



ADMINISTRATION ON AGING: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GUIDE



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GUIDE



Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) is pleased to provide new technical assistance materials to assist the Aging Network and others in preparing for and coping with disasters. These materials are based on a number of recent experiences faced by our State and Area Agencies on Aging and aging services providers following the Gulf Coast hurricanes and other natural and man-made disasters of recent years. In 1995, the AoA issued a *Disaster Preparedness Manual* for the Aging Network which provided very basic information about helping the elderly in the event of a disaster. That manual served us well in providing introductory training. Recent events have taught us that the Aging Network needs to assume a more proactive role in attending to special needs of the elderly to assure they receive the type of attention needed in a disaster event. State and Area Agencies and aging services providers must be a strong and active presence in emergency preparedness planning and response efforts. The growth of the aging population, with more frail elders remaining in their own homes, creates some special challenges to assure their safety.

Changing technology has greatly altered how we communicate and how we maintain information about the elderly. Technological advances give us new opportunities for having vital information readily available during emergencies. AoA's new Emergency Assistance Guide includes up-to-date information to help the Aging Network and others to be an active presence in disaster efforts. The AoA collaborated with many public and private organizations that work on behalf of the safety and security of the elderly. We are grateful for the outstanding cooperation from many sources, including the American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Administration, National Organization on Disability, National Association of State Units on Aging, and National Association of Area Agencies. We pledge to continue our cooperation with these and many other organizations to assist in providing the highest quality of services to elderly citizens.

In today's world, it is possible for an emergency situation to occur in any location at anytime. I strongly urge all readers to carefully study these materials, to share them with emergency personnel and others who work with the elderly, and to keep them available as a resource when needed.

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Assistant Secretary for Aging

United States Department of Health and Human Services

Disaster Assistance Roundtable Advisory Council

The AoA is especially indebted to the following members of the Disaster Assistance Roundtable Advisory Council who gave time from their busy schedules to help define what materials were needed and recommendations for improving content. Round Table members and their contact information are listed in Resource B.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GUIDE

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, offers a comprehensive set of technical assistance materials to help the Aging Network and others prepare and plan for the management of major emergencies or disaster events. This technical assistance Guide includes many tools to assist those of you with responsibility for the safety and continued independence of this nation's older population. These materials may be used for training and technical assistance and may be copied, modified and adapted as appropriate.

The Guide is designed to help the Aging Network work through the intricate planning and collaborative efforts needed by State and Area Agencies and local providers. Agencies need to think through and decide in the planning process who has what responsibility in an emergency so that emergency teams are ready to begin work immediately should a disaster or emergency occur. In the planning and preparing, thought must be given to ways to work and network with emergency responders, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other residential facilities. All of these entities are important partners and the interchange with staff can be a valued resource in an emergency.

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