

# Who Turned Out the Lights?!

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*The weather radio reports that a hurricane is approaching and should hit the area near the facility in 1.5 hours. Your staff are preparing dinner for 150 residents. The lights are flickering on and off and the winds outside are blowing fiercely. All of a sudden the lights go out. What do you do if . . . the generator kicks in . . . the generator **fails** to kick in . . .*

Most people who survive disasters agree that their chance for survival dramatically increased because they were prepared, knowledgeable, adaptable and calm during their experience.

## Plan Ahead

Facilities should have detailed written plans and procedures to meet all potential emergencies and disasters (fire, severe weather, explosion, etc.). Employees should be well trained in emergency procedures. Conducting unannounced staff drills can help staff learn proper procedures, and how to stay safe.

## Analyzing Risk

The first step in preparing for a disaster is to assess the likelihood of disasters in your particular area. Natural disasters include fire, flooding, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, blizzard. Other disasters can include loss of electricity, loss of natural gas, loss of water, contaminated water supply. Once you have identified all of the possible disasters, determine what should be done in the event that each disaster occurs.

## Taking Care of the Kitchen

The Dietary Department should prepare ahead to coordinate the function of the dietary department during an emergency by:

1. Establishing an emergency menu pattern for three to seven days.
2. Assuring a supply of food, beverages (including water), and disposable dishes sufficient for three to seven days.
3. Providing a list of organizations and vendors, with contact information, that agree to assist the facility in case of an emergency to be notified by the as soon as possible.
4. Providing a list of dietary department employees' names and telephone numbers if additional staff are needed.

## Employee Training

To ensure that your employees are prepared for the unexpected events that may occur, inservice on the following items:

- Contents of the Emergency and Disaster Plan
- Contents of the Disaster Feeding Plan
- Location of stored supplies including, food, water, drinking water, all purpose water, paper products, etc.
- Location of emergency equipment and first aid kit
- Water Purification
- Responsibilities in connection with other departments

## Emergency Meal Planning

Leave instructions on how to use perishable food items: For the first and second day, use the perishable food items in the coolers and freezers.

Plan to use foods in order of their keeping qualities (assure cold foods are less than 40 degrees F).

1. Perishable fresh foods
2. Food in refrigerators - probably good for 12 hours without electricity
3. Food in freezers - probably will keep two days without electricity
4. Canned & dry foods

Once the perishable food items have been used, follow the disaster meal plans. All facilities should have pre-planned menus along with the required food/fluid items in stock. Try to maintain well-balanced meals with consideration for special diets as much as possible. It will be necessary to simplify special diets as much as possible.

## General Recipes

Use recipes that require minimal cooking and preparation. Recipes are especially useful for staff that are not trained in the dietary department and must prepare meals.

When using packaged or prepared food items, follow the instructions on the packages for appropriate preparation and serving sizes. For pureeing without electricity, add liquid to the finished products before using an eggbeater or battery operated whisk. Pureed foods can utilize the juice for fruits, broth or canned gravy for meats and vegetables. Better yet, have pre-prepared pureed foods on hand in case of emergencies.

Use dry sugar free pudding mix to make a sugar free pudding for the diabetic resident. Canned tuna and mayonnaise can be mixed to make sandwich spread and can be served immediately. If it is possible to boil pasta, a canned cheese sauce can be used to make macaroni and cheese. Chile con carne can be made with canned chili, canned kidney beans, and pasta. Be creative and capitalize on the resources you have available.

If you follow these important preparation steps, you'll be ready when the weather radio reports that a hurricane is approaching and should hit the area near the facility in 1.5 hours...The lights are flickering on and off and the winds outside are blowing fiercely...All of a sudden the lights go out...Dinner needs to be served in an hour and a half. The generator kicks in . . . OR The generator **fails** to kick in . . .

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