

CareCertify LLC

Assisted Living Training Series

AL-09

Emergency Preparedness & Procedures

Participant Guide

Assisted Living Training Series · Audience: HHAs · CNAs · PCAs · DSPs · AL Staff · CE Hours: 1.0

Know the Plan Before You Need It

Emergencies are won or lost in the first minutes, and those minutes are not the time to start reading a binder. Minnesota requires assisted living facilities to maintain an emergency-preparedness plan and to train staff on handling emergencies (Minn. Stat. 144G.41 and 144G.63). Your job is to know that plan before an emergency happens.

This guide covers the common emergencies and the response patterns for each. Throughout, three rules hold: protect life first, follow the facility plan, and communicate clearly. Residents who cannot move quickly depend on your preparation.

Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Locate and describe your facility's emergency plan and your role
- Respond to a fire using RACE and operate an extinguisher using PASS
- Shelter residents safely during severe weather
- Recognize a medical emergency and activate 911 and the nurse
- Follow procedures for missing residents and security threats

Section 1: The Emergency-Preparedness Plan

Under Minn. Stat. 144G.41, your facility must maintain an emergency-preparedness plan for the hazards it could face, and staff must be oriented to handling emergencies. The plan covers fire, severe weather, medical emergencies, utility failures, evacuation, and sheltering in place.

Learn the practical details now: where exits, alarms, extinguishers, shelter areas, and utility shut-offs are; how the facility communicates; how residents are accounted for; and your specific role. Treat every drill as real practice.

Section 2: Fire: RACE and PASS

For any fire, follow RACE: Rescue anyone in immediate danger, sound the Alarm and call 911, Contain the fire by closing doors, and Extinguish only if it is small and safe — otherwise Evacuate. Never use an elevator during a fire.

To use an extinguisher, follow PASS: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle, Sweep side to side. Only fight a fire that is small, contained, and between you and an exit.

Life before property

Never delay evacuation or rescue to save belongings or fight a growing fire. Residents who can't move on their own are your first priority.

Section 3: Severe Weather and Tornadoes

For tornado or severe-weather warnings, move residents to the lowest interior level, away from windows and exterior doors, into hallways or designated shelter rooms. Account for every resident and stay sheltered until the official all-clear. Know your facility's shelter locations in advance.

Section 4: Medical Emergencies

For medical emergencies — chest pain, difficulty breathing, stroke signs, severe bleeding, unconsciousness — call 911 immediately, then notify the nurse. If a resident has fallen, do not move them unless they are in danger; stay with them, keep them calm, and monitor until help arrives. Know where AEDs and first-aid supplies are kept.

Section 5: Utility Failures and Evacuation

When power, heat, or water fails, follow the facility plan and protect residents from temperature extremes and dehydration. Know the backup systems and where utility shut-offs are. If evacuation is ordered, move residents to safety by the plan, account for everyone, and assist those who cannot move on their own. Never use elevators during a fire.

Section 6: Missing or Eloping Residents

Elopement is a serious safety event, especially for residents with dementia who may not recognize danger. The moment a resident is unaccounted for, alert other staff, begin the facility's search of the building and grounds, and notify your supervisor.

If the resident is not located quickly or may be in danger, call 911. Afterward, document and report so the team can prevent a recurrence.

Minutes matter

For a missing resident, immediate action beats a perfect search. Raise the alarm first, then search systematically by the plan.

Section 7: Security Threats

For security threats — an intruder, a violent visitor, or a threat of violence — your priority is protecting residents. Follow the facility's lockdown or response plan and call 911. Do not attempt to physically confront a dangerous person if it can be avoided. Account for all residents and staff once it is safe.

Section 8: Communication and Documentation

Clear communication holds every emergency response together. Report accurately to your supervisor, use the facility's designated channels, and stick to facts. After any emergency, help account for all residents and staff and complete the required documentation and incident reporting so the response can be reviewed and improved.

Key Terms

Term	What it means
Emergency-preparedness plan	The facility's all-hazards plan for responding to emergencies (144G.41).
RACE	Rescue, Alarm, Contain, Extinguish/Evacuate — the fire-response sequence.
PASS	Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep — how to use a fire extinguisher.
Shelter in place	Moving residents to a safe interior area rather than evacuating.
Elopement	A resident leaving the facility unsupervised and potentially at risk.
AED	Automated external defibrillator used in cardiac emergencies.

Check Your Understanding

1. What must your facility's emergency plan have you know in advance?
2. What does RACE stand for?
3. What is PASS, and when should you fight a fire?
4. Where do you shelter residents during a tornado warning?
5. What are the first steps when a resident is missing?

What's Next

Looking ahead

Next, AL-10: Person-Centered Service Planning & Documentation covers assessments, the service plan, and the documentation that ties care together.