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**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF*  
*DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES*

# **Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines**



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# **DDS**

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES  
FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..... Page 3

FORWARD..... Page 4

**PART I – DDS GENERAL FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES**

Chapter 1. Fire Emergencies: General Instructions..... Page 6

Chapter 2. Fire Emergencies: Dealing with Fire Emergencies ..... Page 7

Chapter 3. Other Types of Emergencies: General Instructions.....Page 10

Chapter 4. Other Types of Emergencies: Specific External Hazards.....Page 11

Chapter 5. Other Types of Emergencies: Specific Hazards within the Home.....Page 13

Chapter 6. Fire Prevention: General Instructions.....Page 15

Chapter 7. Fire Prevention: Building Fire Protection Features.....Page 16

Chapter 8. Fire Prevention: General Fire Safety Practices.....Page 19

Chapter 9. Fire Prevention: Fire Evacuation Drills.....Page 23

Chapter 10. Developing Community Relationships for Safety.....Page 27

Chapter 11. Glossary..... Page 28

**PART II – SITE SPECIFIC FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLANS**

Chapter 1. Overview of Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plans..... Page 31

Chapter 2. Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for CLA's, Campus, Community Training Homes and Day Service and Support Locations..... Page 32

Chapter 3. Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for Individual Supports, Own Homes and Family Homes..... Page 33

Chapter 4. Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for Respite Centers..... Page 34

**PART III – ANNEXES**

1) DDS GENERAL FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL  
a) Condensed Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines supplemental Material

2) DDS Fire Drill Form

3) Evacuation Score Frequently Asked Questions

4) FILL IN THE BLANK TEMPLATES FOR SITE SPECIFIC PLANS:  
a) CLA's, Campus/Respite Programs, Community Training Homes and Day Programs  
b) Supported Living and Family Homes

5) FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY HOMES

6) FILE FOR LIFE

7) FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT AND TESTING AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

8) OTHER RESOURCES

9) RESOURCES FOR FAMILY HOMES

10) FIRE PLAN FOR FAMILY RESPITE CENTERS

## INTRODUCTION

Since March 2004, the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines have served as a summary of "best practices", supporting Commissioner Peter O'Meara's health and safety agenda. This important reference document is, furthermore, an "All Hazards Guidebook" for consumers, families, and support staff.

These Guidelines, first published in 2004 and revised in 2005, are reissued in this 2009 edition, which is the basis for DDS's Fire Prevention Training Curriculum, for which the Department was awarded a development grant by the Department of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate, under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant-Fire Prevention and Safety Program.

In July 2008, a curriculum development committee was formed to review and revise the Guidelines. A cross section of individuals representing the fire service community, private providers, DDS staff and consumers, met through the Fall and completed these revised Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines. This project was completed by Co-Committee Chairs, Timothy E. Baldwin, Fire Chief, DDS Southbury Training School Fire Department and Daniel A. Micari, DDS Director of Quality Management Services Division, along with Committee members Adam Piskura, State Director of Fire Training, Commission on Fire Prevention and Control; Russ Emons, Director of Public Fire Education, Commission on Fire Prevention and Control; Alan Zygmunt, Public Fire and Life Safety Coordinator, Connecticut Fire Academy; Carlos M. Colon, DDS Self Advocate Coordinator; Kenneth Comerford, DDS Quality Services Review Specialist Supervisor; Elmer Kiessling, Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Emergency and Building Services, Office of the State Fire Marshal; Maureen Evelyn, DDS Trainer; Cathy Faulkner, DDS Regional Training Supervisor; John Yacovino, Connecticut Fire Marshals Association; Irving D. Moy, Public Health Services Manager, Department of Public Health; Carmen Onalfo, DDS Quality Services Review Specialist Supervisor; Christine Pratt, Fire Lieutenant, DDS Southbury Training School; Stan Soby, Vice President of Community Programs, Oak Hill School for the Blind; Stella Stanescu, Executive Director, Network, Incorporated; John D. Tierney, DDS Program Training Coordinator; Beverly Tulisano, DDS Public Community Programs Manager; Robin Wood, DDS Self Determination Director.

These Guidelines are intended to advance awareness and educate all of the stakeholders whose daily health and wellbeing depend on a practical understanding of the dangers of fire and other hazardous emergencies. The Guidelines furthermore promote vigilance and readiness on the part of every one of us who face the possibility of an unforeseen emergency, which may require a life sustaining response for ourselves, or others who depend on assistance or support.

Many thanks to the committee whose work will serve as the foundation for awareness, prevention, and readiness at home, at work, and in our communities

## FORWARD

The State of Connecticut DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (DDS) has always maintained an aggressive campaign in dealing with the ever-present threat of Fire or other emergencies. Full compliance with all State, Federal and other regulatory agencies' codes and regulations pertaining to fire and emergencies has always been a cornerstone of the Department's approach toward fire safety.

These Guidelines are promulgated, to provide guidance and direction in assisting those charged with providing services to individuals served by DDS. These Guidelines provide a holistic approach to fire safety, fire prevention and all hazard response. It addresses not only meeting minimum standards set forth by regulatory agencies, but also addresses general building construction features, planning and preparation for response to emergencies, fire prevention, training for both staff and consumers, and integrates all these facets of safety into one easy to use guideline.

Therefore these Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines are divided into Three Parts:

### PART I – DDS FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES –

*“DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES”* – Provides general instructions and guidelines that should be used throughout DDS, on how to respond to fire, potential fires (automatic alarms), internal and external hazards.

*“FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINES”* – Provides general information on building fire protection features, general fire safety practices and guidelines to conducting fire evacuation drills. Also provides resources for developing community relationships for safety.

### PART II – SITE SPECIFIC FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLANS –

Overview of what Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plans are and also provides minimum contents of Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plans for various occupancies and programs.

*NOTE:* See the Annexes for “Fill in the Blank Templates” for Site Specific Plans

### PART III – ANNEXES

These annexes constitute a “living document”, which can be updated with new information to enhance or develop these documents for future use.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Providers should also develop plans and procedures to adequately:**

- Train all staff in these guidelines and emergency procedures, and
- Train individuals, to the best of their ability, in emergency procedures.

## **PART I - DDS GENERAL FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES**

What to do in Fire Emergencies

## **Chapter 1- Fire Emergencies: General Instructions**

Despite everyone's most conscientious efforts, fire and other emergency situations may occur. It is important to have appropriate planning, training and skill to be ready and able to react effectively. The training and information you receive is designed to help prepare you so that if an incident does occur, your response should be immediate, intelligent and most importantly, effective.

The following instructions need to be followed throughout the DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES for all Fire Emergencies (e.g., fire, smoke, odor of smoke or burning, crackling noises, unusual heat conditions, and any automatic detector activation). Although specifically geared to "fire" type emergencies, much of this would apply in any generalized emergency situation. In addition, following this section on dealing with fire emergencies, there is some specific guidance for dealing with other potential emergencies.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION :**

1. ALL AUTOMATIC ALARMS shall be treated as TRUE EMERGENCIES. Everyone should immediately implement the Fire Plan and begin an evacuation as outlined in your evacuation plan, regardless of the cause of the automatic alarm.
2. ANY Staff members and any other occupants in the building(s) at the time of an alarm or other emergency shall render such assistance as directed.
3. Beds, mattresses and other bulky equipment should NEVER be used to evacuate occupants unless absolutely necessary. (Use blanket drags, carries, etc.)
4. STAY LOW. Keep yourself and all occupants low if in a smoke involved area. The fire generated smoke and gases are potentially more dangerous than the actual flames.
5. Elevators shall not be used during a fire or emergency situation, other than by firefighters.
6. NO ONE other than firefighters shall enter or re-enter a fire or smoke involved structure.
7. Based on your training and/or your obligation, you may need to re-enter areas that are not involved with fire or smoke to assist others. Use your training and caution if necessary to do this. If re-entry is attempted, make someone aware of your actions, to provide accountability for arriving emergency responders.
8. **REPORT ALL FIRES TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY, EVEN IF IT APPEARS TO BE OUT, OR IS CONSIDERED INSIGNIFICANT !!!!!**
9. If your local fire department is responding to assist, DO NOT reset your alarm until they arrive and evaluate the situation.

**Chapter 2- Fire Emergencies: Dealing with Fire Emergencies**

One helpful technique that is used to teach proper fire response is the

**“R.A.C.E. PLAN”****REMOVE****ALER**T**CON**FINE**EXTINGUISH**

The following general instructions explain these fundamental steps and provide guidance in the event of an emergency. It must be understood and stressed that **each** emergency will present itself in a unique way and with a different set of circumstances each time.

Therefore, staff must be creative and confident to implement these steps in various situations.

**In addition, it is important to note, that although these “steps” are presented in an organized manner in order to provide guidance on the importance and general sequence of these events, in the case of a true emergency, it could happen that many of the functions of this Guideline will be conducted at the same time or in an order appropriate to that specific situation. In all cases sound practical judgment, experience and training will prevail.**

Pending the arrival of the fire department or other back up and responding personnel, **YOU are the first line of defense**. The lives of those entrusted to your care, and possibly your very own, may well depend upon your reactions.

**TO SUMMON HELP IN ANY EMERGENCY SITUATION...  
IMMEDIATELY CALL .... 911**

## **REMOVE**

- **DO NOT PANIC - REMAIN CALM - DO NOT SHOUT OR YELL.**
- **YOUR FIRST CONCERN IS FOR LIFE SAFETY - SAFETY OF THE OCCUPANTS, OTHER STAFF AND YOURSELF IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.**
- **EVACUATE EVERYONE TO A POINT OF SAFETY.** All occupants in the building must be evacuated as quickly and as orderly as possible to a predesignated POINT OF SAFETY, using the following guidelines:

### **1. ORDER OF REMOVAL OF OCCUPANTS:**

#### **Remove anyone in immediate danger (i.e., in the room of origin).**

Evacuate occupants who can walk on their own. (*This is done first to facilitate evacuating the most, the fastest*)

Evacuate occupants who cannot walk, require additional assistance, use walkers, etc.

Evacuate occupants who are connected to life sustaining devices or medical management devices.

### **2. HOW TO EVACUATE THE OCCUPANTS:**

Movement of any occupant shall be done as planned in advanced. As a general rule, the method that is used during non-emergency situations is going to be the best method for movement under emergency situations. (e.g., self-ambulating, assistance, wheelchair, etc.) The method should be based on the information in the "Site Specific and Emergency Plan". In addition, consideration should be given to: What is the **safest and most efficient** method to evacuate this individual in this **specific emergency situation**? Staff in-service training should include removal methods, lifts, carries and drags that will be used in each site.

### **3. WHERE TO EVACUATE :**

ANYONE IN **IMMEDIATE DANGER** should utilize the **nearest and most immediate EXIT**. **If you have to escape through smoke, crawl on your hands and knees where air will be cleaner. Test all doors in your escape path for heat prior to opening them. Always test doors with the back of your hand. Remember to practice your escape plan several times annually.** In most Group Homes (aka Residential Board and Care by the Fire Marshal) evacuation plans should call for the final evacuation to be to the outside. However, the plan may include using "Staged Evacuation" techniques. Staged Evacuation Techniques include staging occupants prior to complete evacuation. If these areas of staging are Authority Having Jurisdiction (A.H.J.) approved "Interior Points of Safety", practice drills and timing of evacuation drills may end when occupants reach that approved point of safety (whether it is an exterior or interior point of safety). Only in Health Care Occupancies can Horizontal Exits, or Defend in Place techniques be utilized. Some apartment buildings and office buildings that provide Day Services and Supports may have Interior Points of Refuge, use of these areas should be planned for in advance.

### **CONSULT YOUR SITE SPECIFIC FIRE AND EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE POINTS OF SAFETY THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR LOCATION.**

- At any time there is evacuation to the outside of the building, the evacuation should be to a pre-determined "POINT OF SAFETY". (See Site Specific Plan for your meeting location.)
- As each area is evacuated be sure to check all areas for occupants in, bathrooms, closets, bedrooms, special purpose rooms, staff rooms, etc. (all areas). In addition as each area is vacated, be sure to close all doors to help confine the fire. Circulation and exhaust fans should be shut down if safety and time allows.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** As soon as all occupants are gathered in a safe place (either within the building, in an area of refuge, or outside), Someone (i.e. staff in charge) shall take a roll call, using a checklist



roster for all occupants and staff. If anyone is missing, immediately report this to the first arriving fire personnel.

- If staff and/or occupants are trapped by smoke, close doors, stay low, block openings to room and open a window to attract attention of rescuers.

## ***A* ALERT**

- **ALERT ALL NEARBY STAFF** – By voice or use of code phrase. (*This may be accomplished simultaneously with the **Remove** step*)
- **PULL THE NEAREST ALARM BOX IF PROVIDED.** This will automatically notify the occupants, and possibly the Fire Department and additional help. In addition this may initiate automatic fire protection features of the building. See your Site Specific Fire and Emergency Plan for details in your location.
- **CALL 911- If no fire alarm is available, immediately call 911.** If there is an alarm system available, make a back-up call to 911 as soon as everyone is in a point of safety. Although redundant, this assures response and provides additional information to the responders.

Give the dispatcher the following information:

NAME, LOCATION, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT, ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. PREPARE TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, AND DO NOT HANG UP UNTIL DIRECTED BY THE DISPATCHER.

## ***C* CONFINE**

- **CONFINE THE FIRE BY CLOSING ANY DOORS, FIRE DOORS AND OTHER OPENINGS INTO THE ROOM OR AREA OF ORIGIN.**
- Closing a door can be a very simple and effective method of containing the fire, buying time for evacuation.

## ***E* EXTINGUISH**

- **EXTINGUISH THE FIRE.** Attempt to extinguish the fire only after **all** occupants are in a point of safety (unless extinguishment of the fire is needed to evacuate, i.e., fire is between you and the door). Any attempts to extinguish the fire should be considered a “Last-Resort”. Evacuation should always be your first priority. Attempt to extinguish the fire only if staff are trained, and it is appropriate to the circumstance

**Chapter 3: Other Types of Emergencies: General Instructions**

1. REMAIN CALM - YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE ENTRUSTED IN YOUR CARE AND FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS AROUND YOU.
2. Respond to all imminent dangers appropriately. Evacuate unsafe or potentially unsafe areas & / or buildings according to the evacuation plans outlined in the Fire Safety Plan.
3. Stay tuned to radio and television reports (the Emergency Alert System- EAS) for updates and information. Information will be disseminated as appropriate. Do not tie up phones and communications with inquiries to the Telecommunications Center or your local Emergency Operations Center, if established. Refer to the following EAS radio and TV stations:  
Primary EAS Radio Stations: WTIC- 1080 am or 96.5 fm/ WDRC- 1360 am or 102.9 fm/ WCTY- 97.7 fm  
EAS TV Stations: WFSB Channel 3 / WTNH Channel 8 / WHPX Channel 26 / WVIT Channel 30 / WTIC Channel 61.
4. Whenever needed, call 9-1-1 to obtain help for ANY EMERGENCY !!!!! Appropriate help and assistance will be dispatched immediately to your location.
5. No plan can prepare for all possibilities - each emergency will present itself in a unique way and with a different set of circumstances each time. **This Plan is designed to give guidance in the event of an emergency and provide a sound foundation for training.**
6. Satellite Radio and television users should remember that the satellite providers do not provide Emergency Notification Announcements, and alternative means of receiving these announcements should be considered.
7. Deviation from this written plan may be needed, so in all cases SOUND PRACTICAL JUDGMENT, EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING SHALL PREVAIL.
8. Emergency Relocation:
  - In some extreme cases that follow, emergency relocation may be required due to the nature of the emergency. Listen for evacuation notices on Emergency Broadcasts or get information from DDS or Local Authorities.
  - All locations for persons served in Group Residential and Day Programs Operated or Funded by the Connecticut DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES are required to have emergency relocation plans in accordance with the DDS Special Operations Plan for Emergency Relocation (issued February 14, 2002). **All such facilities shall include its DDS Special Operations Plan for Emergency Relocation as part of this document.**
  - Consider preparing individual evacuation checklists for each occupant, containing unique necessities such as critical medications, glasses, etc. as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the American Red Cross.

**Chapter 4 Other Types of Emergencies- Specific External Hazards****SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCIES****HURRICANES AND EARTHQUAKES**

- Know the terms used to describe severe weather threats: A Hurricane WATCH means that such a storm is possible, A Hurricane WARNING means that such a storm is expected in the area.
- Move all occupants away from glass doors and windows.
- Move to an interior portion of the building, if possible. (i.e., the center halls)
- Close all blinds, drapes etc. To prevent flying glass.
- Be orderly and reassuring. Maintain normal routine as much as possible.
- See your Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for details specific to your location.

**TORNADOES**

- Know the terms used to describe severe weather threats: A Tornado WATCH means that such a storm is possible; A Tornado WARNING means that such a storm has been sighted or is imminent.
- The safest place to relocate occupants is near walls, in the corners of the basements.
- If a WARNING is received, immediately bring all occupants and staff to a central location and be prepared to expeditiously relocate to the basement if possible.
- Open all windows 2-3" and close all blinds to prevent flying glass. Windows can be taped if enough warning is given.
- When a Warning occurs or conditions dictate, immediately move all occupants to the basement in an orderly fashion.
- Moving bedridden occupants and wheelchair occupants to the basement shall be handled as in any other evacuation process.
- If you are in a building, which does not have a basement or the basement is inaccessible, move to an interior room on the lowest level possible.
- See your Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for details specific to your location.

**FLOODING**

- The safest place to relocate occupants is at higher floors or levels.
- Be aware if your location is in a low-lying area or flood plain.
- In the event of minor flooding, stay in your location, unless the building's systems (e.g., furnaces, etc.) are threatened.
- In the event of wide spread flooding, prepare for relocation.

**SEVERE COLD WEATHER**

- Wind Chill Temperatures below 25 degrees F pose increasing danger and precautions should be taken.
- Each location shall note in the Occupant's Roster and Information in their Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan, anyone who is prone to specific problems during extreme cold weather. These people shall be closely monitored.
- Everyone shall be dressed for adequate warmth, closely monitored and kept in heated locations during all cold weather.

**SEVERE HOT WEATHER**

- High Temperature Weather that is over 85 degrees F., especially with high humidity over 70 %, pose increasing danger and precautions should be taken.
- Extreme High Temperature Weather is defined as any day in which the ambient temperature is over 90 degrees F., with high humidity.
- In either hot weather cases (or as deemed by supervisory staff), staff should check to make sure all drapes are drawn to stop sunlight, all cooling appliances are operating (air conditioning and fans), and that all occupants are appropriately dressed.
- Each location shall note in their Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan, anyone prone to specific problems during extreme hot weather. These people shall be closely monitored.
- Appropriate precautions such as extra fluids to avoid dehydration, moving occupants to cooler areas, stopping of strenuous activities etc., shall be taken as needed.

**RADIOLOGICAL DISASTERS**

- Any facility within the 10 Mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) of the Millstone Nuclear Power Plant should be aware of the emergency relocation plans, warning systems and methods of the Relocation Planning Zone.
- Check your local phone directory, the DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES Special Operations Plan for Emergency Relocation or contact your Local Emergency Planning Commission for details.
- **Any Facility within the 10 Mile Emergency Planning Zone shall include its DDS Special Operations Plan for Emergency Relocation as part of this document.**

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**Chapter 5 Other Types of Emergencies- Specific Hazards within the Home****HAZARDOUS MATERIAL EMERGENCIES**

- In the event of any leak or spill of Hazardous Materials that creates an immediate or imminent danger, ALL OCCUPANTS shall be evacuated to a "Point of Safety". This will usually be an area away from the building and upwind.
- Immediately Activate the Plan for evacuation as outlined in the Fire Safety portion of these Guidelines and summon outside help - CALL 9-1-1 and state a brief description of the emergency.
- Your local Fire Department will respond promptly and evaluate the emergency and shall implement its plan for dealing with Hazardous Materials incidents.
- Further evacuations as deemed necessary by the Fire Officer in charge shall be so ordered and carried out as necessary.
- In no case shall occupants enter or re-enter an unsafe or toxic atmosphere - immediately report to incoming fire personnel, any occupants unaccounted for. LIFE SAFETY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE!!!!!!
- To ensure that information about the dangers of all hazardous chemicals used within these areas are known by all affected employees, MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS should be maintained at licensed homes, on site (or available) in the event they are needed. Products in family homes may not have a Material safety Data Sheet available. In this case, staff may obtain critical information about a product by reading the label on the container.

**CARBON MONOXIDE EMERGENCIES**

- It is recommended, that in all areas where there is a potential source of Carbon Monoxide (e.g., furnaces) should have Carbon Monoxide Detectors installed.
- In smaller facilities, such as family homes, apartments, and group homes, where there are potential sources of carbon monoxide, there should be carbon monoxide detection outside of each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the sleeping rooms. When there are multiple sleeping areas, the detection should be interconnected
- In larger facilities, zone protection is desired. An example of the design of the zone protection would be having a detector in the basement near the source of carbon monoxide and the regularly occupied area above the source on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- In any case where a Carbon Monoxide detector sounds or occupants are concerned there may be build up of carbon monoxide present due to symptoms (see below), all occupants should be evacuated. Generally treat all Carbon Monoxide Alarms as fire alarms and react as outlined above.
- Carbon Monoxide poisoning has many symptoms. However, some symptoms are very similar to flu like symptoms. Symptoms may include but are not limited to: headaches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and may result in severe symptoms such as unconsciousness, convulsions and death.
- Evacuation to an approved point of safety is generally going to be the best action to take. Follow the appropriate guidelines in the "Fire Safety Evacuation" portion of these Guidelines and in this location's Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan.
- From a "Point of Safety", Immediately call 9-1-1 and notify the dispatch center of the problem and your local Fire Department should be dispatched. Give the dispatcher as much information as possible, especially if any occupant is feeling symptoms.

### TERRORIST/ BOMB THREATS

#### Instructions for the Call Recipient:

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask him/her to repeat the message. If possible, record every word spoken by the person.
- Ask for the location of the bomb and time of detonation. Record this information.
- Inform the caller that the building is occupied and detonation could result in deaths and injuries to innocent people.
- Pay attention to background noises and any other potential clues. Record Information.
- Listen closely to the voice (e.g., male, female calm exited, etc.) Record Information.
- Immediately report the call to the authorities via 9-1-1. Pass on all information to the dispatcher.

#### Instructions for Building Receiving Threat:

- Immediately evacuate the entire building to an Exterior Point of Safety away from the building / location.
- Do not shut doors, turn objects on or off, or touch anything that is not essential for a safe evacuation.
- Await for Police response.
- Notify appropriate agency personnel.

### UTILITY FAILURES

- Each location should have plans that directly address the loss of normal utilities, including loss of water, heat, electricity and telephone.
- Special attention should be given to individual needs of the occupants that rely on these systems (e.g., electricity for feeding machines, etc.).
- Special attention should also be given to the impact that the loss of these utilities would have on fire protection systems (e.g., loss of water for sprinkler systems, loss of electricity for the alarm system's batteries, etc.)

### FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT OUT OF SERVICE

- In the event of a malfunction or if a building's fire system is deemed "OUT OF SERVICE" or not functioning correctly, a FIRE WATCH PROCEDURE shall be initiated. A building's occupancy is based on the fact that all fire safety systems (e.g., alarms, sprinkler systems, stove hoods, etc.) are in place and operational. In the event that a system is not working, alternative measures must be in place to assure that fire safety is maintained. What type of fire watch is required, shall be determined by your Authority Having Jurisdiction (State or Local Fire Marshal), who should be consulted in all cases when fire protection systems are not functioning.
- Your Authority Having Jurisdiction should be notified if any system is deemed "Out of Service" for greater than four hours per CT State Fire Code.

### MISSING PERSONS

- Each facility should have a policy to identify a proper procedure and notifications for when an occupant cannot be located.
- Please refer to the DDS's Missing Person: Reporting Procedure, to ensure timely notification of DDS personnel, law enforcement (local and State police) and families/guardians when an individual is determined to be missing and whose whereabouts are unknown.

**Chapter 6: Fire Prevention: General Instructions**

Fire Prevention is potentially the most powerful strategy for reducing both life and property fire hazards.

**A FIRE THAT NEVER HAPPENS CAUSES NO LOSS OR DAMAGE !!!!**

The most important thing that can be done to protect people from a fire is to prevent it from occurring. By preventing the outbreak of fire, you not only save lives, but also avoid property damage.

Everyone has a responsibility to protect those that they support from fire. Assuring adherence to common fire safety practices, regarding the use of appliances and other dangerous items, and assuring that all fire protection systems are operating properly all promote good fire safety. Practicing the Fire Plan is also an integrated component of a well-rounded fire prevention program.

DDS's Fire Prevention Program is based on the following components that are outlined in this Part of the DDS Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines:

- A. ADHERING TO GENERAL FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES:** Vigilance and awareness can be key tools to prevent fires. Following simple safety rules can also prevent fires. Listed here are some common fire safety guidelines that should be practiced.
- B. BUILDING FIRE PROTECTION FEATURES:** Knowing and understanding a building's fire protection features and assuring required testing and maintenance is completed. General Building Fire Safety Features are listed and explained.
- C. CONDUCTING FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS:** Having a plan is only the first step; it must be consistently practiced.

**Chapter 7: Fire Prevention: General Instructions: Building Fire Protection Features**

Listed in this section are building fire protection features that may be found in family homes, apartment buildings, group homes, health care facilities or other program areas that fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Developmental Services.

NOTE: ALL FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT MUST BE INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED ACCORDING TO THE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN THE CT FIRE SAFETY CODE AND ITS REFERENCED PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER STATE OR FEDERAL REGULATIONS AT ALL LICENSED FACILITIES. INFORMATION HERE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND IN ALL CASES FINAL AUTHORITY IS THE REGULATORY AGENCY INVOLVED.

**IMPORTANT:**

- Please see the site-specific section of your plan that identifies which of these systems are actually found in your specific location.
- Please see Annex 4 FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE & TESTING GUIDELINES

**ENHANCED-911 PHONE SYSTEM (E-911)- Everywhere in Connecticut!!!**

In the event of an emergency, dial 911. State your problem, name and location. Provide any information the dispatcher requests. Locations are also encouraged to participate in the “Enhanced-911” system – by contacting your local telephone company. Information about your location (e.g., number of occupants, handicaps, etc) can be put into the 911 system, so that information is available to emergency responders as soon as you call 911. When calling 911, it is imperative that the caller remains on the phone until such time that the 911 operator instructs the caller that it is ok to hang up.

**Early Notification Systems (aka Reverse 911 or Code Red)- Most towns!!!**

Many community Emergency Management Offices have placed into service an Early Notification System that utilizes a computer based phone call system. Everyone is encouraged to access these systems. It may be required to register with the Municipality to ensure that you are called in the event of a significant event. When registering, ensure that the numbers provided are to a direct phone, not a Central Switchboard. Many systems provide for additional contact numbers for an occupant of a home (such as the child of an elderly occupant). This is a great option that should be evaluated for use.

**FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS- Every home!!**

Smoke Alarms – These are found in family homes and some group homes. Smoke Alarms are devices that automatically sound a warning when visible or invisible smoke is near. Whenever possible, smoke detectors should be powered by the house electrical current with battery back-up and be inter-connected so that one detector sounding will sound all detectors in the location, alerting all occupants. These systems generally do not summon the Fire Dept.

Complete Fire Alarm Systems generally include the following components:

1. Initiating Devices: Smoke Detectors - Heat Detectors - Manual Pull Stations  
Once an initiating device is activated, the alarm sounds in the building and initiates an alarm to a remote alarm receiving station, which is staffed 24 hrs a day seven days, a week, who in turn notify the Fire Department.
2. Main Control Panels: Located in the building, which monitors and activates the alarms.
3. Alarm horn & strobe system: Located throughout the building alerts the occupants via horn and flashing strobes that an alarm has been activated.



**FIRE WATCH PROCEDURES- Family Homes, Group Homes, Regional Centers**

In the event of a malfunction or a building’s fire system is deemed “OUT OF SERVICE” or not functioning correctly, a FIRE WATCH PROCEDURE shall be initiated. In a family home, you do not have to perform a Fire Watch as described, but if a system is out of service (dead battery in a smoke detector) you need to take care of this so that the home can be as safe as possible. If there is a bigger problem, then everybody that lives at the home needs to be aware of the problem, so that a fire safe environment can be maintained. In other homes, a building’s occupancy is based on the fact that all fire safety systems (e.g., alarms, sprinkler systems, commercial stove hoods with suppression systems, etc.) are in place and operational. In the event that a system is not working for more than 4 hrs, alternative measures must be in place to assure that fire safety is maintained. What type of fire watch required; shall be determined by your Authority Having Jurisdiction, who should be consulted in all cases fire protection systems are not functioning. A Sample Fire Watch Procedure is provided in Annex 4.

**SAFETY BOOKS (“AKA RED BOOKS”)**

All locations shall maintain a Safety Book , which shall at a minimum contain the following:

- |                                                    |                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The DDS FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES    | 2. Maintenance and testing records of all fire protection equipment                             |
| 3. Site specific fire safety and emergency plans . | 4. Current memos, directives, etc. Pertaining to fire safety from DDS or agency administration. |
| 5. Staff training outlines and information.        | 6. Overview of any occupant training conducted.                                                 |

**PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

The purpose of a fire extinguisher is to allow occupants who are trained, to put out a small fire quickly and efficiently AFTER following the RACE plan. All locations should provide extinguishers and train everyone in their proper use. At a minimum, extinguishers should be located in furnace rooms, kitchens and other hazard areas and must be easily accessible.

**BUILDING COMPARTMENTALIZATION**

Open stairways, open doors, and penetrations through walls and floors all contribute to spread of fire. When the building is separated by walls and fire doors we achieve what is known as proper compartmentalization. The compartmentalization of a building and corridor prevents fire and smoke from spreading unchecked throughout a floor or to the upper floor of a house. Occupants can be endangered in another part of the house, not even near the fire. Open stairways, open doors, and penetrations through walls and floors all contribute to the spread of fire. Your location may be equipped with a variety of types of fire doors rated for 20, 60 or even 90 minutes of protection from fire. But in ALL cases closing a door, any door, can limit the spread of fire. This applies to family homes, group homes and health care facilities. Lives and property have been saved this way. Your location (apartment buildings, group homes, health care facilities, and some day service and support locations) may also be constructed to provide a form of an interior point of safety that provides some limited protection for occupants who cannot easily evacuate. In all cases, these “interior point of safety” are built of special construction and you must check your location’s Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan to see if they apply to your area.

**EMERGENCY LIGHTING**

Your location may be equipped with emergency lighting systems. These may include battery operated lighting systems, or electrical generators. All locations should assure adequate emergency lighting in the event of a power failure. This could be as simple as flashlights with fresh batteries in family homes (which should be checked monthly). Check your location’s Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan to see what applies to your area.

### **AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS**

Automatic sprinkler systems are the most effective device to protect against loss of life due to fire. In years to come you may see these life safety devices in new family homes, as the building codes change. An automatic sprinkler system is a network of specially sized piping installed throughout a building at or near the ceiling. Sprinkler heads are connected and systematically spaced in the piping. The system is connected to a water supply and when activated, automatically sets off the fire alarm system. The heat from a fire automatically opens each sprinkler head individually, causing water to spray out and extinguish, or control a fire.

### **STOVE HOOD FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS**

Some stoves (in larger facilities) have Stove Hood Fire Suppression System. This system is a combined hood exhaust system for removal of grease-laden vapors and an automatic fire suppression system that covers the stove area and also all ductwork and greatly enhances kitchen fire safety. The system can also be activated manually via a special pull activation device. This should not be confused with a simple domestic "stove hood", which provides no suppression capability, but which should be cleaned on a regular basis.

## **Chapter 8: Fire Prevention: General Fire Safety Practices**

Listed in this section are some common fire safety practices that should be adhered to throughout the Department in locations, which are under the jurisdiction of the DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

### **COOKING**

Never leave cooking food on the stovetop unattended, and keep a close eye on food cooking inside the oven. Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles (e.g., potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging).

Turn pot handles inward so they can't be bumped or grabbed.

Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.

Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald danger if the moisture in the mitt is heated.

Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.

If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.

If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave. Call the fire department and make sure to have the microwave oven serviced before you use it again. Food cooked in a microwave can be dangerously hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from micro waved food carefully to prevent steam burns.

### **OPEN FLAMES**

**Use of open flames, such as candles, is not suggested in any areas. Some occupancies (ie: Health Care) may have additional requirements or prohibitions. Consult your local Authority Having Jurisdiction for details.**

In private residences, (e.g., Individual Supports / Own homes, etc...) where candles are permitted, care should be taken to follow general safety rules:

Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep. Keep candles away from items that can catch fire (e.g., clothing, books, paper, curtains, Christmas trees, flammable decorations). Use candleholders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that can't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax. Don't place lit candles in windows, where blinds and curtains can close over them. Place candleholders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface and do not use candles in places where they could be knocked over by children or pets. Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids. Keep candlewicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder or decorative material. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt. Avoid candles with combustible items embedded in them.

### **ELECTRICITY & EXTENSION CORDS**

All appliances in use should be approved by a recognized laboratory (e.g., UL or FM).

Extension cords of any design shall only be used for temporary use. (e.g., Christmas lights are temporary, electric razor recharging is temporary; aquariums are not temporary).

Some occupancies (e.g., Health Care) may have additional requirements. Consult your local Authority Having Jurisdiction for details.

The use of re-locatable power taps (multi strip surge protectors) is not permitted in ICF-MR facilities, except for computers.

### SMOKING

Designate a specific area where people can smoke; if in the home make sure there is a smoke detector located in the space and **non-combustible** safety-type ashtrays are provided.

Provide large, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Fill ashtrays with water before dumping their contents into wastebaskets.

If the individual takes medication that might cause drowsiness, keep an eye on them while they smoke. Assess the individual's ability to safely use matches or a lighter and whether the individual should be able to carry matches or lighters on their person.

Teach individuals the danger of fire as it relates to smoking. Never permit smoking in bed.

### ALTERNATIVE HEATING APPLIANCES

Use of any alternative heating appliances including fireplaces, space heaters and wood stoves should be used only after consulting with the local Authority Having Jurisdiction. Your local fire marshal or fire department can provide you with specific guidance in your home about the use of these devices. In all cases, such appliances should be installed, maintained and tested in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations including the disposal of ash and debris

### CT FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENT FOR INTERIOR FINISHES, FURNISHINGS, MATTRESSES, CURTAINS, ETC.

In licensed facilities, your Authority Having Jurisdiction should be consulted to determine which of the following items must meet the Fire Code: drapes, blinds, curtains, wall coverings (e.g., wallpaper), carpeting and rugs (including throw rugs, bath mats, etc.), upholstered furniture or other items.

In all homes and settings, however, care should be taken to limit combustible interior finishes.

### EXIT DOORS AND WINDOWS

Exit doors and windows shall be arranged and maintained to provide free and unobstructed egress from all parts of the building at all times. No lock or fastening device (e.g., chains, padlocks, hooks deadbolts, or key operated locks) shall be installed to prevent free escape from the inside of the building, unless approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. In family homes, consideration needs to be given to how the extra locks will prevent escaping during a fire. This includes keeping clear of snow and ice in the winter months.

### FLAMMABLE & COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS

All flammable and combustible chemicals (e.g., paint thinners, paints, etc.) shall be stored in original or approved containers, designed for that purpose. They shall be stored separate from paper goods and shall be in appropriate metal cabinets. In addition, only small quantities (consumer quantities) should be maintained in the home.

GASOLINE shall only be kept in approved containers, designed for that purpose and in small amounts. This applies to licensed facilities and at family homes. GASOLINE should be stored at least 20 ft. away from a structure and kept inaccessible to all occupants.

### HAZARDOUS AREAS

A hazardous area is a space containing materials that, because of their basic nature (e.g., areas for cartoned storage of food or maintenance supplies, laundry areas, furnace areas, etc.), represent a significantly greater fire hazard than would otherwise be typical of the contents of the occupancy. These areas can be found in apartment buildings,

Special care should be taken in these areas to prevent fires.

Qualified personnel should inspect furnaces annually. Combustibles should be kept clear of the furnace and doors to the furnace area should be kept closed at all times.

Laundry areas should be properly vented, including the dryer vent. Accumulation of debris, lint and trash should also be avoided. The lint trap should be cleaned in between every load of laundry.

### HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Family Homes need to use caution when utilizing live decorations. Families should consider using UL or equivalent lighting, minimizing or eliminating candles and open flame with the decorations and keep any live trees well watered.

Only decorations that are permitted by CT State Fire Safety Code shall be permitted in licensed homes. The use of cut Natural Christmas Trees, open flames and other flammable materials including but not limited to, evergreen branches, paper or fabrics, etc., is PROHIBITED by LAW in *many* residential occupancies.

**Consult your local Authority Having Jurisdiction for details.**

Decorations shall be so located as to not impede nor obstruct any stairs, doorway or means of egress. All sources of temporary wiring shall be tested and listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory (UL) approved by the CT State Fire Marshal's Office. All Exterior outlets shall be Ground Fault protected. All wiring and power shall meet National Electrical Code Requirements.

Additional Guidelines and Suggestions are available from your local Fire Marshal's Office each holiday season.

#### **OXYGEN IN USE**

Medical Oxygen has the capability of enhancing a fire and requires special attention to ensure minimizing any fires in the area of medical oxygen. Smoking should be discouraged and may be prohibited in areas where oxygen is present. Occupancies that have occupants that use oxygen (gas, liquid or concentrators) should have written procedures and safety policies in place that address use, storage, signage, evacuation and other safety concerns. Consult your local Authority Having Jurisdiction and reference Annex 4 for a sample Oxygen Procedure.

#### **GRILLS- Propane and Charcoal**

The AHJ may have restrictions in some homes (apartments, condominiums) for the use of grills on upper floors. Every spring the user should check the tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders, or food grease. Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear blockage and push it through to the main part of the burner. Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing. Make sure gas hoses are as far away from the hot surface as possible, including areas where grease could drip on them. If you can't move the hoses, install a heat shield to protect them. Replace scratched or nicked connectors, which can eventually leak gas. Check for gas leaks if you smell gas or when you reconnect the grill to the LP-gas container. If you detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas and don't attempt to light the grill until the leak is fixed. Keep lighted cigarettes, matches, or open flames away from a leaking grill. Never use a grill indoors. Use the grill at least 10 feet away from your house or any building. Do not use the grill in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, or under a surface that can catch fire. Do not attempt to repair the tank valve or the appliance yourself. See a LP gas dealer or a qualified appliance repair person. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions that accompany the grill.

NEVER use a charcoal grill inside the home, or any enclosed space even if ventilation is provided.

Charcoal produces carbon monoxide (CO) a colorless, odorless gas that can kill you.

Use and keep the charcoal grill at least 10 feet away from any building.

Store charcoal lighter fluid and any other combustibles away from the house.

**SPECIAL ACTION FOR TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY IN ANOTHER LOCATION**

It is possible that all occupants may be relocated to another building for renovation, due to maintenance emergencies, etc. In the event that all occupants need to be relocated for over twenty-four hours, the following procedure should be followed:

Immediately upon occupation of new building:

Everyone shall be in-serviced on the location of the EXITS, fire alarm system components, fire extinguishers, etc. , immediately upon occupying the building.

Within 48 hours of occupation:

*EACH SHIFT (1, 2 & 3)* should conduct fire drills and inservicing of staff. One of the drills should be a total evacuation to the outside, weather permitting.

To prepare for the possibility of temporary relocation, everyone should prepare by ensuring that they have a "Go Bag" that contains essential items for all people in the home. Guidance can be obtained from Annex \_\_\_ or the American Red Cross Web Site. In addition to the Go Bag, consideration of following the DDS Emergency Relocation Plan and the required components of that plan should be given.

## **Chapter 9: Fire Prevention: Fire Evacuation Drills**

An important part of any emergency plan is the successful completion of a fire evacuation drill. Fire evacuation drills involve the actual evacuation of all occupants to a predetermined assembly point and provide occupants with experience in using all exits from a facility.

There are four reasons for conducting fire evacuation drills, they are:

- It is required. Most codes, laws and regulatory agencies require fire drills in licensed settings. It is strongly encouraged in family homes, and the concept is promoted by the National Fire Protection Association.
- To learn the emergency plan in ALL occupancies, even single family homes. People learn best by practicing the plan, and ALL homes should have an emergency plan.
- To practice the plan – Learning the plan is not enough. Occupants and staff must practice until it becomes automatic.
- To evaluate the emergency plan's performance – This is done to provide information concerning the occupants' and staffs' abilities to choose safe evacuation routes.

### **HOW OFTEN TO CONDUCT FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS**

1. In Campus Programs, Community Living Arrangements, and 24 hour supports and services, Fire Evacuation Drills shall be conducted at least once each quarter on each shift. *Note: In ICF residential occupancies, Fire Evacuation Drills shall include at least one total evacuation (to the outside), each shift, each year – NO EXCEPTIONS!*
2. In Community Training Homes, Fire Evacuation Drills shall be conducted at least quarterly, varying time of day and at least one should be during sleeping hours.
3. In Individual Support Living Arrangements, Fire Evacuation Drills should be conducted at least quarterly, varying time of day and where practical, at least one should be during sleeping hours. To avoid disturbing neighbors, drills need not sound an actual alarm but the sounding of the alarm can be simulated as long as the evacuation is practiced .
4. In free standing Day Program Sites, Fire Evacuation Drills should be conducted at least quarterly.
5. In Day Program sites where individuals work in community settings, Fire Evacuation training should be reviewed with those individuals at least quarterly.
6. In Respite Centers fire evacuation drills need to be completed every other month, with a total of six per year, two on each shift per year.
7. In family homes, evacuation preparedness should include Evacuation Drills in the Home (EDITH). The plans should include a prearranged meeting place.

### **TYPES OF FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS**

- **Surprise Fire Evacuation Drills** - Fire Evacuation drills should be surprise evacuation drills – Drills are used to evaluate what is likely to happen in a real emergency. Unannounced drills conducted at inconvenient times, such as late at night, as well as at convenient times should surprise the staff, as well as the occupants. Drills may be announced in advance to the supervisory staff.
- **Actual Fire or Fire Alarm Responses** – In the event of an actual fire, fire alarm or perceived fire in a residence resulting in evacuation, a fire evacuation drill report should be completed to document the actual response of the occupants where fire evacuation documentation is required.
- **Simulated evacuation drills** – This type of drill is allowed only in residential facilities that are designated as “Health Care Occupancies”, or designated as “Board and Care Facilities” that has an Evacuation Score designation as “Impractical to Evacuate” or has written approval from the Authority Having Jurisdiction that allows occupants to be exempt from participating in drills. In these types of drills, the staff present shall practice all aspects of the Fire Safety Plan, except for activating the alarm and physically evacuating occupants. Where simulated fire drills do occur, there may be additional fire code

requirements, the Authority Having Jurisdiction shall be consulted. **SEE YOUR LOCATION’S SITE SPECIFIC PLAN TO SEE IF THIS APPLIES TO YOUR AREA.**

**WHERE TO EVACUATE TO DURING FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS**

All types of drills (except for simulated drills) should include evacuation to a designated Point of Safety. The Point of Safety most often will be to the predesignated, exterior meeting place. However, evacuation may also use “Staged Evacuation” techniques. Staged evacuation techniques include staging occupants prior to complete evacuation. If these areas of staging are A.H.J. approved “Interior Points of Safety”, practice drills and timing of evacuation drills may end when occupants reach that approved point of safety (whether it is an exterior or interior point of safety).

Only in Health Care Occupancies can Horizontal Exits, or Defend in Place techniques be utilized.

**CONSULT YOUR OWN HOME OR SITE SPECIFIC FIRE AND EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE POINT OF SAFETY THAT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR LOCATION.**

- **Simulated Evacuation Drills:** Actual Evacuation to a designated point of safety is not necessary.
- **To an Exterior Point of Safety :** Actual Evacuation to a Pre-Designated Exterior Meeting Place. **SEE YOUR SITE SPECIFIC FIRE AND EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE LOCATION OF YOUR EXTERIOR MEETING PLACE.**
- **Staged Evacuation To an Interior Point of Safety:** Occupants are either evacuated to, or kept in place in designated Interior Points of Safety. It is important to note; however, this is only a temporary measure and all plans should call for eventual total evacuation. . **SEE YOUR SITE SPECIFIC FIRE AND EMERGENCY PLAN IF THIS IS APPROVED BY YOUR AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION, AT YOUR LOCATION AND FOR THE LOCATION OF ANY INTERIOR POINTS OF SAFETY.**

**WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN DRILLS**

All occupants should participate in all aspects of the drill. This includes all occupants, and staff. If occupants *refuse* to participate, that individual’s evacuation score should reflect that behavior and that behavior should be noted in the facility’s site-specific fire safety plan.

**Exception #1** – If the home is designated as “Impractical to Evacuate” and the facility meets the additional requirements set out in the CT Fire Safety Code (which is the Operating features required of Health Care Facilities/Chapter 13), those occupants who cannot meaningfully assist in their own evacuation, or have special health problems, shall not be required to actively participate in the drill. Written Fire Marshal’s approval is not required; however, it is recommended that the local AHJ be consulted in this arrangement, and DDS inspectors may require documentation from the physician substantiating the occupant’s special health problems.

**Exception #2** – Occupants of Health Care Facilities are not required to participate in evacuation drills; simulated drills may be conducted.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There are NO EXCEPTIONS for ICF/MR Facilities where ALL occupants must participate in at least one total evacuation (to the outside) each shift, each year.

**SEE YOUR LOCATION’S SITE SPECIFIC FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLAN FOR YOUR OCCUPANCY DESIGNATION AND REQUIREMENTS**





participate should actively involve themselves in all aspects of the drill. Drills should be conducted in order to practice utilizing all potential EXITS.

6. If inefficiency or other problem is identified during the evacuation drill, a written plan of specific corrective action(s) should be promulgated and carried out.

7. Fire Drills should vary to utilize all appropriate exits in a building and should include suitable procedures to ascertain that all occupants in the building, (supervisors, direct care, etc..) actually participate and it is so documented. Each designated means of escape (**excluding** windows) should be used during drills annually.

8. The drill should be conducted seriously. Be a positive role model.

9. Provide positive reinforcement.

10. The facility should have specified/consistent shifts i.e. hours for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift drills.

11. For third shift drills, they should be conducted when the occupants are sleeping. The Fire Evacuation Drill Report should indicate that occupants were asleep at the time of the third shift drill. If an occupant is awake at the time of a third shift drill, it should be noted.

**Chapter 10: Developing Community Relationships for Safety**

Your local fire department and local Fire Marshal's Office have a definite interest in assisting you in keeping your location free from fire. Developing relationships to foster communication in the area of prevention also assists your local department and YOU in the event of an emergency. They may assist you in planning escape routes, where to install smoke detectors and may provide you with additional resources.

Contact your local Fire Department or local Fire Marshal's office for more information.

## **Chapter 11: Glossary**

**Area of refuge:** An Area of refuge that complies with the accessible route requirements or a pre-approved meeting place.

**Approved Listing Laboratory:** Underwriters Laboratory, Factory Mutual or any independent laboratory approved by the CT State Fire Marshal's Office.

**Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or Fire Marshal:** The person who will do inspections and or investigations for fire related problems, and has the responsibility and authority to determine fire code compliance.

**Automatic Detection:** A device that senses visible or invisible particles of combustion and sounds an alarm.

**CSFSC:** Connecticut State Fire Safety Code

**Dispatch Center:** Normally found at a Police or Fire station that will dispatch or send the needed personnel.

**Emergency egress lighting:** Lights that will help show the exits, for a period of time, in case of a fire or the loss of power.

**Evacuation Scores (A.K.A. "E-Scores"):** An Evacuation Score is the designation of the facility's "Evacuation Capability". The evacuation capability of a facility is the ability of the occupants, occupant and staff, or as a group, to either evacuate a building or relocate from the point of occupancy to a point of safety.

**Exit:** Exits include exterior exit doors, exit passageways, horizontal exits, separated exit stairs, and separated exit ramps.

**Fire door:** A door and door assembly that has met the fire protection rating and testing acceptance criteria as determined by the National Fire Protection Association, Underwriters Laboratories or any other approved testing lab.

**Firewall:** A continuous membrane either vertical or horizontal, designed and constructed with a specified fire resistance rating to limit the spread of fire and also will restrict the movement of smoke.

**Fire code:** A comprehensive and systematically arranged collection of laws to protect people from fire.

**Fire protection devices:** Devices designed to protect people or occupants during a fire (e.g., Fire rated doors, extinguishers, and sprinklers).

**Fire Marshal/or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ):** The person who will do inspections and/or investigations for fire related problems, and has the responsibility and authority to determine fire code compliance.

**Means of egress:** A path of travel, usable by a person with a severe mobility impairment, that leads to a public way or an area of refuge.

**Points of Safety:** It is exterior to and away from the building, or it is an acceptable interior point of safety, determined by the AHJ, and documentation as to its acceptability is on file in the facility

**Pull station:** Normally found at exits of a building, used to activate the building's fire alarm system to notify persons in a building, fire personnel and or a dispatch center of an emergency i.e., fire.

**Smoke barrier:** A continuous membrane, either vertical or horizontal, such as a wall, floor, ceiling assembly, that is designed and constructed to restrict the movement of smoke. A smoke barrier might or might not have a fire resistance rating.

**Staged Evacuations** – Evacuation plans should call for eventual total evacuation; however, it is permissible to conduct staged evacuations (e.g., movement toward a door) to areas that may or may not be an approved interior point of safety. However; practice drills, actual responses and timing of evacuation drills only ends when occupants reach an approved point of safety (exterior or interior).

**Suppression devices:** A device used to reduce the incident or severity of the incident (e.g., sprinklers or extinguishers).

**Stove hoods:** Venting system over the stove that can also incorporate a fire suppression system.

**Sprinkler system:** A fire extinguishing system made up of a network of water pipes equipped to release water automatically when temperatures rise above a predetermined limit.

**Strobe:** A light that goes off in case of an emergency as to notify individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. This is tied into the fire alarm system.

### ***Residential Opportunities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities:***

**Independent Living:** Some people with intellectual disabilities need no staff support to manage a household on their own. They live in apartments, houses, and condominiums and effectively manage their lives.

**\*Individualized Home Supports:** Some people with intellectual disabilities need minimal hours of support to live in their own place. This staff support may be in the form of assistance with budgets, shopping and/or leisure activities. These supports provide assistance from a few hours a day to only a few hours a month, depending on the needs of the person.

**\*Community Living Arrangements:** People who need 24 hour support are provided with on-site staff in group home settings. Typically, two to six people will share an apartment or house and will have support staff available 24 hours a day.

**\*Community Training Homes:** People with intellectual disabilities live in a family setting that is not within their own family. People in these settings live with a family that has received training and is licensed by DDS.

**\*Residential Centers:** Residential Centers are facilities with over 16 people. Connecticut has eight Residential Centers that provide 24 hour staffing for the people who live there. Usually, a person living in a Residential Center also receives their day services at the same facility.

### **\*DDS Certified Living Arrangements**

**\*Individualized Home Supports:** Some people with intellectual disabilities need minimal hours of support to live in their own place. This staff support may be in the form of assistance with budgets, shopping and/or leisure activities. These supports provide assistance from a few hours a day to only a few hours a month, depending on the needs of the person.

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**PART II – SITE SPECIFIC FIRE SAFETY**  
**AND EMERGENCY PLANS**

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## **Chapter 1: Overview of Site Specific Fire safety and Emergency Plans**

1. **As appropriate, all CLA's, and Day Service Support Locations** shall have a complete, written Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan.
2. Other homes should have a plan as well. Guidance is provided later in this guide.
3. This plan shall be specific to each location, detailing the important information and guidance for that area.
4. Both this Site Specific plan, in conjunction with Part I of these Guidelines ("DDS Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines", shall constitute a complete plan.
5. This shall be completed initially and reviewed annually thereafter.
6. **ALL** personnel assigned to an area shall be fully aware of the responsibilities and information outlined in this plan. Documentation of staff training of the plan is recommended.
7. **IMPORTANT:** The instructions and duties in these guidelines provide an important tool for training and preparing for various potential emergencies (e.g., fire , weather, etc..). These instructions also provide specific guidance on how staff need to react in the event of an emergency, however, it is understood that each emergency will present itself in a unique way, and in all cases sound practical judgment, experience and training shall prevail.
8. **NOTE: THE AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION (LOCAL OR STATE FIRE MARSHAL) MUST APPROVE ANY FIRE EVACUATION PLANS THAT PROVIDE FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN TOTAL EVACUATION TO THE EXTERIOR.**
9. **NOTE:** As appropriate, completed Site Specific Fire Safety & Emergency Plans and Evacuation Score (E-score) determination letters include individually identifiable health information that is protected health information (PHI) covered by privacy policy.

Policy mandates accounting for disclosures of PHI to appropriate authorities, such as Fire Marshals. Disclosures include, but are not limited to:

- a. Periodic review or inspection of a Site Specific Fire Safety & Emergency Plan;
- b. Providing a copy of a plan to these authorities;
- c. Review of PHI contained in an Evacuation Score determination letter (if shared by you, separately from the plan); and
- d. Providing a copy of the Evacuation Score determination letter to these authorities (again if the letter is shared by you separately from the plan)

Follow your organization's procedures to record an entry into a disclosure log. Remember to record *written and oral* disclosures of PHI.

Contact your organization's Privacy Officer to answer questions you may have.

For DDS operated facilities, the staff may choose between the two following methods to record a disclosure.

Facilities serving small numbers of consumers may prefer to use the Department's "Consumer PHI Disclosure Record" and log an entry for each consumer listed in the site specific plan into a copy of the form maintained for each individual consumer.

Facilities serving large numbers of consumers may prefer to use the log provided on the Site Specific Plan cover sheet.

**Remember:** These logs, disclosure record form and cover sheet, must be kept as documentation. The HIPAA retention period is six years from the most recent date of disclosure contained in the log.

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**Chapter 2: Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for  
CLA's, Campus, Community Training Homes and Day Service and Support  
Locations**

- A) Building and Site Information
- B) Agency Designated Emergency Contact Information
- C) Special Instructions for Occupants
  - In this section Specific Information should be detailed for each person. The information should consider the individual's capacity to evacuate and the physical environment
- D) Special Instructions for Staff, Identified by Position not names.
- E) Specific Building Fire Protection Features:
  - Approved Points of Safety including Exterior Meeting Places and Interior Points of Safety.
  - Fire Alarm Systems
  - Portable Fire Extinguisher Information
  - Location of Smoke Detectors and/or Heat Sensors
  - Location of Telephones
  - Information on Safety Book (AKA: "Red Books")
  - Automatic Sprinkler System Information
  - Stove Hood Fire Suppression System Information
  - Emergency Lighting in Building
  - Oxygen in Use Information
- F) Specific Fire Prevention Guidelines
  - Fire Watch Procedures
  - Smoking Policies
  - Special Actions for Temporary Occupancy in another location
- G) Fire Evacuation Drill Procedures
  - Detail if Simulated Drills are allowed \*
  - Detail if any occupants are exempt from participating in drills
  - Detail any Site Specific Fire Evacuation Drill Procedures
- H) Specific External Hazards:
  - Hurricanes and Earthquakes
  - Tornadoes
  - Flooding
  - Severe Cold Weather
  - Severe Hot Weather
  - Radiological Disasters
  - Emergency Relocation
- I) Specific Internal Hazards:
  - Hazardous Material Emergencies
  - Carbon Monoxide Emergencies
  - Terrorist Threats
  - Electrical Failure
  - Loss of Water
  - Loss of Heat
  - Telephone Failure
  - Missing Persons
- J) Developing Community Relationships for Safety (Outline Community Resources Available)



**Chapter 3: Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for Individual Supports, Own Homes and Family Homes**

- The names of the occupants
- The street address and phone number
- The number of occupants that occupy the home
- The property owner name and contact information
- The name and contact information for an emergency contact person
- The name of the Provider Agency and contact information
- Maintenance and fire alarm contact information
- Any other relevant information that may help the occupants and 1<sup>st</sup> responders in the event of a emergency at the home
- A copy of the NFPA EDITH (Exit Drills In The Home) pamphlet

## **Chapter 4: Minimum Contents of a Site Specific Fire Safety and Emergency Plan for Respite Centers**

### **FAMILY RESPITE CENTER OVERVIEW**

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) recognizes that individuals and families often need occasional breaks. These breaks, in the form of out-of-home respite care, allow individuals visiting the Respite Centers to have an enjoyable time, meet new people and participate in a variety of fun activities. Meanwhile, the family is provided relief from their ongoing caregiver responsibilities. Families report that scheduled respite center visits provide them with an opportunity to have their family members stay in a safe, enjoyable and home-like environment through planned respite. At the same time, the caregiver is able to take a few days off from care giving and perhaps go on a short vacation, attend a special event, spend time with other family members, finally finish a project, or simply relax.

#### **What is Respite?**

Respite is the temporary care of a person with a disability for the purpose of offering relief to the family or caregiver. It is a service that allows for time to reenergize, deal with emergency situations, or engage in personal, social, or routine activities and tasks that otherwise may be neglected, postponed, or curtailed due to the demands of caring for a person who has intellectual disabilities.

#### **What types of respite are available?**

Overnight respite is available at the DDS Respite Centers operated and staffed by DDS. DDS Respite Centers provide 24-hour care for extended weekends in comfortable home-like environments. Respite Centers are also open full weeks during the summer and some school vacations. Both overnight and hourly respites are available as services to individuals enrolled in the Department's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers.

Families of individuals who are not enrolled in an HCBS Waiver may request a subsidy, called an Individual and Family Grant, to purchase their own respite services or may request hourly respite supports provided by regional Family Support Workers.

The Emergency Evacuation Summary form is to be used for each guest of the Family Respite Centers. The information can be gathered at the pre-visit, through review of the guest profile and medical information as well as through conversations with the family/guardian at the time of admission.

The Emergency Evacuation Summary must be reviewed by all employees working in the Family Respite Center at the time of the guest's stay.

To complete the form, the Supervising Developmental Services Worker (SDSW) or designee at the pre-visit must discuss with the family the type of assistance the family anticipates their family member would need in the case of an emergency evacuation. Check off the appropriate box on the form.

Use the comment section to add detail so staff have a clear understanding of any potential variables (seizure activity that may occur as a result of a loud noise/alarm, strobe lights, etc.) that would potentially impact on the guest's ability to evacuate safely.

The bottom section of the form is used to document subsequent conversations with the family/guardian to re-affirm or revise the document.