



Vol. 6 No. 2  
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# CNA Training Advisor

Formerly *Program Plans: Nursing Basic*, an EPSCO publication.

## Disaster preparedness

Disasters come in many shapes and sizes. They tend to be sudden, urgent, and usually unforeseen occurrences or occasions requiring immediate action.

All healthcare facilities must have disaster and evacuation plans. These must be reviewed on a regular basis.

The goal of disaster plans is to **save lives** and **reduce panic, confusion, and injury**. The first step in doing so is to **remain calm** yourself.

As a CNA, you must prepare to take immediate action for any scenario that may arise in the facility. When disaster hits, it's important to remain calm and follow all necessary procedures that will assist the facility's residents to safety.

Emergency personnel may not always be available immediately to help out when a disaster strikes. As a CNA, you are responsible for doing everything in your control to keep your residents out of harm's way.

Many different emergencies will be covered in today's lesson, including **fires, power outages, terrorism, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and bomb threats**.

Have a good day of training, and stay tuned for next month's issue of **CNA Training Advisor** about restorative nursing.

## PROGRAM PREP

### Program time

Approximately 45 minutes

### Learning objectives

Participants in this activity will learn how to do the following:

- Define at least four types of emergencies
- Develop plans to prepare for different types of emergencies
- Take appropriate and effective action in the event of these emergencies
- Determine how to assist residents during a disaster

### Preparation

- Review the material on pp. 2–4
- Duplicate the **CNA Professor** insert for participants
- Gather equipment for participants (e.g., an attendance sheet, pencils, etc.)

### Method

1. Place a copy of **CNA Professor** and a pencil at each participant's seat
2. Conduct the questionnaire as a pretest or, if participants' reading skills are limited, as an oral posttest
3. Present the program material
4. Review the questionnaire
5. Discuss the answers

### Questionnaire answer key

- |      |      |       |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. a | 5. a | 9. c  |
| 2. c | 6. b | 10. a |
| 3. d | 7. d |       |
| 4. b | 8. b |       |

### About your CNA training advisor:



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### Restorative Nursing and You: Helping Residents Help Themselves

Restorative nursing helps residents remain as independent as possible while promoting well-being and overall health. CNAs play a vital role in this process, providing the direct, day-to-day care that helps residents maintain independence. In just 20 minutes, this video will ensure that residents receive proper care by breaking down the restorative nursing process and incorporating real-life scenarios in ways CNAs will understand. For more information or to order, call 800/650-6787 or visit [www.hcmarketplace.com](http://www.hcmarketplace.com).

# Disaster preparedness

## Fire emergency

### Question:

What procedures should you follow in your facility in the case of a fire emergency?

### Discuss.

### Suggested plan

If a fire is detected and the alarm has not sounded, the person who discovers the fire should do the following:

- Pull the nearest fire alarm
- Move patients in immediate danger to a safer place
- Call 911 and confirm the exact location of the fire, along with the address of the facility and your name
- Announce “Code Red” over the public address system, along with the exact location of the fire

Other staff members should do the following as assigned:

- If it is a small fire, extinguish the fire if it is safe to do so
- If the fire cannot be safely extinguished, close the door to the room containing the fire and place wet towels, sheets, or blankets at the base of the door if it is safe to do so
- Remove patients from adjoining rooms and relocate them to a safe area
- Take a patient head count and relay the results to the charge nurse
- Check all rooms, close windows and doors, and turn off overhead lights, electrical appliances, oxygen, and fans
- Clear corridors if smoke is not present
- Wait for the arrival of the fire department for further instructions

If smoke is present, remain close to the floor and cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth. Smoke and poisonous gases collect first near the ceiling.

Patients who are not in immediate danger usually are not evacuated unless directed by fire department personnel.

However, if all patients are ordered to be evacuated, begin with those patients who are on oxygen. Relocate them beyond fire doors or as far away from the fire as possible.

### Question:

What should you do if you are not on your assigned unit when there is an emergency alert?

### Discuss.

If patients must be removed from their beds during evacuation, disconnect any catheters or other equipment attached to the bed in preparation for moving. After patients have

been relocated, another head count will be taken and relayed to the charge nurse. The professional staff will assemble all patients’ charts or Kardexes and secure and lock the medication carts.

### Question:

How should you test a closed door to check whether it’s safe to open? (Example: Test the temperature of the door by pressing your forearm or palm against it.)

### Discuss.

## Power outages

In the event of a power outage, notify the local utility company that the facility has lost power. The company should also be informed if respirators and other emergency medical equipment are in operation.

Always have spare flashlights, batteries, a battery-operated radio, and a list of emergency telephone numbers readily available.

In addition, you should take the following steps in this type of emergency situation:

- Go from room to room reassuring patients and informing them of what has happened.
- Unplug electrical equipment, such as TVs, to prevent electrical overload when power is restored. When the power is restored, wait a few minutes before turning on lights and appliances.
- If the weather is cold and heat is lost, help keep patients warm by providing extra clothing or blankets.

## Home health care

If you are a home health aide, and the power goes out during a home visit, you should:

- Check the fuse box to see whether a fuse is blown or a circuit breaker has been tripped.
- Notify the local utility company of the outage.
- Turn off and unplug most lights and appliances.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible. If the freezer is only partially full, group packages together so they form an “igloo” to keep each other cold.
- If the outside temperature is cold, open faucets so the pipes will not freeze.
- If the weather is cold and heat is lost, help keep patients warm by providing extra clothing and blankets.

## Terrorism

Since 9/11, we have all become aware that we are vulnerable and subject to terrorist attacks.

You can prepare to deal with terrorist acts by adapting many of the same techniques used for other crises. Prepare as follows:

- Be alert and aware of what is happening around you.

- Know where emergency exits are located in public buildings. For instance, if you are in a movie theater or restaurant, take note of the location of emergency exits. At work, know the evacuation plan.

## Building explosion

An explosion, whether due to terrorist activity or malfunction of equipment within the facility, can cause fires and/or building collapse. Take the following safety measures in case a building explosion should occur:

- Know emergency evacuation procedures
- Know where the fire exits are located
- Know where fire extinguishers are located and how to use them
- Learn first aid
- Keep several flashlights with extra batteries and know where they are

## During an explosion

Prior to 9/11, the issue of becoming trapped in the debris of a collapsed building was rarely addressed. However, this disaster can happen, and in the event that it does, stay calm and follow these important rules:

- Use a flashlight if you have one.
- Remain quiet so that you don't kick up dust or disturb the material above you.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or clothing to prevent breathing in dust.
- Make a noise by striking two items together to let rescuers know where you are. Don't shout, because dust from a collapsed building tends to collect in your throat.

## Victims of explosion

If you are in close proximity to a building that has collapsed, do not attempt to rescue people inside the building. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Without the proper training, you may unintentionally cause injury to yourself or those you are trying to help. Emergency personnel are trained to rescue survivors and remove wreckage without causing further building collapse and endangering the rescue effort.

## Tornadoes

In the event of a tornado, you should open the windows on the side of the building away from the direction of the arriving storm. This reduces the buildup of air pressure inside the building.

If possible, board up all other windows. Move residents to central hallways to prevent them from being injured by glass from broken windows.

Completely cover residents who are unable to be moved quickly to prevent them from being cut by flying glass or objects. Put all loose objects in drawers so they will not blow around and cause injury. Find flashlights to use in the event of electrical and generator failure.

When residents are taken care of, assist in accounting for each of them.

## Floods

In some parts of the country, floods are a frequent occurrence. They may come on slowly or quickly.

If the water rises slowly, there is usually time to evacuate the residents to the safety of higher ground. However, in some situations when the water rises quickly, there may not be time for evacuation.

It may be decided not to evacuate if there is flooding in the general area, but the facility is not directly threatened.

### Question:

What steps should be followed in the event of rising water when evacuation of the building is not possible or immediately necessary?

 **Discuss.**

In the case of a flood emergency, always use stairwells—never elevators. An elevator can malfunction if water gets

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# Disaster preparedness

into the electrical equipment. Flashlights are again a necessity, in case of electrical and generator failure. If it's possible, residents should be moved to higher floors.

Collect and fill large, clean containers with water for drinking, as the water supply may become contaminated. Fill bathtubs and other containers with water for nondrinking purposes. All patients should be accounted for when necessary precautions have been taken.

## Hurricanes

The strong winds that are commonly associated with hurricanes can cause major damage to a facility. If there is enough warning, the maintenance staff may cover the windows with boards and put away or secure outdoor furniture and other objects.

In the event of a hurricane warning, close all drapes or curtains to protect residents from any breaking windows. Put all loose objects into drawers so they will not blow around and cause injury. If a flood warning accompanies the hurricane, follow the flood warning guidelines. Again, having flashlights available and taking a head count of residents are also necessities.

## Earthquakes

Earthquakes typically come without much warning. They can range from slight tremors to major quakes. Be prepared for aftershocks, which can also cause severe damage.

In the event of an earthquake, get as many people as possible in doorways or other areas that have structural strength. Watch for and report signs of fire due to broken gas and electrical lines. Report any broken gas, electric, or water lines to the appropriate authorities. Fill clean containers

with water for drinking purposes, and fill bathtubs with water for nondrinking purposes. Finally, find any flashlights and account for all residents.

## Bomb threats

### Question:

What steps should you take in the event of a bomb threat?



### Discuss.

Bomb threats are another emergency you must be prepared to handle. When dealing with a bomb threat that is phoned in, the number one thing to keep in mind is that you should never hang up first. There is a possibility that the call can be traced. Other things to remember include the following:

- Get as much information as possible from the caller.
- Keep the caller on the line and record every spoken word, if recording equipment is available.
- Ask the caller where the bomb is located, what type of bomb it is, and when it is set to detonate. If someone is in the frame of mind to plant a bomb, he or she may tell you this information without thinking twice about it.

If possible, try to record the following facts:

- The time and date of the call
- The assumed age and sex of the caller
- Any distinguishing speech characteristics
- A complete and accurate account of what was said by the caller, to the extent this is possible
- Any background noise that may help identify the source or location of the call
- The phone number of the caller, if the phone is equipped with this function

The police and the facility administrator must be notified immediately about any bomb threat.

Every bomb threat should be considered legitimate. After you've been notified of the threat, do not touch any suspicious packages. Clear the area around any such package. When the police arrive, they will conduct a search of the building or specific locations in or about the building. Avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas of an evacuated building. Move away from the building to leave sidewalks and streets clear for emergency officials.

In the end, CNAs who are trained and prepared to handle emergencies can reduce the number of injuries and level of damage that can occur in an emergency situation. ■

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*CNA Training Advisor*

# CNA Professor

## Disaster preparedness

Mark the correct response.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. During an evacuation due to a fire, whom should you evacuate first?
  - a. Residents on oxygen
  - b. Residents on the first floor
  - c. Residents in wheelchairs
  - d. Residents who don't need assistance to evacuate
2. Which of the following should be the first thing you do after an evacuation?
  - a. Alert the media
  - b. Call your loved ones to tell them you're okay
  - c. Take a head count of all residents
  - d. Notify staff members who weren't on duty
3. During most emergencies, which of the following should always be on hand?
  - a. Batteries
  - b. Flashlights
  - c. List of emergency contacts
  - d. All of the above
4. In the event of a collapsed building, always attempt to rescue whomever you can from any damages.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. In the case of a tornado, where should you put residents?
  - a. Into hallways to prevent injury from broken or flying objects
  - b. On the highest floor possible
  - c. In the dining room
  - d. Do not remove them from where they are
6. You should always use the elevator to remove residents quickly from a facility during a flood.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. If there is advanced warning of a hurricane, what is a precaution the maintenance staff can take?
  - a. Cover windows with boards
  - b. Put away or secure outdoor furniture
  - c. Secure all loose objects
  - d. All of the above
8. Once an earthquake is over, no more damage can occur.
  - a. True
  - b. False
9. One thing you should never do in the event of a bomb threat is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. ask the caller where the bomb is located
  - b. record the conversation if the proper equipment is available
  - c. hang up
  - d. ask when the bomb is set to go off
10. When emergency officials show up to search a building that received a bomb threat, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. leave sidewalks and streets clear for emergency officials
  - b. stand close by the facility with evacuated residents
  - c. go back in to help look for anything suspicious
  - d. none of the above