

The table below summarizes the minimum requirements of the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* (the Act) and Ontario Regulation 166/11 (the Regulation) with respect to plans to respond to emergencies in the home. Some additional information for licensees is provided in the footnotes, which can be found on page 2. There is also a “Sample Resources” section at the end of this Guideline

Requirements for all homes	Additional requirements for homes with 10 or fewer residents (homes that can only accommodate 10 residents or less)	Additional requirements for homes with more than 10 residents (homes that can accommodate more than 10 residents, regardless of the number of residents currently residing in the home)
<p>Licensees must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a written emergency plan in consultation with community agencies, partner facilities and resources that will be involved in responding to an emergency <sup>1</sup> <i>Reg s 24(2), 25(2)(a), 26.1.</i></li> <li>▪ Keep all arrangements with community agencies, partner facilities and resources that will be involved in responding to an emergency current <sup>2</sup> <i>Reg s 24(4)</i></li> <li>▪ Ensure that the emergency plan is updated at least once a year (includes updating contact information for community agencies, partner facilities and resources) <sup>3</sup> <i>Reg s 25(5), 26.6.</i></li> <li>▪ Test the emergency plan on an annual basis at least, <sup>4</sup> including arrangements with community agencies, partner facilities and resources that will be involved in responding to an emergency, related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ the loss of essential services;</li> <li>▫ situations involving a missing resident;</li> <li>▫ medical emergencies; and</li> <li>▫ violent outbursts <i>Reg s 24(5)(a)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Ensure that a planned evacuation is conducted at least once every two years <sup>5</sup> <i>Reg s 24(5)(b)</i></li> <li>▪ Keep a written record of the test, planned evacuation, and any changes made to the plan <sup>6</sup> <i>Reg s 24(5)(c)</i></li> <li>▪ Develop a staffing contingency plan to be implemented in the event of emergency or infectious outbreak related staffing shortages to ensure that residents continue to live in safety and security and receive appropriate care.</li> </ul>	<p>The emergency plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and address hazards and risks that may lead to an emergency affecting the home <sup>7</sup> <i>Reg s 26.2.</i></li> <li>▪ Include the steps to be taken to evacuate the home, and a system to account for the whereabouts of all residents in the event of an evacuation or relocation <sup>8</sup> <i>Reg s 26.3.</i></li> <li>▪ Require that resources, supplies and equipment vital for the emergency response are set aside and readily available at the retirement home and are tested regularly to ensure they are in working order <sup>9</sup> <i>Reg s 26.4.</i></li> <li>▪ Identify the community agencies, partner facilities and resources that will be involved in responding to an emergency <i>Reg s 26.5.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The emergency plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify hazards and risks that could affect the home (whether they originate in the home or in the community) <sup>7</sup> and strategies to address them <i>Reg s 25(2)(b)</i></li> <li>▪ Deal with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Fires</li> <li>▫ Community disasters</li> <li>▫ Violent outbursts</li> <li>▫ Bomb threats</li> <li>▫ Medical emergencies</li> <li>▫ Chemical spills</li> <li>▫ Missing residents</li> <li>▫ Loss of one or more essential services</li> </ul> <i>Reg s 25(3)(1)</i> </li> <li>▪ Provide an evacuation plan for the home, including a system to account for the whereabouts of all residents in the event of an evacuation or relocation <sup>8</sup> <i>Reg s 25(3)2.</i></li> <li>▪ Provide for resources, supplies and equipment vital for the emergency response being set aside and readily available at the retirement home, and for regular testing of the resources, supplies and equipment to ensure that they are in working order <sup>9</sup> <i>Reg s 25(3)3.</i></li> <li>▪ Identify the community partners and agencies that will be involved in responding to an emergency <i>Reg s 25(3)4.</i></li> <li>▪ Address plan activation, lines of authority, communications plan and specific staff roles and responsibilities <i>Reg s 25(4)</i></li> <li>▪ Be evaluated at least once each year <i>Reg s 25(5)</i></li> </ul>

**Note:** If there is an inconsistency between a provision in the fire code (under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*) and a provision in the licensee’s emergency plan, the fire code will override the emergency plan, to the extent of the inconsistency - *Reg s 24(3)*.

**1** For example, if the local Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) is to have a role in any evacuation of the home, the licensee must consult with the CCAC about their proposed role as the emergency plan is being developed. If an alternate facility is to accommodate residents following an evacuation, the licensee must consult with the facility to establish how the home and the facility will coordinate to provide resident care.

Refer to the Sample Resources page for examples of community agencies, partner facilities and resources that may be involved in responding to an emergency at the home.

**2** Licensees must ensure that the arrangements they have made with community agencies and partner facilities properly reflect the current needs of the home. If the home's needs have changed (for example, the number of residents has increased or the care services provided by the home have changed) then the arrangements must be updated.

Licensees should record their communications with community agencies and partner facilities (emails, debriefing notes, etc.) in order to demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

**3** The home's list of community agencies, partner facilities and resources (including key contacts and their titles and phone numbers) should be updated whenever there is a change. For example, alternative arrangements must be made if the company that will supply water during an emergency goes out of business, or a local community centre that has agreed to the use of its facilities in case of an evacuation moves. At the very least, the emergency plan must be updated once

every 12 months, meaning licensees must not go more than 12 months without updating the emergency plan.

If the capacity of the home increases or decreases, licensees must consider whether the emergency plan needs to be updated, keeping in mind that the requirements for homes with capacity for less than 10 residents are different than the requirements for homes with capacity for 10 or more residents.

**4** The emergency plan must be tested at least once every 12 months, meaning licensees must not go more than 12 months without conducting a test. Licensees may simulate an emergency response in each of the four scenarios, or carry out a tabletop test of how the home would respond in each scenario. A 'tabletop' test is an escalating emergency scenario presented to staff in several segments, with staff discussing how they would respond to the scenario rather than actually performing the actions. Alternatively, a real scenario that took place in the home during the year could be discussed and analyzed.

The test will help licensees to identify any problems with the emergency plan that need to be addressed. Any staff members with specific emergency plan responsibilities should participate in the test. Community agencies (including emergency responders), partner facilities, and other resource providers do not have to participate in the test. However, at a minimum, the test requires licensees to communicate with their community agencies, partner facilities and resources to ensure the arrangements in place will meet the needs of residents in an emergency.

**5** The planned evacuation must be carried out at least once every 24 months, meaning licensees must not go more than 24 months without conducting a planned evacuation.

**6** Licensees should:

- prepare records describing when and how the test and planned evacuation were carried out, who participated, rationale for using stand-ins (if applicable), and what the outcomes and learnings were (i.e. any problems identified);
- keep all documentation and correspondence from community agencies, partner facilities and resources in relation to the test of the emergency plan; and
- keep evidence of any changes made to improve the emergency plan following the test and planned evacuation.

When assessing compliance with the emergency plan requirements, RHRA Inspectors will review the licensee's written records.

**7** Refer to the Sample Resources for examples.

**8** For example, the use of a resident census report, resident lists and sign-out books. Licensees should consider keeping an up-to-date census report readily available, including resident photos, special needs such as medication or ambulatory assistance and family contact information.

**9** For example, ensuring flashlight batteries are charged, there is fuel for the home's generator and that food, water and medical supplies have not expired.

RHRA guidelines are not a substitute for the Act and Regulations, and licensees and others should consider the guidelines in light of the relevant provisions of the Act and Regulation, taking account of any changes to them that may occur after the RHRA issued a guideline. RHRA guidelines do not provide legal advice and they do not fetter the discretion of Registrar in making statutory decisions. Licensees should review the sections of the Act and Regulation which relate to emergency plans.

The Act and the Regulation are available at [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)

For More Information Contact the RHRA:

By Mail:

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5th Floor  
Toronto, ON M4P 3B5

Telephone: **1-855-ASK-RHRA** (1-855-275-7472)  
Fax: 416-487-1223  
Email: [info@rhra.ca](mailto:info@rhra.ca)  
Website: [www.rhra.ca](http://www.rhra.ca)

## SAMPLE RESOURCES

The RHRA is providing links to these websites to assist licensees to meet requirements related to emergency plans. The RHRA has no control over these websites and is not responsible for their privacy practices. You should review the privacy policies of these websites before navigating them. The RHRA makes no representation about the accuracy or any other aspect of the information on any of these websites. The RHRA does not endorse these websites or the information on them. The RHRA assumes no responsibility for the results of the use of these websites by anyone.

Professional associations and accreditation bodies may provide additional resources for licensees in connection with the topics covered in RHRA Guidelines.

Any examples provided are samples only, and are not to be considered as complete lists.

### Examples of Community Agencies:

- Local Fire Department
- Local Police and Ambulance
- Public Utility Service Providers
- Community Care Access Centre
- Local Hospitals and Clinics
- Community Services Associations
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Local Community Centres
- Local Senior Service Organizations

### Examples of Partner Facilities:

- Facilities (whether related to the licensee or not) that may provide support and/or temporary accommodation of residents in the case of an emergency or evacuation, such as:
- Other retirement homes
  - Long-term care facilities
  - Hotels/motels
  - Community Centres
  - Churches
  - Local hospitals and clinics
  - Municipal heating/cooling stations

## SAMPLE RESOURCES (Continued)

### Examples of Resources (or resource providers):

- The home's pharmacy provider (if applicable)
- External care providers
- Temporary workers, such as fill-in nurses/personal support workers
- Emergency Management Ontario's public warning service (see below)

### Examples of Hazards and Risks:

- Technological hazards (i.e. train derailments, power plant emergencies) that could occur in the vicinity of the retirement home
- Natural hazards such as extreme temperatures or an epidemic/pandemic
- Damage to the home as a result of a natural disaster, or a flood or fire in the home
- Fire hazards such as electrical equipment or residents who smoke in the home
- Loss of essential services (i.e. loss of power following a severe ice storm, or loss of water supply due to municipal water contamination)
- Any other damage to the retirement home building and infrastructure

Licensees may also wish to consider how frequently such hazards and risks arise, how severe their impact can be, and which hazards and risks pose the greatest threat to the home.

For more information on hazard and risk assessment, visit the following guide provided by Emergency Management Ontario: <http://bit.ly/1LgU4uC>

### Office of the Fire Marshall:

<http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/FireMarshal/OFMLanding/OFMmain.html>

Information on approved fire drill scenarios for retirement homes can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1dcdu1>

### Emergency Management Ontario:

[www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)

Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System issues alerts for actual or potential emergencies and includes recommended protective actions. The system allows subscribers to receive three types of emergency alerts: Red Alerts, Emergency Information Advisories and Tornado Warnings.

The website is updated at least weekly with tips and info, and during emergencies is updated frequently with info on current situation, recommended actions, links and official statements.

### Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

The *'Emergency Preparedness Planner'* is a newsletter from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Emergency Management Branch. Subscribe by emailing [emergencymanagement.moh@ontario](mailto:emergencymanagement.moh@ontario)

Important Health Notices are issued by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in response to abnormal events that require ministry direction or instruction: [www.ontario.ca/ihn](http://www.ontario.ca/ihn)

### Red Cross Canada:

<http://www.redcross.ca/>

Canadian Emergency Assistance:

<http://www.redcross.ca/what-we-do/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/how-we-help-canadians>

Emergency & Disaster Services in Ontario:

<http://www.redcross.ca/where-we-work/in-canada/ontario>