

575 Fifth Avenue Emergency Protocol Guidelines

General Information

These guidelines describe procedures to be followed in situations involving emergencies that are medical, psychiatric and building/facility in nature. They apply to any resident, staff or visitor to the supportive housing residence who is determined to be in an emergency situation. An emergency is defined as any situation or condition that presents a danger to a person or persons. These procedures are designed both to prevent the development of emergency situations and to ensure appropriate action in case of emergencies.

Emergencies can also arise from illegal activities. These may require police intervention and/or action to ensure the safety of residents, staff, and the physical structure. Such activities include: drug trafficking, prostitution, trespassers who refuse to leave the building, significant and continuous destruction of property, or other acts that threaten the safety of the individual and/or others. The 24 hour front desk staff as well as the social service agency staff should contact the police department, as appropriate, when illegal activity is threatening the safety and security of any program premises or participant.

Staff must be knowledgeable of the agency's emergency policies and procedures to ensure that immediate and appropriate assistance is sought for all emergency situations and conditions. Safety and emergency response training sessions should be conducted regularly.

Medical Emergency

Definition

A medical emergency is any condition requiring emergency medical care. Conditions or situations that involve any of the factors described below fall into this category:

- Severe vomiting or visible blood in the vomitus, fever above 101°F, unusual abdominal pain, blood in urine or stool, convulsions, mental confusion, poisoning, severe burns, overdose of medicine, physical symptoms of alcohol or drug abuse, head injury, uncontrolled and/or severe cuts, severe bruises, broken bones, chest pains, difficulty breathing, unconsciousness, any combination of the above listed conditions.
- An individual requests an ambulance.
- Request by a health professional for an ambulance.
- Any situation where staff are unqualified to make medical determinations.

Prevention and Preparedness

Intake staff is responsible for ensuring that program staff are given timely and complete information on all new residents who may have the potential for medical emergencies.

Medical information must be reviewed by program staff upon a resident moving in, including review of the adequacy of any arrangements for follow-up care in situations where a medical condition has been diagnosed.

Residents should be engaged in discussion regarding their potential for medical emergencies.

Every effort should be made to ensure that appropriate authorization forms are signed and placed in each resident's chart.

Response

Early Detection

- a. Notify supervisor.
- b. Attempt to have the individual act on his/her own behalf.
- c. Provide supports to the individual by contacting a friend, peer or family supports, with client's permission.
- d. Contact resident's physician if an authorization has been signed.

Immediate Response

- a. Notify supervisor immediately. If a situation and/or condition requires immediate notification of EMS (911), the supervisor is to be contacted after this has been done or have another staff member contact the supervisor while EMS is being contacted.
- b. Call 911 for EMS assistance.
- c. Prepare hospitalization letter for EMS.
- d. EMS should be called whenever there has been an injury to the head. The EMT's should make the assessment as to the need for further treatment and/or observation. EMS should also be the ones to advise the resident on treatment and allow the resident to refuse treatment if he/she chooses.
- e. If an individual chooses not to have immediate medical attention, it is important that the person be monitored on a regular basis. If condition worsens, notify supervisor immediately.
- f. In situations where the individual cannot communicate, is in need of emergency medical care, cannot mobilize independently, and is in acute pain or cannot breathe, 911 should be called and the staff person should not attempt to transport the individual to the hospital without emergency medical assistance.

Psychiatric Emergency

Definition

A psychiatric emergency is any condition requiring emergency psychiatric intervention. Conditions or situations that involve any of the following fall into this category:

- An individual presents a clear and present danger to him/herself, including serious threats of suicide.
- An individual presents a clear and present danger to others including serious threats of harm to others.
- An individual requests an ambulance or urgent psychiatric assessment.

Prevention and Preparedness

Residents should be engaged in discussion regarding their potential for psychiatric emergencies. Residents should be encouraged to prepare an individual Crisis Management Plan. This plan will include identification of the individual's preferences regarding actions to be taken in a crisis situation and identification of the individual's support network.

Every effort should be made to ensure that appropriate authorization forms are signed and placed in each resident's chart.

Response

Early Detection

- a. Notify Supervisor. If possible, the supervisor will speak to the resident to determine the nature and scope of the emergency.
- b. Refer to the Crisis Management Plan for guidance if a plan has been made. Whenever possible, have the person act on his or her own behalf.
- c. Provide support to the person by asking them if they would like a friend, peer, or family member contacted. Do not contact anyone if permission is not given.
- d. Contact the individual's psychiatrist, if there is a signed authorization.
- e. Contact HRA's assessment team if appropriate. Let them know that there is an individual on site who needs to be psychiatrically assessed.

Immediate Response

- a. Notify supervisor. If possible, the supervisor will speak to the resident to determine the nature and scope of the emergency.

- b. Notification of supervisor should be delayed if the situation places the individual, staff member or other residents in imminent danger. Notification to supervisor should then be made as soon as appropriate action has been taken.
- c. Refer to Crisis Management Plan for guidance if a plan has been made. Whenever possible, have the person act on his or her own behalf.
- d. Provide support to the person by asking them if they would like a friend, peer, or family member contacted.

Prepare hospitalization letter for EMS.

- e. Encourage the individual to seek emergency psychiatric care, either by calling 911 or by voluntarily presenting themselves at an Emergency Room.
- f. If the individual agrees to go to the Emergency Room voluntarily and a decision is made to transport them via a car service, two staff members should accompany the individual (if possible), one sitting on each side of the person on the journey to the hospital.
- g. If a decision is made to contact 911 against the wishes of the resident, the supervisor will make the determination. This is done when a situation appears to threaten the safety and security of the individual, other residents, staff or the community at large.
- h. If EMS is to transport the individual to the hospital and the individual has a preference about where he/she wants to be taken, address this issue with EMS and see if it is possible.
- i. Social service staff, whenever possible, will accompany the resident to the Emergency Room and advocate for evaluation and admission including providing written details of reason for emergency psychiatric evaluation. Staff are to remain with him/her in the Emergency Room for as long as is feasible, to provide support.
- j. Contact the individual's treating psychiatrist, if an authorization form has been signed.

Building/Facility Emergency

Definition

A building/facility emergency is any physical plant related situation that requires emergency response from police and/or fire departments to ensure the safety of residents, staff, the community and/or preservation of the physical structure. Conditions and/or situations that involve any of the following fall into this category:

- Uncontrolled fire conditions, gas leaks and/or explosions, boiler explosions, flooding, oil (tank) leaks, building collapse (any part thereof).
- Any staff member or resident who reports a condition that can not be safely and/or appropriately handled.
- Directives given by police, fire, building inspectors to evacuate premises.

Prevention and Preparedness

Each program/facility must have a documented emergency evacuation plan which includes identifying a safe place to reconvene in case an evacuation becomes necessary.

Building Superintendent and maintenance staff are responsible for ensuring that buildings/facilities are being maintained in safe and hazard free conditions.

All staff and residents should report maintenance problems, safety and/or hazardous conditions immediately.

The Property Management Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all required inspections are completed on a regular basis and that a preventative maintenance program is actively utilized and updated as needed.

Notify supervisor of any situation and/or physical condition that is not rectified in an appropriate period of time.

Response

- a. Building Superintendent and/or Property Management Supervisor are to be contacted immediately to respond to all building emergencies. Program Directors are also to be contacted as soon as possible.
- b. If a condition and/or situation does not allow time to notify Building Superintendents and/or Property Management Supervisor, the senior staff member on-site is responsible for implementing appropriate emergency procedures (e.g. building evacuation) immediately. Appropriate staff is to be notified as soon as possible.
- c. In the event of any condition/situation that requires building evacuation, an appointed staff member is responsible for providing fire department personnel with a list of individuals that require assistance in vacating their apartment.
- d. Once fire department personnel arrive on scene, they will assume responsibility for actions taken at the building. The senior staff member on-duty or other designated staff member will provide appropriate information to fire department personnel as needed.
- e. Staff and residents are to be instructed not to place their personal safety at risk during building emergencies.
- f. The Program Director, Property Management staff and 24-hour front desk staff should immediately notify his or her supervisor when any emergency involves a major police and/or fire department intervention and/or a situation where there is a threat to bystanders, a major threat to property, or possible public repercussions.