



Child Care Emergency Preparedness

Frequently Asked Questions | November 2016

Thousands of Minnesota’s children attend some form of child care every day. Child care programs play a critical role in keeping children safe during times of emergency. On most days, parents, guardians, and child care providers do not think about how a flood, tornado, or violent incident could affect a child. However, these events have the potential for injury, harm, or loss of life. While the odds are low, the possible impact is great. A pro-active and prepared community can reduce the consequences of emergencies. The following “Frequently Asked Questions” address how child care providers and communities can prepare for and respond to emergencies.

What resources are available to help me prepare for an emergency?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, in partnership with child care providers, parents and guardians, emergency managers, counties, and child advocacy organizations, developed and released two new emergency planning resources to assist families, child care providers, counties, and state agencies prepare for and respond to emergencies in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of children.

Minnesota’s Statewide Child Care Emergency Plan

This resource outlines Minnesota’s *statewide child care emergency plan* and addresses the roles and responsibilities for coordination, communication, and support in the event of a disaster or emergency. This document serves as a tool for all parties involved with the care of children and the management of emergencies.

Keeping Kids Safe

This resource is a tool to help child care programs prepare for disasters and emergencies, such as fire, floods, severe weather, and violent incidents. This resource includes best practices for emergency preparedness and a template to help providers create their own “emergency preparedness plan.”

What does “emergency” and “disaster” mean?

The terms “emergency” and “disaster” mean any event or situation that could pose a threat to the health or safety of children in child care. An emergency could include acts of nature such as a tornado, flood, or blizzard; accidents such as a severely injured child, train derailment, or hazardous material leak; public health events such as a pandemic disease; or person-caused events such as an act or threat of violence. These definitions also include disasters declared under [United States Code, title 42, section 5121](#), et seq., or under the governor’s authority under [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 12](#).

Do all child care providers need an emergency preparedness plan?

While state law does not currently require licensed or legally non-licensed child care providers to have an emergency plan, the Department of Human Services encourages child care providers to create an emergency plan. The Department of Human Services recently updated *Keeping Kids Safe* with the intent that if state law ever required child care providers to develop an emergency plan, the *Keeping Kids Safe* template would allow child care providers to do so.

What can I do to make sure that my child care program is prepared for an emergency?

- Create your emergency preparedness plan by reviewing *Keeping Kids Safe* and completing your plan
- Share your plan with parents and guardians of children for whom you provide care and notify them if you make updates or changes
- Keep your plan up-to-date and review it regularly
- Practice emergency procedures and drills, including evacuations, relocations, shelter-in-place, and lock downs.
 - Licensed child care providers are required to conduct emergency drills. Review Minnesota Rules, [chapter 9502](#) and [chapter 9503](#) for more information.
- Be ready to evacuate children in care, with special planning for evacuating infants, children with a disability, or children with medical conditions.

