

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

The following checklist offers some suggestions to help minimize the potential consequences of a disaster or adverse circumstances.



1. Compile primary phone numbers
 - State board of pharmacy
 - Computer company
 - DEA/fire and police departments
 - Insurance agents(s)/landlord
 - Wholesalers and major suppliers
 - Employees
 - Utility companies
2. List of all vendors
 - Mail and email addresses
 - Phone and fax numbers, including help desk
 - Complete representatives' information, including after-hours phone numbers
 - Phone/electric/cable/DSL/computer
3. Maintain important documents—copies of current licenses
 - State license/DEA license/pharmacist and tech licenses
 - Diplomas
 - Controlled substance inventories
 - State tax license/federal tax license
 - Copies of your corporate charge cards
 - Copies of your bank account numbers
 - Any other license or posted notice that would normally be required to be posted at your business site
 - All of your insurance documents
 - Original drafts/all riders/all changes
4. Have the ability to store the appropriate quantity of invoices/claim advices/contracts/etc.
5. Take pictures of everything (including aisles, fixtures, basement, technology, and office areas).
6. Retake pictures when needed—keep a current visual history of your business.
7. Create a “before” video
 - Use of video and narration of damage reduces the time needed by the insurance adjuster to make a decision on damage.
 - Update video p.r.n.
8. Back-up tapes/CDs/hard drives
 - Dual/redundant external hard drives—back up each day
9. Full system backup (Rx and POS)
 - Business office computers
 - Take home each day and swap out next day
10. Before entering the damage area:
 - Check with police/fire departments and utility companies
 - Work in pairs
 - Wear protective clothing
11. Form a “cooperative agreement” with another pharmacy on an in-case-of-emergency basis.
12. Scope out potential storage sites.
13. Maintain a good rapport with your business neighbors.
14. Consider having an off-site answering service or device.
15. Delegate authority when possible to key personnel who will obtain and maintain store information that can aid your business during a transitional period.
16. Prepare a policy analysis and claim strategy.
17. Set up a post-loss plan to protect your operations and market, and to notify your customers, banks, and suppliers.
18. Pre-prepare a public relations program to inform all stakeholders and the public of the store’s status and where they can obtain their medications.
19. Know the players, including insurance company representatives.
20. Make the decisions that are best for the survival of your company.

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ARE YOU

READY?





Resources are available to help pharmacists prepare for emergencies—use them

By Lisa Schwartz, PharmD

Do you remember the Zombie Apocalypse of 2011? Chances are the answer is no, because there was no such disaster. Regardless, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Zombie Apocalypse Preparedness Guide* (<http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/zombies.htm>) brought thousands of people to the CDC webpages to learn about the steps they should take to prepare for

any emergency requiring shelter-in-place. What started out as a light-hearted awareness campaign was a great success to reach a broad audience.

Emergency preparedness is a broad and sometimes misleading notion. Emergencies take many forms, may affect a few or millions and may occur with no notice or several hours' notice. There is a good chance that you have a disaster recovery plan if you attempted or accomplished the feat of becoming an accredited durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) supplier. There is an even better chance that a little bit of legwork or delegation will go a long way to shoring up your plan. For the sake of your family, your employees, and your community, it's time to evaluate your preparedness.

Plan for Minor Emergencies

Start with a plan for a minor emergency. Do your employees know what to do when the power goes out for more than a minute or two? Tomorrow, ask each of your employees if they know where to find a flashlight and spare batteries. Ask them to role-play and escort you calmly to the front door or a safe location in the pharmacy designated for shelter during severe weather. Assign one or more employee to be responsible for a sweep through the store to be sure all customers have been escorted to an exit or safe location and that all employees are safe and have been accounted for. If you have expensive refrigerated inventory, an emergency generator is good insurance against loss of inventory.

Did you pass? The next challenge is to consider natural disasters which, though they may be rare, are most likely to affect your normal operations. How should you respond to a fire, flash flood, major flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or winter storm?

Sometimes, emergency preparation just means you've taken measures to minimize losses and downtime. The Disaster Preparedness Checklist offered by the NCPA Foundation at NCPAFoundation.org (see sidebar) is an excellent resource to make sure your business is ready to get back online or ready to start over.

Rx Response.org (see sidebar) has a template for you to help patients prepare for an emergency. Helping



patients fill out the Vital Information Card may help you identify prescriptions from other pharmacies, regular over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements the patient takes. Helping people fill out cards at a community service event may lead you to make an important intervention. The Rx Response Pharmacy Status Reporting tool is turned on when disaster strikes to tell health officials and patients which pharmacies are open and transmitting reimbursement claims—an excellent proxy for normal operations. Pharmacies that want to ensure they are reporting to the Pharmacy Status Reporting tool should email the name and location of the pharmacy to contactus@rxresponse.org and ask to “opt-in.”

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Shelter in Place Drill

In June, Rx Response hosted a drill for the health care associations who are members. NCPA and two NCPA pharmacy owner members participated in this four-hour event that simulated what could happen if dirty bombs went off in Philadelphia; Wilmington, Del.; and Newark, N.J. We responded to the initial reports of the first imaginary bomb, putting together a list of members who would be directly affected, those

who would likely have moderate to severe business interruptions and those who would need guidance on responding as thousands evacuated. Then there was the uncertainty that came with the second, and then the third, we wondered where the next one would be. The simulation issued orders from government officials to “shelter in place” aiming to reduce the number of people exposed to radioactive debris or avoid evacuating to a subsequent target city.

RX RESPONSE—PROVIDING MEDICATIONS IN TIME OF NEED

Rx Response supports the continued delivery of critical medicines to patients whose health is threatened by a severe public health emergency, such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or pandemic that disrupts the normal bio-pharmaceutical supply chain. Rx Response does this through its role as an information-sharing and problem-solving forum for a coalition of bio-pharmaceutical supply chain organizations, disaster relief agencies, and local/state/federal government agencies.

Rx Response members continually monitor news media across the United States to identify potential or realized threats to public health and engage Rx Response as soon as possible. This response can often be pre-emergency, if forewarning permits. Additionally, the program continues to develop new and innovative ways for partners to share critical information internally and with the general public. These include InfoCenter—Rx Response's online information-sharing forum—and the Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool, which enables those in affected areas to determine the closest open pharmacy in a specific location during a public health emergency.

To learn more about Rx Response, including the history of the Rx Response program, visit www.rxresponse.org.



NCPA staff involved in the Rx Response exercise learned what it meant to shelter in place. Shelter in place generally lasts for hours, versus days or weeks. The ideal room is large, has few windows and has a water supply or a gallon of water per person in bottles. After an emergency is better understood, authorities are able to determine whether emergency shelter or possibly, evacuation, is warranted. The CDC and American Red Cross both have checklists of supplies and steps necessary to shelter in place (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/kit/disasters/>, www.redcross.org/preparedness).

If not directly affected, NCPA will be an

excellent source of current information gathered from the Rx Response partners. One other important partner to highlight is the NCPA Foundation. As mentioned previously, NCPAFoundation.org has a free disaster preparedness checklist and an application for pharmacies seeking relief funds after a disaster. **ap**

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