.

STANDARD #10

Local emergency responders are familiar with staff and agency

"Who are the emergency responders in your area and have you established a connection with them?"

An effective emergency plan relies on having your staff and volunteers personally prepared at home, in their cars and at work. After a disaster staff and volunteers who are personally prepared will be more likely to be available to support your agency's services at a time when they are most needed by your clients. Many free resources are available to help your staff and volunteers to be personally prepared.

10a. The names and contact information of emergency providers is gathered and accessible to staff and volunteers.

- Local emergency manager
- Local police and fire departments
- Public Health - Seattle & King County
- Seattle Office of Emergency Management
- King County Office of Emergency Management
- American Red Cross serving King & Kitsap counties
- Post emergency provider responder information in public places such as the lunchroom or coffee station.
- Emphasize calling 911 for emergencies.

10b. Emergency service providers, such as the local office of emergency management, Public Health and American Red Cross, are aware of the role the agency is likely to play in a response or recovery phase of a disaster or emergency.

- Communicate the services your agency will perform during a disaster to your local emergency responders (see Standard 1, Indicator b).

10c. Key agency staff have been identified to develop and maintain relationships with local emergency service providers.

- Identify a representative in your organization who has authority to make decisions regarding participation in emergency management planning activities.
- Build a relationship with your emergency providers.
- Invite a representative from the fire department to evaluate your evacuation drills and to discuss potential fire hazards at your facility.
- Invite a representative from the police department to discuss security concerns.

10d. Procedures for communicating with local government, including providing situational assessment information are in place.

- Contact your local office of emergency management to determine efficient communication procedures with government agencies.

STANDARD #11

Staff are trained in the Incident Command System (ICS)

"Are staff equipped to perform their ICS roles in the event of an emergency?"

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized management tool developed by FEMA to help you make your best decisions during an emergency. ICS is flexible and can be used for incidents of any type, scope, and complexity. ICS consists of procedures for coordinating your agency's staff/volunteers, facilities, equipment, and communications. The system is designed to be applied from the time an incident occurs until the requirement for management and operations ends.

11a. Staff understand the organizational structure of the ICS.

- Explain each of the 5 major management activities (command, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance and administration) and each person's related role in relationship.

11b. If organizing by ICS, agency leadership staff have taken on-line courses (FEMA ICS 100 & 200) and the ICS structure is incorporated into training and exercises.

- FEMA ICS 100
- FEMA ICS 200

STANDARD #12

Physical safety of facility/ies is/are addressed (hazard reduction & mitigation)

"Has your building been inspected and deemed safe in the face of various hazard scenarios?"

12a. The agency has conducted a hazards and vulnerability analysis of facility(ies).

- Consider the various hazards listed below (earthquake, severe wind, flood, tsunami, hazardous materials, arsenic contamination, landslides) and use the tools to complete your analysis.
- Consider the needs of potentially vulnerable populations as you conduct your analysis.

12b. The agency has taken action to minimize facility risks to staff and clients.

- The physical environment of your facility has been prepared for a variety of hazardous situations.
- Assign tasks throughout the year for staff to complete based on your vulnerability analysis.

Key Tools for This Standard

- Severe Wind [NOAA](#)
- Flood
 - [King County Regional Preparedness Site](#) [FEMA Flood Insurance](#)
- Tsunami
 - [Tsunami Hazard Map](#)
- [Arsenic Contamination from Tacoma Smelter Plume](#)
- Landslides
 - [King County GIS Maps](#)

STANDARD #13

Facility and staff are prepared for an evacuation

"Have you conducted regular evacuation drills?"

13a. Evacuation routes and exit signs are clearly marked and posted throughout the facility.

- Locate and make copies of building and site maps with critical utility and emergency routes clearly marked. Identify and clearly mark entry-exit points both on the maps and throughout the building.
- Post maps for quick reference by employees.
- Keep copies of building and site maps with your crisis management plan and other important documents in your Go Kit and also at an off-site location. Identify which person will be responsible for taking the Go Kit during evacuation.
- Make copies of building and site maps available to first responders or other emergency personnel.
- Plan two ways out of the building from different locations throughout your facility.
- Consider the feasibility of installing emergency lighting or plan to use flashlights in case the power goes out.

13b. Staff and volunteers are familiar with the evacuation protocols and know where to rally after evacuating the facility.

- Some disasters will require people to leave the building quickly. The ability to evacuate staff, clients and visitors effectively can save lives. People who plan and practice how they will get out of the building in an emergency are better prepared than those who do not.
- Decide in advance who can order an evacuation. Create a chain of command so that others are authorized to act in case your designated person is not available. If local officials tell you to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Be sure to take time to specifically account for diversity in how information is received and acted upon.
- Identify who will shut down critical operations and lock the doors, if possible, during an evacuation. Emphasize personal safety first.
- Identify roles to help in evacuation. Alarm systems, flashing lights and announcements do not ensure that everyone on site will be aware of the need to evacuate. Identify people in each area of your building who will sweep the area as they exit.
- Train others who can serve as a back-up if the designated person is unavailable.
- Write down, distribute and practice evacuation procedures.
- Establish a warning system. Test systems frequently.

- Designate an assembly site. Pick one location near your facility and another in the general area in case you have to move farther away.
 - Talk to staff in advance about the importance of letting someone know if they cannot get to the assembly site or if they must leave it. Have sign in sheets and designate certain staff responsible for retrieving these to account for guests and customers when you get to the assembly site.

Key Tools for This Standard

- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal](#)