

# Personal Disaster Plan FAQs

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## What is a Personal Disaster Plan?

A Personal Disaster Plan is the client's plan of preparation, action, and response to any possible disaster that may occur. Types of disasters include hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes, floods, chemical and biological spills/attacks, nuclear power plant incidents, terrorist attacks, etc. The plan must be personalized to the needs of the client, and it should include preparation for any potential health or safety concerns that may arise during a disaster.

## Who is responsible for developing the client's Personal Disaster Plan?

The Waiver Support Coordinator (WSC) is responsible for completing the client's Personal Disaster Plan (iBudget Handbook, pg. 2-76). As part of the support planning process, the WSC must coordinate with the client and other members of the client's circle of supports to develop the Personal Disaster Plan. If a client is receiving supported living coaching services, the Supported Living Coach (SLC) is also a member of the client's circle of supports. The SLC is responsible for including the client's Personal Disaster Plan in the implementation plan for supported living (iBudget Handbook, pg. A-7). The WSC must coordinate with the SLC to ensure that the Personal Disaster Plan is aligned with the client's implementation plan.

All parties involved in the development and execution of the Personal Disaster Plan should understand their responsibilities and receive a copy of the plan.

## What must be included in the plan?

The plan must address **any** possible weather events, natural disasters, or other emergencies that could occur in the client's regional or local area. For example, hurricanes and tornadoes may occur throughout the state of Florida, and some areas in the state are also prone to wildfires or floods.

The plan must include hurricane preparation, as well as shelter and evacuation decisions. The WSC should work with the SLC, community resources, natural supports, family members, and local emergency management staff to ensure that each client has a solid evacuation and sheltering plan. A [Personal Disaster Plan template](#) is available on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) website.

### *Making Evacuation Decisions*

If the client lives in housing that is structurally sound, able to withstand strong winds, and located in a relatively safe zone (not in an [evacuation zone](#)), sheltering in place may be the best option during severe weather and other emergencies. If sheltering in place is not an option, the client should consider sheltering with family or friends. Identifying appropriate host homes or other viable alternatives may be essential for some clients.

## **Relying on a local shelter, whether it is a general population or special needs shelter, should be the option of last resort.**

While many people will continue to rely on general population or special needs shelters, there is a potential risk that mass sheltering may create other health or safety concerns. For example, there may be infection control concerns to think about with evacuation shelters. The following COVID-related questions must be considered:

- Does the client have a higher risk of severe illness?
- Do the client's emergency supplies contain Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and sanitization items?

If a client must rely on a local special needs shelter, they will need to register in advance with their county emergency management agency or county health department and indicate their transportation needs as part of the registration process. The special needs registry is co-managed by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Department of Health and can be accessed on either agency's website. It is important to note that special needs shelter registration **does not** roll over from year to year - registration must be completed every year.

## How often should the Personal Disaster Plan be reviewed and updated?

- **Annually, during the support planning process** - The support planning process typically begins 60 days prior to the support plan effective date, around the time that the annual report is due to be submitted to the WSC.
- **Before the start of hurricane season** - The Personal Disaster Plan must be reviewed to ensure that the client and the client's support team are ready to implement the plan if needed.
- **Any time the client moves into a new residence** - The Personal Disaster Plan must be updated to reflect the client's current address, and any changes to sheltering or evacuation decisions.
- **As needed** - The plan must always reflect the current needs and preferences of the client.

The SLC must contact the WSC whenever changes or updates must be made to the Personal Disaster Plan.

## How can the SLC meet Personal Disaster Plan reporting requirements?

When the SLC completes the client's implementation plan in APD iConnect, the SLC must verify that the client's Personal Disaster Plan is completed and available for review. This includes verifying that the plan is (1) in APD iConnect, (2) up to date and aligned with the implementation plan, and (3) that the client has received a copy of the plan. The SLC may need to contact the WSC to complete this verification process. As a best practice, the SLC should also keep a current copy of the client's Personal Disaster Plan in their client records.

Figure 1: Personal/Emergency Disaster Plan field on the implementation plan form in iConnect.

Personal/Emergency Disaster Plan is completed and available for review:	Plan is in iConnect Plan is up-to-date and aligned with this IP Consumer received copy of plan	
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### *Hurricane Season Reporting Requirements*

During a severe weather event or evacuation, Supported Living Providers may be required to report the status of their clients to APD. It is critical for APD to ensure that all clients who live in supported living arrangements are accounted for, and that their health and safety is maintained. **APD will notify Supported Living Providers when and how to report evacuation information on their clients. When notified, the SLC must submit the requested information to APD within the requested time frame.**

Supported Living Providers should closely monitor communication from APD before, during, and after a severe weather event to ensure that information requests from APD are received and responded to as soon as possible.

### Disaster Preparedness Resources

- Checkout the information and resource links available on APD’s [Disaster Recovery Toolkit webpage](#).
- Florida’s Division of Emergency Management maintains the [FloridaDisaster.org](#) website, which provides several online resources to assist with disaster planning, including a [disability planning page](#) and a link to the Florida Department of Health’s Special Needs Registry.
- [Ready.gov](#) is a national public service website with information on how to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters.

### iBugdet Handbook References

**Requirements for all Waiver Support Coordinators:** “All WSCs must... [8<sup>th</sup> bullet] Complete a Personal Disaster Plan to utilize in the event of natural disasters.” (pg. 2-76)

**Support Plan Development & Update Requirements:** “At least once annually on behalf of the recipient, the WSC will... [7<sup>th</sup> bullet] Update the recipient’s Personal Disaster Plan.” (pg. 2-92)

**Documentation Requirements for Supported Living Coaching:** “In addition to the minimum required components of the individual implementation plan described in the definitions section of this handbook, the individual implementation plan for supported living coaching service must also contain the following: ... How home, health, and community safety needs will be addressed, and the supports needed to meet these needs, including a personal emergency disaster plan, which must be updated annually and any time the recipient moves to a different residence.” (pg. A-7)