



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Home and Community Living Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

June 25, 2025

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ESF #2025-017

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUMMER HAZARDS

Dear Provider/Administrator:

Summer around Washington poses a variety of hazards that can be especially impactful to long-term care settings, including extreme heat, wildfires, wildfire smoke, and power disruptions. As we enter the summer season, it is imperative to be prepared for these activities. This can include reviewing emergency plans, conducting emergency exercises, procuring equipment & supplies, and preparing your facilities. It is recommended you begin preparing for the season now, before the full impacts are seen.

The purpose of this letter is to provide an overview of the hazards facing Washington State throughout the summer. In 2024, a series of Dear Provider Letters were distributed that went into details on these hazards, as well as steps your facility can take to prepare. Links to each of these letters will be included in each section.

Wildfires

Prepare your facility for wildfire defense. This can include clearing vegetation away from your building, cleaning debris from roofs & gutters, and upgrading components of your facility.

Staying alert on wildfires is a low cost and critical step for keeping your facility safe. Make sure you have signed up for alerts through your local emergency management agency. Additionally, be familiar with wildfire watch applications. [WatchDuty](#) is a free application that allows you to monitor wildfires in real-time.

Review evacuation plans and resources. Review with staff triggers for calling an evacuation. Maintain go-bags for both residents and staff/administrators. Ensure all vehicles are adequately fueled. Consider all needs of residents (including accessibility equipment, oxygen, etc.). Review agreements with transportation and EMS companies for evacuation assistance. Have multiple evacuation locations identified, this can include facilities, hotels, hospitals, and temporary shelter sites.

See Dear Provider Letter on Wildfires from 2024:

[EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILDFIRE \(June 2024\)](#)

Extreme Heat

High temperatures have already impacted the state and will continue throughout the summer. Extreme heat has the highest fatality rate among all weather hazards and has a high correlation of death in long-term care settings. Extreme heat should be treated as any other major weather emergency.

Residents with a history of dehydration, cardiovascular disease, or pulmonary disease are particularly susceptible to heat-related illnesses.

Please review the following Dear Provider Letters distributed in 2024 for detailed information on preparing for extreme heat.

[EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXTREME HEAT \(July 2024\)](#)

[EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXTREME HEAT \(May 2024\)](#)

Power Safety Power Shutoffs

In 2024, several utility companies across Washington State implemented Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) programs, a last-resort safety measure used to cut power in high-risk areas during critical fire weather conditions. Currently, Chelan Public Utility District, Avista, Pacific Power, and Puget Sound Energy are participating in these programs, though additional utility districts may also be involved. To stay informed, residents should check with their local power supplier to see if they plan to implement PSPS measures and resources provided.

Please review the Dear Provider Letter distributed in 2024 for detailed information on PSPS programs and what your facility can do to prepare for potential power shutdowns.

[NOTICE OF PUBLIC POWER SAFETY SHUTOFFS \(June 2024\)](#)

Wildfire Smoke

Wildfire smoke exposure is associated with increased rates of emergency department visits. Older adults are more sensitive to the adverse effects of wildfire smoke. As the wildfire season approaches, it is recommended you familiarize yourself with tools to monitor outdoor air quality and begin preparations for your facilities.

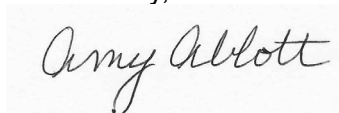
Monitor outdoor air quality through tools such as the [Washington Smoke Blog](#). When air quality drops to “moderate” or lower quality index levels, it is important to limit resident’s time outdoors to only necessary activities.

Maintain indoor air quality by limiting indoor pollutants. Keep windows and doors closed when air quality drops. Prepare your facility by checking seals around doors, upgrading air filters, purchasing air quality monitors. Make purchases now, before items are out of stock.

[EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILDFIRE SMOKE](#) (May 2024)

Thank you for your continued commitment to residents’ health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Freed, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, at richard.freed@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: “Transforming Lives”

Resources

[Residential Care Services-Resources for Long Term Care Facilities-Emergency Planning](#)

[Northwest Healthcare Response Network: Long-Term Care Resources](#)

[Heat.gov](#)

[Washington Department of Health- Air Quality](#)

[Washington Department of Natural Resources-Wildfire Resources](#)