



South Carolina Department of Social Services

Child Welfare Services Manual

760.7 Disaster Preparedness Plans

Effective Date: 7/21/2016

Purpose Statement:

As a part of the agency's mission to provide safety for children in foster care, the agency shall partner with foster parents to plan for the occurrence of a disaster event. This section sets forth the requirements for disaster preparedness plans and the instruction to be given to foster parents regarding disaster response.

Policy:

Foster families shall have a disaster preparedness plan in place as a prerequisite for initial licensure and for all renewals thereafter. Such a plan shall include the following topics:

1. Flexible and appropriate responses to various scenarios, including locations in which to seek emergency shelter;
2. Additional considerations for medically fragile children;
3. Plans for compliance with mandatory evacuation orders; and
4. Identification of an approved local shelter or, if plan is to evacuate to a residence, steps for ensuring child safety and continued communication with DSS.

Procedures:

1. The Initial Licensing Coordinator shall review the foster parents' written evacuation plans during the initial assessment and incorporate the plan into the recommendation for licensing. The issuance of a license is tacit approval of the plan.
2. Once a foster home license is issued, the Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support Coordinator (FSC) assigned to the family shall be responsible for updating and reviewing the family's disaster plan at the time of license renewal. The FSC shall be responsible for ensuring the family understands the means by which shelter can and should be utilized during a disaster.
3. The initial and ongoing plan should include the following topics:
 - a. Disaster preparedness plans that are responsive, flexible, appropriate to the situation and include several locations to choose from; and
 - b. If a child is considered medically fragile, the plan should reflect attendance at either a medically fragile shelter or a home that can accommodate the child's special needs (refer to the county emergency plan for a listing of shelters to accommodate the medically fragile if a listing is available);
4. The FSC shall instruct the family on an ongoing basis that:
 - a. Foster children must be evacuated when there is a mandatory evacuation order;
 - b. Foster parents must evacuate to shelters that have been approved by the local

- emergency/disaster preparedness plan. Local law enforcement or Red Cross offices have information regarding approved shelters. The FSC will assist the family in determining locations of shelters provided by local emergency protective services;
- c. When local shelters are used, the foster parents are to confirm that the foster child's name is listed on an attendance roster; and
 - d. In the event that the foster parents plan to evacuate to a residence, they must be certain that:
 - I. The location is safe and is large enough to accommodate everyone; and
 - II. The location of residence is located far enough away to not be threatened by the disaster; and
 - III. The name, address and telephone number of the residence is available; and
 - IV. The residence is appropriate to the needs of the child.
5. Foster parents must alert DSS as to the whereabouts of all foster children. Within 24 hours of an evacuation, or, in the event of phone service disruption, immediately upon restoration of service, the foster parent must call the Children's 24-hour Helpline number to supply the Agency with the following information:
- a. Foster child's name;
 - b. County or office of case management;
 - c. Foster child's whereabouts and situation; and
 - d. The telephone numbers where the child and family can be reached.
6. Within 24 hours of the disaster or as soon as communication with the DSS office managing the foster child's case is available, the foster parent shall contact the child's Foster Care worker with the following information:
- a. The safety and condition of the foster child and foster family;
 - b. The current living arrangements;
 - c. The condition of the home (if known); and
 - d. Whether or not if they can reside in the home (if known).
7. If the home is damaged and requires repair, the FSC shall confirm that repairs meet Standards of Care requirements and fire, safety, health, and sanitation requirements.
8. If the foster home is damaged beyond repair or habitation, the foster home license shall be amended to reflect the new address and home environment of the family's residence. The new residence must meet all the requirements for licensing as described in Section 720: Standards of Care and Section 740 et seq. Fire, safety, health and sanitation inspections are required to amend a license.
- a. If the new home is located in an area outside of the original Health Services Region, the license must be transferred to the appropriate Regional Office, who will oversee the license amendment.
 - b. If the family's new residence is unable to meet licensing requirements or if the family refuses to comply with requirements, the license must be closed and any foster children removed.
 - c. If the home is closed and children removed, immediate notice must be given to the Foster Care worker.

Documentation:

- Contacts with foster family and children
- Copies of shelter listings
- Copy of current disaster preparedness plan

Legal Citations:

42 U.S.C.A. § 622(b)(16): disaster preparedness

S.C. Code Reg. § 114-550: licensing regulations

Forms:

[DSS Form 30246: Foster/Adoptive Family Disaster Plan](#)