**Post Disaster Self Assessment Form**

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**Children Need a Safe Place to Go**

When child care programs close, the community suffers. Efforts to quickly reopen child care programs benefit the entire community. In addition to providing children with a safe place to go, it allows them to return to a normal routine and enables families to focus on rebuilding and recovering. While there is often great pressure to reopen childcare, care must be taken to ensure that the facility is safe for children to reoccupy. Consequently, we must take steps to ensure our programs are safe before reopening.

**Disasters Create New Hazards**

A disaster can drastically change the environment we live in. Some disasters may cause the direct and indirect releases of hazardous (dangerous) materials into the environment that can make places that were at one time safe for children no longer safe. This document was developed to help identify issues that you should consider after a disaster. The information contained within this document provides suggestions on how to protect children from harmful environmental and chemical exposures during disaster recovery.

Ultimately, your state or local child care licensing regulators, in conjunction with other authorities, such as the health department or fire marshal, will dictate whether you are allowed to reopen or not. This document is not a replacement for existing laws and regulations. It is a guidance tool to help you identify any safety hazards that should be addressed.

**Who can use this form?**

Child care providers, owners, and operators can use this document after a disaster as a starting point to help identify potential public and environmental health risks and issues.

State and local authorities, such as the health department, fire marshal and child care licensing agencies, are encouraged to modify this form as needed in order to meet applicable regulations and to provide guidance as to whether a child care facility in your jurisdiction may reopen or not. This form can also be used to evaluate potential alternative sites to relocate temporarily in an emergency until the permanent site can be repaired.

**How do you use this form? INSTRUCTIONS:**

**STEP 1:** Review pages 1 and 2 of this document. Page 1 describes the purpose of this document. Page 2 provides examples of the optimal operating environment for child care programs. We recognize that after a disaster things are usually not optimal. This information is provided as an example of what to strive for, but it is recognized that it is unlikely that child care programs will be able to meet all of these criteria immediately following a disaster.

**STEP 2:** Complete the self-assessment on pages 4 and 5 following the instructions for each question. After each question, proceed to the next sequential question unless otherwise indicated. This will help you identify potential hazards at your child care program.

**STEP 3:** Repeat this assessment frequently. Recovery from disaster can take a while, during which conditions may change. The goal is for you to reopen and welcome staff and children back to a safe environment.

**STEP 4:** Share the results of your assessment with your regulatory authorities. This can assist governmental organizations in understanding the types of issues that you need additional assistance with and / or which issues still require attention.

**Post Disaster Self Assessment Form**

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**Outdoors**

* The building should be in compliance with fire codes, building codes, and zoning.
* An environmental assessment should include: previous use of the building and/or nearby sites (which includes proximity to any nearby sites that can lead to exposure of environmental or chemical hazards), testing of air, soil, and water, and assessment of potential hazardous building materials.
* The playground, playground equipment, fences and any surrounding outdoor areas that children can access should be structurally sound .
* Walking surfaces should be clear, be a non-slip surface, and should not have any holes or irregularities in the surface.

**Indoors**

* If a new childcare facility is opening or a facility is moving to a different location, that site should be inspected by the appropriate agency within your community to make sure that the building does not have environmental, chemical, or other health hazards that can lead to exposure to children or staff (lead, mold, asbestos, etc). A disaster may disturb a building’s existing chemical hazards (e.g. lead asbestos) by separating them from building materials that can result in exposure to children or staff.
* The facility should have proper ventilation, heat, and cooling that is maintained.
* Windows, if used for ventilation, should have screens to prevent mosquitoes and other insects from entering.
* Walls, windows, doors, roofs, and ceilings should be structurally sound, water-tight, and weather-tight.
* There should not be any open holes in the building structure, including leaks in the roof.
* Check for signs of mold or moisture from leaking roofs, leaking pipes, or from condensation on or water intrusion through walls or basements. Building materials can also become a source of nutrition for mold.

**Food Safety**

* Food preparation area should be separate from all other areas by a physical barrier and children should not have access to that area.
* Food storage and food handling areas must be clean and monitored closely.
* Refrigerator works at optimal temperatures (at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit for fridge, at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit for freezer) and there is no lapse in refrigeration.
* Food preparation surfaces are clean and free of bacteria, mold, fungus, etc.
* Utensils, cups, plates, and other wares used during food preparation should be able to be washed and properly sanitized with hot water and bleach and water dip or in a sanitizing dishwasher, and has been tested and determined safe to use post disaster. Areas and equipment used for washing and sanitizing utensils, cups, plates, and other food service wares have been tested and determined safe to be used post disaster.
* Properly store any hazards, pesticides and sanitizing chemicals away from children and food preparation areas.

**Water**

* There must be access to water that has been tested post disaster and determined safe to use for drinking and hand washing.
* There must be access to hot water that has been tested and determined safe to use for washing food preparation materials (kitchen ware, etc) and washing hands.

**Waste**

* Waste is properly managed and disposed of routinely. There is no garbage or debris that can attract pests or be accessible to children.
* Hazardous materials are stored and disposed of in accordance with the recommendations, guidelines, or laws of your regulatory agency.
* The sewage/septic system is fully functional and sized appropriately for the number of occupants in the facility.

**Post Disaster Self Assessment Form**For Early Childhood Program

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Facility Name |  | Date of Assessment | |  | Time (am/pm) |  | |
| Address |  | City | | State | Zip Code |  | |
| Faculty Contact |  | | | Owner Contact |  | | |
| Phone # |  | | E-mail |  | Current Enrollment | |  |
| Hours of Operation |  | | Disaster Type (Hurricane, Flood, Tornado, etc.) |  | Number of Staff | |  |

**Sources:**

1. American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. CFOC Standards Online Database. Aurora, CO; National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education; 2019. https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.8.0.1. Accessed July 3, 2019.
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3. American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. CFOC Standards Online Database. Aurora, CO; National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education; 2019. https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/6. Accessed July 3, 2019.

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD. (2019, May 21). Controlling Mosquitoes at Home. Retrieved July 19, 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/controlling-mosquitoes-at-home.html>

5. Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force - Indoor Environmental Pollutants Work Group. “Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters | Mold | CDC.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2015, www.cdc.gov/mold/cleanup-guide.html

6. National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC). (2019, February 5). Clean Up Safely After a Disaster [Fact sheet]. Retrieved July 3, 2019, from https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup/facts.html

7. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition’s Food Cosmetic Information Center. (2017, November). Food and Water Safety During Power Outages and Floods. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved July 2019, from <https://www.fda.gov/media.72124/download>

8. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Flooding. (2019, April 11). Retrieved July, 2019, from https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/flooding

 \*Contact information will vary between jurisdictions and will need to be filled in by the document provider.

**Post Disaster Self Assessment Form**

While a response of “No” to any one of the following questions may not impede a successful reopening, the goal is to be able to answer “Yes” to all questions that relate to your child care program setting. This would ensure the safest possible reopening  
after a disaster.

For Early Childhood Programs

***Outdoors: Section A***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A1. Is the building accessible (no damage to building structure or excess debris)? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| There is no visible damage to the exterior of the building. | Take pictures/videos and document all structural damage if safe to walk on grounds. If not safe to walk on grounds, do not proceed until the proper authorities have deemed it safe to walk on grounds. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A2. Is the outside play area fenced and in a safe condition? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| There is no damage to the fence around the play area and there is no debris. | Remove any debris & repair any damage to the fence and/or play area. |

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| A3. Are all potential physical hazards eliminated & out of children’s reach? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Potential physical hazards are not present in the area where children occupy. | Contain garbage/debris/any hazards in area not accessible by children. |

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| A4. Is there standing water? | | |
| **Yes** | | **No** |
| Electrical lines are touching the water. | | There is no standing water observed. |
| Yes | No |  |
| Note where the standing water is. | Empty the water out of any containers to prevent insects from laying eggs in them. |  |
| Immediately shut off electrical power to the facility and do not make contact with the water. Call authorities to have electrical lines properly removed. | If standing water is preventing access to the facility, wait until the waters have receded and local authorities have deemed it safe. |  |

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| --- | --- |
| A5. Is there contaminated soil, water, dust, pest or air (exhaust, chemicals) in areas to which children have access? | |
| **Yes (ie:** unusual odor present, pests visible, potential for chemical contamination present**)** | **No** |
| Contact a certified local authority to perform an inspection/assessment of soil, water, air quality, and/or pest control. | Consider getting an assessment to ensure there are no contaminants present. Most chemicals are not visible (e.g. lead in soil). |

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| A6. Is there a generator and is it being used safely? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| The generator is located outside of the facility at least 75 feet away from windows and doors, and is inaccessible  to children. | There is no generator or the generator must be relocated to at least 75 feet away from windows and doors and is not accessible by children. |

***Indoors: Section B***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| B1. Are there functioning carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke detectors? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| The carbon monoxide and smoke detectors have been tested and are operating properly. | Test your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and use a battery-operated or battery backup CO detector to ensure no CO is present. If there is no CO and/or smoke detector present, then install one. |

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| B2. Is there visible mold or an odor of wet/damp materials? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Throw out any damp or wet materials that can’t dry quickly (ex: mattress, stuffed animals, some baby toys, etc). Clean mold with 1 cup of bleach and 1 gallon of water. Wear goggles, gloves and an approved N-95 mask for nose/mouth. Have proper air circulation (fan/ windows). | No mold is detected. |

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| --- | --- |
| B3. Is there ventilation to maintain a comfortable temperature (air condition/heating system or screened windows)? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Ventilation system is maintained and working properly: all windows and doors have screens, HVAC system is working properly. Filters are clean. | Make sure all windows and doors are properly screened. A certified professional should verify if the ventilation system is working at optimal temperatures and filters are clean.  Note: If the facility was flooded, the HVAC should be checked and cleaned by a service professional experienced in mold clean-up before you turn it on. If the system was flooded with water, turning it on will spread mold throughout the facility. |

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| B4. Has an assessment been done for hazardous materials (lead, asbestos) in the building? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Assessment was done in the initial inspection of the building OR was done post disaster. Any identified chemical hazards were professionally remediated and deemed safe for occupancy. | A certified entity must do an assessment for hazardous materials such as lead and asbestos (buildings built or renovated between 1930-1950 in PR and USVI and 1989 in the USA are prone to having asbestos). |

|  |  |
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| B5. Are all chemicals and hazardous materials out of children’s reach and used properly when needed (cleaning and pest products)? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Chemicals and hazardous materials are kept in a place inaccessible to children and are handled properly when in use. | Store all hazardous materials, chemicals and cleaning supplies in a place that is inaccessible for unauthorized personnel, including children. |

**Post Disaster Self Assessment Form**

For Early Childhood Programs

***Water: Section C***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C1. Is the post disaster public water source safe for drinking? | | |
| **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| There was a public notice sent out that the public water sources are safe to use. | Use bottled water until public water source is deemed safe. | Do not use a public water source. |

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| C2. Is there reliable, safe drinking water from a private source (well, cistern) and it has been tested and approved post disaster? | | |
| **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| The drinking water from the private source was tested and approved post disaster. | Prior to use have water source tested by an approved agency or organization. | Do not use a private water source. |

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| C3. Is there a method for washing hands with safe water and soap available (don’t have to use hand sanitizer)? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Safe water and soap are available to use for washing hands. | \*Local jurisdiction should include language about the ability to operate without a safe method of washing hands. |

***Food: Section D***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| D1. Are you able to safely keep perishable food at proper cooling and warming temperatures? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Refrigerator and heating equipment are working properly to keep food at correct temperatures (freezer at or below 0 degrees, refrigerator at or below 40 degrees, and above 140 degrees Fahrenheit for hot foods). | Dispose of all refrigerated food if the refrigerator’s continuous functioning is compromised (by loss of electricity, broken, etc). Dispose of any perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) in your refrigerator when the power has been off for 4 hours or more. Dispose of foods that show any signs of thawing. Sanitize. |

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| D2. Are you able to safely wash plates, utensils, cups, bottles, etc. with access to hot water that is safe post disaster? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| There is hot water available to use for cleaning materials used in food preparation or presentation. | Use throw-away items (disposable cups, plates, silverware) until proper dishwashing can resume. |

***Waste: Section E***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| E1. Is there a reliable waste water system (public sewer or private septic system is fully functional)? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Sewage is not backing up, septic tank is not over capacity, able to flush toilets and sinks can drain fully. | If sewage system is not fully functional, do not use until the issue is addressed by a certified entity. |

|  |  |
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| E2. Is garbage kept contained and routinely removed to reduce chance of pests? | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| Garbage is disposed of properly, in a timely fashion, and out of reach of children. | Contain garbage in an area not accessible to children and remove routinely and legally according to local regulations to reduce pests. |

Identify issues that need to be addressed in Food:

Identify issues that need to be addressed in Water:

Identify issues that need to be addressed in Waste:

**Final Summary:**

Identify issues that need to be addressed in Outdoors:

Identify issues that need to be addressed in Indoors:

Please include additional info on back