



Disaster Mini Drill

Topic: Patient Evacuation Decision & Floor-Level Response

Leader Instructions: This mini-drill builds staff familiarity with floor-level evacuation roles, priorities, and patient movement considerations. Use this guide to help frontline Long-term Care Facility staff think through patient evacuation decisions before an emergency occurs. This discussion focuses on *floor-level actions* and *early-stage decision making* during a potential evacuation. Review questions in advance, identify the ‘right’ answers based on your facility’s protocols and emergency plans. Adjust the language or skip questions as needed.

Estimated Time: 10–15 mins

Scenario: A prolonged extreme heat event has caused widespread HVAC failure. Indoor temperatures are rising and several floors are becoming unsafe for residents. Facility leadership is evaluating whether evacuation may be required.

Run this scenario assuming your current staffing, patient census, and visitors.

Discussion Questions (select 3–5 across the sections below)

Situation Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What information would the floor need before beginning evacuation preparations? ○ How would staff know that evacuation is being considered or has been initiated? ○ What are our evacuation triggers for this situation, and how monitored/communicated? ○ What indicators would suggest conditions are worsening and evacuation may be necessary (e.g., resident heat intolerance, respiratory distress, agitation, equipment/staffing limits)? ○ How should staff communicate concerns from floor to leadership or incident command?
Evacuation Triage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How would your floor begin prioritizing residents for evacuation, and which residents would need to leave first and why? ○ How will residents be grouped by evacuation priority (e.g., Immediate / Soon / Last)? ○ Which residents might require specialized transport teams or equipment? ○ Which residents could potentially be discharged to family instead of transferred during evacuation, and what would need to accompany them? ○ Which residents on your the right now would be most difficult to evacuate safely, and why?
Floor Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What steps should the floor take to begin preparing residents for evacuation? ○ Who gathers essential resident documentation and medications? ○ What equipment must accompany certain residents during evacuation? ○ What essential comfort or orientation items (e.g., glasses, dentures, hearing aids, memory care objects) need to go with residents? ○ How are visitors on the floor managed during evacuation preparation? ○ How should staff communicate evacuation plans to residents and families?
Resident Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are residents physically moved off the floor during evacuation? ○ What are our primary and backup routes for moving residents off the floor (elevators vs stairwells), and what is the plan if elevators are unavailable? ○ Who coordinates movement through stairwells or corridors? ○ Are residents going out to waiting transport or to a temporary holding area before leaving? ○ Who is responsible for escorting residents during evacuation? ○ What evacuation equipment do we have (sleds, wheelchairs, lifts)? Who is trained to use it? ○ How will staff know where each resident is being sent during evacuation?
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will we track which residents have been evacuated, and which remain on the floor? ○ Who is responsible for maintaining the floor’s evacuation list? ○ How will the floor account for visitors present during the event? ○ How are we keeping track of staff on the floor during evacuation? ○ How will staff on the floor verify and document where each resident has been relocated once evacuation underway or complete? ○ How will we confirm all residents, visitors, and staff are accounted for?



Additional Questions for Advanced Discussion

How to Use these questions:

- Replace or add to the provided questions on the front worksheet as needed.
- Use these if you want to explore specific challenges or resident populations.
- Focus on questions that resonate most with your facility's protocols and priorities.

General Preparedness Questions

- What are the immediate priorities to address this situation in your area?
- What challenges or delays could impact evacuation (staffing, transport, layout, equipment)?
- Do we have the resources and staffing needed to evacuate safely, or is additional support required?
- What safety concerns need to be addressed for staff or residents during preparation and movement?
- What key information must be to receiving facilities or destinations?

Memory Care and Behavioral Health

- What additional considerations are needed when evacuating residents in memory care or with behavioral health needs?
- How should staff manage residents who may become agitated, resistant, or confused during staging or evacuation?
- How will we prevent elopement during evacuation or staging (e.g., door control, visual cues, buddy system)?
- What role do security or behavioral health staff play during evacuation?
- How can staff maintain orientation and calm for residents whose routines or environments are disrupted?

Mobility and Bariatric Care

- Which residents require two to three person assists or mechanical lifts?
- Which evacuation devices are available to the floor (sleds, wheelchairs, lifts), and where are they stored?
- Who on the floor is trained to use this equipment?
- Are there any mobility or bariatric needs that would significantly delay movement, and how would we address them?

Coordination and Destinations

- Who would coordinate evacuation activities on the floor?
- What role do the support staff on each floor play during evacuation?
- How do techs or support staff assist with patient movement?
- Who would you contact if you need additional support?
- Which non-nursing departments (House Keeping/Dining Services/Security/Plant Ops or Maintenance) support the evacuation process?
- Is there a clear plan for when and how different departments are activated to help the evacuation process?
- What role do providers play in determining which residents could be discharged rather than transferred?

Reflection and Problem-Solving

- What challenges did we identify during this discussion?
- What resources or processes would make evacuation easier for this floor?
- Are there policies or procedures that staff should review or clarify?
- What is one action we could take to improve readiness for evacuation?

