

Caring for Seniors in Residential Care in an Emergency

Preparing for and responding to hazards, such as wildfires, floods, earthquakes and severe weather, requires consideration of the needs of seniors, especially those in residential care facilities.

How are family members cared for in a residential care facility?

B.C. health authorities are required to have emergency preparedness plans for all health care and residential care facilities. In an emergency, health authorities will continue to care for people evacuated from hospitals and other health care facilities.

Residential care facilities that are licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* are required to have their own emergency preparedness plan. The plan must include procedures to prepare for, respond to and recover from any emergency. This includes procedures for evacuating people in their care, if required. They will work with health authorities and local emergency responders to make sure residents are safe, whether they stay in the care facility or move to another location.

For information about emergency preparedness and planning at the facility where your family member lives, you may ask:

- What is the facility's evacuation plan?
- Where would facility residents move or relocate to?
- What is the role of family members in an emergency?

What are some things to consider if I want to care for my family member during an emergency?

In an emergency, some families may want to care for their family members themselves.

If you want to care for your family member during an emergency, consider if your home is suitable, and if you have the skills to care for a person with their medical and/or mobility conditions. Also think about how you will provide for your family member's needs while also caring for yourself and your family.

Things to think about include:

- Mobility aids, such as a walker or a wheelchair
- Medication storage and administration
- Helping the person in and out of bed or going up and down stairs
- Helping the person with toileting or bathing
- Special equipment, such as lifts, grab bars, and a raised toilet seat
- Special dietary needs
- Safety and security of your home
- Preparing your home with a household emergency plan and kit with food, water, and some basic supplies

For More Information

For information on emergency preparedness in your area, contact your local health authority:

- Fraser Health www.fraserhealth.ca/health-info/health-topics/emergency-preparedness
- Interior Health www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/EmergencyPreparedness
- Island Health www.viha.ca/emergency_management
- Northern Health https://northernhealth.ca/Portals/0/Your_Health/Programs/Community%20Care%20Licensing/Emergency%20Preparedness%20Guide.pdf (2.52 MB)

- Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.ca/public-health/licensing/residential-care/emergency-preparedness

For more information on emergency preparedness, visit PreparedBC: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/preparedbc