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Date: Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 5:08 PM
Subject: Emergency Preparedness-Severe Winter Weather
To: <DSS_LICENSING@listserv.cov.virginia.gov>

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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: February 17, 2021

TO: All Adult and Children's Programs

FROM: Tara Ragland, Director
Division of Licensing Programs

SUBJECT: Emergency Preparedness- Severe Winter Weather

Due to the upcoming severe winter storm, VDSS would like to provide you with informative resources that will assist residents and staff to stay safe, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following links may be beneficial as you review and update your existing emergency preparedness and response plan to include COVID-19 infection prevention and control practices:

[CDC Natural Disasters, Severe Weather, and COVID-19](#)

[CDC Natural Disasters & COVID-19: Resources for Professionals & Emergency Workers](#)

[VDH Winter Weather Preparedness](#)

[Virginia Department of Emergency Management](#)

[Ready.gov Prepare for Winter Weather](#)

[FEMA Get Ready for Winter Weather](#)

[National Weather Services-Winter Safety](#)

[American Red Cross](#)

[Evacuation Zone Notification](#)

Licensed Assisted Living Facilities and Children's Residential Facilities

If you relocate residents due to an emergency or accept residents from another facility, please follow your emergency preparedness and response plan, as well as infection control guidelines from VDH and CDC. The CDC website has information on how to [prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Assisted Living Facilities](#) and [VDSS COVID-19 Mitigation Plans for ALFs](#). Additionally, VDH has COVID-19 [Interim guidance for Group/Congregate Residential Settings](#).

Relocating residents safely when necessary:

Please contact your licensing inspector or administrator *immediately* by phone or email. If you do not reach them, please call the main number of your [licensing office](#) to inform the office that the facility is relocating.

Provide the following information to the licensing office:

- Your facility's contact name, address, and telephone number that can be **accessed during the relocation period**;
- The receiving facility's name, address, and telephone number;
- The number of residents that are relocating; and
- The number of staff that are relocating, including the number of licensed healthcare providers and registered medication aides.

Important measures to follow as you relocate:

- Follow [VDH](#) and [CDC](#) COVID-19 infection control guidelines;
- Exercise safety in your relocation travel;
- Ensure that you have the means to account for all residents during the relocation, sheltering, and return phases;
- Maintain active communications with the receiving facility to ensure they are prepared and capable of providing for the health, safety, and welfare of your residents;
- Follow your facility's relocation plan, paying close attention to major issues such as taking resident's information, family/legal representative's contact information and notifications, medications/MARs, assistive devices, etc.;
- Take extra precautions with your special needs populations as the relocation process may increase distress responses; and
- Contact your licensing inspector when you arrive at the receiving location and contact the licensing inspector when you return to the facility.

Receiving residents from another facility:

Please contact your licensing inspector or administrator *immediately* by phone or email. If you do not reach them, please call the main number of your [licensing office](#) to inform the licensing office that you are planning to accept relocated residents.

Provide the following information to the licensing office:

- Your facility's contact name, address, and telephone number that can be **accessed during the relocation time period**;
- The relocating facility's name, address, and telephone number;
- The number of residents relocating to your facility; and
- The number of staff that are relocating, including the number of licensed healthcare providers and registered medication aides, if appropriate.

Important measures to follow as you receive residents:

- With the additional residents, you are able to following the [VDH](#) and [CDC](#) COVID-19 infection control guidelines;
- If your facility will be exceeding your current use and occupancy classification number, you must contact your local building and fire officials to discuss this with them **prior to the arrival of the relocated residents**. In emergency cases, local officials may allow an increase in occupancy for a limited period of time. However, there are stipulations that you need to follow and it is imperative that you contact your local building and fire officials to gain approval;
- Maintain active communication with the relocating facility to ensure you are prepared and capable of providing for the health, safety, and welfare of their residents, and your own facility's residents, including enough staff and emergency supplies for additional residents; and
- When the relocated residents have departed the facility, notify your licensing inspector that you are back to normal operations.