Department of Developmental Services
Emergency Communications Protocol
2/24/2014

Approved BOD January 12, 2016

During emergencies, maintaining communication and sharing timely information with stakeholders is an important component throughout all phases of the emergency. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) works very closely at the state level with emergency agencies such as the California Office Emergency Services (CalOES). CalOES has lead responsibility to initiate emergency communications with all other state agencies.

Once CalOES receives emergency information, it is shared with all state agencies via email and/or by telephone. DDS will then forward any emergency information it receives to Regional Centers (RCs)/Developmental Centers (DCs)/and State Operated Community Facility (CF) in the impacted area. Depending on the severity of the emergency, information is shared with the affected RCs/DCs/CF emergency coordinator(s) via email. If there is an imminent threat to the health and safety of those in the impacted area, DDS may place phone calls to RC/DC/CF emergency coordinators in the interest of time. To ensure that connections are made when needed, DDS recommends:

- Ensuring DDS has up-to-date emergency contact information for emergency coordinators at the RCs/DCs/and CF
- Creating an emergency email Distribution List
- Implementation and maintaining of the Everbridge Emergency Notification System i.e. It is very important that the data placed in the system is kept up to date at all times.

The CalOES often receives its information from local sources closest to the disaster event. Therefore, it is possible that impacted RCs /DCs/and CF may already be apprised of an incident, even before the CalOES. For RCs/DCs/CF to receive this type of information at the local level, DDS recommends:

- You establish connections with the Local Offices of Emergency Services
- You sign up for local alert/notification systems within your counties served including the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN) (*see description below)

Often during large emergency events, DDS is called upon to provide reports on the individuals within the DDS service system. DDS' only means of receiving the information for reporting is through the RCs/DCs/ and the CF in the area.   The department understands that it may be difficult for RCs/DCs/and the CF representatives to take time to prepare status reports; however, in the interest of preserving the health and safety of clients and receiving timely information we are requesting that initial status reports be submitted to the DDS Duty Officer (dutyofficer1@dds.ca.gov) within the first two hours of the incident. This is consistent with current county-to-state emergency reporting requirements. To assist with our reporting requirements, DDS is requesting RCs/DCs/and the CF to:

- Identify and train staff responsible for reporting
- Provide status updates on impacts to the following:

- o Clients and staff (injuries, fatalities, evacuated, relocated, sheltered)
        - o Facilities (damaged, destroyed, evacuated)
        - o Facilities/Programs (closures, altered activities)
        - o Power outages, telephone service outages (land and wireless)
- Continue to provide periodic updates through the life of the incident
- Identify any assistance needed or requested

During community catastrophes, landline and cell phone service may be disrupted therefore alternate forms of communication must be relied upon. These resources include such items as Satellite phones, two-way radios, and Governmental External Telecommunication Service accounts (GETS). These tools are to be utilized when normal communication systems are impacted.

CAHAN: State of California's web-based information and communications system available on a 24/7/365 basis for distribution of health alerts, dissemination of prevention guidelines, coordination of disease investigation efforts, preparedness planning, and other initiatives that strengthen state and local preparedness. CAHAN participants have the ability to receive alerts and notifications via alphanumeric pager, e-mail, fax, and phone (cellular and landline).