

## Disaster Policies and Procedures

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By now your CIL has updated your policies to include any retroactive responses to the current pandemic. Some of you developed very specific, COVID-19 only policies. Here is a question: Are your policies broad enough to include the next unexpected emergency? Would they cover other infectious situations, not just this one? Do you have policies for all kinds of emergencies? You should have comprehensive emergency/disaster policies in place. Like all policies, you can develop them to fit your local situation, and your board is the approval body. They would be effective the date of approval and can address a wide range of possibilities. And like all policies, training will need to be in place for the staff who implement them. You are responsible for disaster planning for your CIL, and certainly disaster planning is an Independent Living Skill needed in our community.

We would like to encourage you, if you have not yet, to examine ALL of your disaster/emergency preparedness policies. Make sure that you have addressed every emergency you can anticipate. If your offices are flooded, or blown away by a tornado, do you know what to do? When do you evacuate your offices? When and where do you shelter in the building? How do policies address your various sites if you have more than one office? When do you call 911? What training is provided to staff to respond in a crisis?

You can find sample disaster plans online and adapt them to fit your CIL. I felt that the sample at <https://friendsresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Disaster-Safety-Policy-and-Procedures.pdf> was useful in demonstrating a more comprehensive approach. You will need to adjust to fit your CIL and culture but consider addressing the areas mentioned in the sample. Having a comprehensive set of policies will benefit you in your disaster planning.

You can find a guide that is disability-specific at <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/disaster-safety-for-people-with-disabilities.html>. This will give you ideas about both individual and organizational preparation.

Other resources can be found on our website at <https://www.ilru.org/projects/disability911/resources-emergency-preparedness-recovery>

There are some specific considerations related to Centers. Here is a link to ACL's Policy on CILs and Emergency Preparedness and Response from 2018: [ACL Policy on CILs and Emergency Preparedness and Response 7.19.18](#)

If you have any questions related to disaster/emergency preparedness policies, please contact Paula at [paulamcelwee.ilru@gmail.com](mailto:paulamcelwee.ilru@gmail.com).