

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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June 10, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Emergency Preparedness Planning, Reporting, and Readiness

Reminders

Together we serve some of the most at-risk Californians, and it has been proven with every disaster that individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities can have significant impacts during emergencies. When it comes to emergency response and recovery efforts, we collectively have an active role in responding, and we take a proactive approach to protecting the health and safety of those supported by the developmental disability service system.

To facilitate emergency response activities and enhance emergency response readiness, the Department would like to remind regional centers and their communities to prepare for the upcoming potential for extreme heat weather conditions, Public Safety Power Shut Offs (PSPS) events, and the high potential of increased wildfires resulting from the severe [drought conditions](#) that exist in California. The fire season is starting earlier and lasting longer each year. Being prepared now is more important than ever.

The Everbridge Mass Notification system is available to each regional center. It provides a quick and efficient way to determine impacts to individuals served. It also provides a great platform for messaging, alerting, and obtaining ongoing updates from individuals during statewide emergencies. Information within Everbridge is updated monthly and the system provides regional centers with a report of information that requires updates or errors to ensure message delivery. This letter also is a reminder to review that report to maximize the number of people who can be reached through messages sent from the regional centers via Everbridge during emergencies.

Education and Preparation

The Department is encouraging regional centers to educate and provide reminders to consumers, families, and caregivers on available resources and strategies that can be implemented now to be better prepared ahead of emergencies. Of note, the March 16, 2021 [letter](#) from Brian Winfield, Chief Deputy Director, provides instructions for obtaining current contact information, and entering and maintaining it in SANDIS. This is important for the regional center's ability to ensure delivery of emergency communications, including through the use of Everbridge.

“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”

Some quick and basic proactive strategies for consumers, families, providers, and vendors are to:

- Make a plan <https://www.listocalifornia.org/prepare-your-community/toolkit/>;
- Ensure basic supplies are on hand;
- Have bags prepared and ready to go if an evacuation is necessary;
- Include this information in go-kits/bags:
[Health Profile \(listocalifornia.org\)](https://www.listocalifornia.org/health-profile/); and
<https://www.dds.ca.gov/consumers/resources/consumer-friendly-publications/>
- Ensure up-to-date contact information, and other personal or important Information, is handy and portable;
- Sign up for alerts with your utility company to be notified of PSPS events in your area: <https://prepareforpowerdown.com/>

Reporting

Situational status updates for events and statewide emergencies help everyone gain an understanding of community and statewide impacts to the Californians we serve. This information helps allocate resources, support sheltering operations, meet access and functional needs, and provide food, cash, and disaster relief assistance to people impacted by events. The Department in 2020 established a spreadsheet tracker to collect information received from regional centers during times of statewide emergencies. This tracker identifies numbers of consumers in the emergency area, number of consumers evacuated, facility types if known, and identifies the number of homes lost. A sample of this tracker is found on the signature page of this letter. Tamara Rodriguez will circulate the latest Excel template for 2021 among the regional center emergency coordinators. This tracker should be updated at least daily during an event with that information, as known. Additionally, regional centers should notify the Department of any immediate unmet needs impacting the health and safety of consumers so that state resources can be coordinated to help meet those needs.

Preparedness Resources

- Extreme heat is expected this summer. It is defined as when temperatures reach above 90 degrees for 2 or 3 days. General extreme heat guidance is available at the California Department of Public Health at: [AFL 20-54 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Assessment/2020-05-14-AFL-20-54.aspx).
- Public Safety Power Shut-Off events, also called PSPS events, occur in response to severe weather conditions. Please check that regional centers are signed up, and help make consumers, families, and vendors aware that they can sign up to receive shut-off notices timely with their respective utility company, via the last link in the “Education and Preparation” section, above.

- Wildfire preparedness is extremely important to keeping you and your families safe. Planning resources can be found here: [Wildfire Action Plan - Ready for Wildfire](#).

The Governor’s proposed budget for the 2021-22 state fiscal year includes additional positions, funding and resources for emergency planning, preparedness, and response. As of this date, these proposals have been approved by both houses of the Legislature. If these proposals ultimately are included in the enacted state budget, effective July 1, 2021, then additional discussion about those proposals will be forthcoming.

Thank you for maximizing our collective preparedness for significant events and emergencies. If you have questions about this informational bulletin, please contact Tamara Rodriguez at 916-718-1942 or by email at Tamara.Rodriguez@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Pete Cervinka
Chief, Data Analytics and Strategy

cc: Regional Center Chief Counselors
Regional Center Administrators
Amy Westling, Association of Regional Center Agencies
Tamara Rodriguez, Officer, Emergency Preparedness & Response, DDS

Sample of the 2020 Excel tracker, mentioned above:

INDIVIDUALS EVACUATED AND HOMES LOST DUE TO 2020 WILDFIRES				
data through 10/28/2020				
TYPE OF HOME / EVACUATIONS OR HOMES LOST IN FIRES	CUMULATIVE		CURRENT	
	CONSUMERS	HOMES	CONSUMERS	HOMES
	ALL RCs	ALL RCs	ALL RCs	ALL RCs
EVACUATIONS				
Residence Type Unknown	200	7	0	1
Family homes	1200		0	
Provider homes (ARF, 4i, ARFPHN, CCF, CCH, EBSH, FHA, ICF - DD-N, ILS, SLS, SRF, SRF (RCFE).	335	75	0	0
TOTAL FOR FAMILY AND PROVIDER HOMES	1,735	82	0	1
State-operated facilities				
STAR #1 ⁵	4	1	0	0
STAR #2 ⁵	4	1	0	0
Subtotal for State Operated Facilities	8	2	0	0
HOMES LOST IN FIRES				
Family homes		12		
Provider homes		0		
State-operated homes		0		
STAR #3 (home was not occupied)		1		
TOTAL HOMES LOST IN FIRES		13		