



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department on Disability Services**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Providers  
**FROM:** Cathy R. Anderson, DDS Deputy Director for DDA  
**RE:** Revised Fire & Natural Disasters Policy and Procedure  
**DATE:** August 28, 2013

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This memorandum provides guidance and clarification on DDS' revised policy and procedure regarding preparedness for responding to fire and natural disasters, attached. These have an implementation date of Monday, September 16, 2013 and will be posted in the DDA on-line policy manual.

- Fire & Natural Disasters policy
- Fire & Natural Disasters procedure

DDS thanks the member of its Quality Improvement Committee for the thoughtful review and discussion of the draft policy and procedure.

The revisions make important clarifications and changes to current policy, procedure and practices, aimed at (1) recognizing that not all programs are facility based and that preparedness requirements ought to be different for people who spend their days in the community, rather than in a building; (2) streamlining the requirements of the Personal Emergency Preparedness Plan (PEPP) so that it is more individualized to what the person needs; (3) eliminating the required overnight wake-up drill, unless the person's assessment shows that this would be required as part of emergency preparation; and (4) increasing safety by testing staff as well as the person's responsiveness by requiring that drills are unannounced and conducted by supervisory staff.

Highlights of some specific changes are as follows:

- For people who live independently, or with family, requires the person's DDS service coordinator to, at least annually, discuss emergency preparedness, share resources for planning, and offer to assist in developing a PEPP.
- Eliminates the requirement of a PEPP for a person in a non-facility based supported employment program, instead requiring that the provider have documentation that the person has received an orientation to the employment site and training on the employer's emergency plans.



- Eliminates the requirement that each PEPP include how the person will be notified of the means to evacuate the building and when it is safe to re-enter, unless the person requires the use of specialized equipment such as a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm.
- Eliminates the requirement of a Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan (CEPP) for non-facility based day services providers, but instead requires them to develop a written plan and train staff on how to respond in the event of severe weather while people are out in the community. For people who are in a non-facility based supported employment program, documentation that the person has received an orientation to the employment site and training on the employer's emergency plans is sufficient.
- Allows a variance from fire drill requirements for a day programs based in a commercial building, upon approval by the DDS Deputy Director for DDA.

Please review the policy and procedure carefully. You may direct questions to Belinda Wiley, Supervisory Resource Specialist, Provider Resource Management Unit, at (202) 870-1320 or [belinda.wiley@dc.gov](mailto:belinda.wiley@dc.gov). Thank you!