

**Poplar Bluff Housing Authority
Emergency Plan
2025**



Contents

Part I: Introduction.....	3
Part II: Emergency Response	3
A. Severe Storm	3
B. Severe Wind/Tornado	5
C. Flood	6
D. Utility Outage.....	7
E. Earthquake	8
F. Fire	9
G. Hazardous Materials Incident/Chemical or Biological Threat	10
H. Natural Gas Leak.....	11
I. Active Shooter	11
J. Terrorism/Bomb Threats	12
K. Civil Disturbance	13
L. Medical Emergency	13
M. Pandemic Virus.....	14
N. Shelter In-Place/Lockdown.....	15

Part I: Introduction

By their very nature, emergencies are unavoidable. In many cases, they either happen without warning or with limited notice. Planning in advance for how the PHA will proceed before, during, and after an emergency must be done to ensure successful emergency operation.

This Emergency Plan describes what the hazards are, and what actions Public Housing Agency employees and residents must take during such emergencies. While this plan is designed as a tool to thoroughly prepare for the myriad emergency situations the organization may face, it is not exhaustive.

Whether facing natural disasters, public health emergencies, or human-made threats, it is essential to have a comprehensive and coordinated approach to emergency preparedness and response. This Emergency Plan outlines the strategies, responsibilities, and protocols necessary to minimize risks, protect lives and property, and ensure continuity of operations across all housing programs and administrative functions.

This plan is designed to serve as a practical guide for staff, residents, and stakeholders, offering clear procedures for preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. It reflects the public housing authority's commitment to proactive planning, effective communication, and collaboration with local, state, and federal emergency management partners. By maintaining a strong emergency response framework, the authority can better safeguard vulnerable populations and support the community's resilience in the face of adversity.

Part II: Emergency Response

A. Severe Storm

Severe Thunderstorm – Storms that have winds of 58 mph or higher and/or hail of 1 inch in diameter or larger.

Because these types of storms have the potential for flooding, tornadoes, and wind damage, staff should also refer to procedures outlined for Severe Wind/Tornado, Flood, Shelter-in-Place, and Evacuation.

1. Before -Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Severe Thunderstorm Watch – A Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued when severe thunderstorms are possible in and near the watch area.

Before a Severe Weather Event– PHA Staff

Maintenance

Remove dead branches and other potential projectiles or trees falling.

Secure or remove exterior signage. Place all loose gear indoors. Secure dumpsters

Fill all gasoline cans and top-off agency vehicle fuel tanks.

Ensure generator is fully fueled at main office location.

Procure a vendor to supply fuel for generators in the event of extended power outages.

Check emergency equipment and medical supplies.

Property Manager

Notify residents to secure all loose exterior items.

Ensure residents know how to remain in contact with the PHA.

Monitor emergency alerts and evacuation orders and communicate with residents.

Have list of shelters readily available

Residents

Identify where you plan to go if evacuation is necessary.

Ensure your vehicle is filled with gas.

Identify transportation options if car is not available: local emergency pickup service, bus stops, friends, or relatives.

Gather essential items in case of evacuation:

- Medicine, medical supplies, and equipment
- Important documents, i.e., identification, social security cards, medical cards
- Insurance documents
- Contact information for doctors, service providers.
- Provisions for pets

If sheltering in place:

- Ensure essential items are available:
- Canned food
- Water
- Baby supplies
- Battery powered light, fan.
- Phone charger
- Whistle

2. During, Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Severe Thunderstorm Warning – A Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued when severe thunderstorms are occurring or imminent in the warning area. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level during the storm. Put as many walls between you and the outside as you can. Stay away from skylights, windows, and glass doors.

- a. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level during the storm. Put as many walls between you and the outside as you can. Stay away from skylights, windows, and glass doors.

3. After a storm

- a. If you evacuate, return home only when officials say it is safe.
- b. Avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. Watch for fallen objects, debris, downed power lines, and weakened structures.
- c. Stay out of any building if you smell gas, if floodwater remains around the building, if there was fire damage, or if the authorities have not declared it safe.
- d. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas if present.
- e. Begin required clean-up and immediate need repairs. Residents should contact the maintenance department to report storm damage to their units.

B. Severe Wind/Tornado

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air touching the ground, usually attached to the base of a thunderstorm. Winds may reach 300 miles per hour. Strong downburst (straight-line) winds may also occur due to the same storm. Hail is very commonly found close to tornadoes. Some tornadoes are clearly visible while others are obscured by rain or low-hanging clouds. Tornadoes develop extremely rapidly and may dissipate just as quickly. Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible.

1. Before – Tornado Watch

Tornado Watch – A Tornado Watch is issued when severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area.

- a. Review location of the Best Available Refuge Area for each building and site
- b. Ensure no physical restrictions exist that would prevent free movement to the nearest safe area; clear any blocked doors, aisles, etc.
- c. If you are in a vehicle, now is the time to seek shelter in a sturdy building. A ditch or under an overpass is not a safe option.

2. During – Tornado Warning

Tornado Warning – A Tornado Warning is issued when a tornado is imminent. When a tornado warning is issued, seek safe shelter immediately.

- a. Take cover. Proceed to the nearest safe area or shelter (Best Available Refuge Area). Because of possible power failures, use stairs, not elevators. Remain well clear of windows and other glass. In multi-story buildings, move to ground level. Interior hallways and small rooms, such as closets, are usually safe areas. Put as many walls as possible between yourself and the outside. If possible, get underneath a sturdy piece of furniture such as a desk. Cover your head and neck with your arms, a blanket/sweater, etc. If possible, wear sturdy or athletic shoes.
- b. There is no safe option when caught in a tornado while in a vehicle. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. The best option is to seek shelter in a sturdy building, or underground if possible. A ditch or under an overpass or bridge is not a safe option. If you are forced to stay in the car, park the car, keep your seat belt on and cover your head with a blanket, jacket, cushion, or by ducking.

3. After a tornado

- a. Leave the shelter only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
- b. Seek medical attention if needed.
- c. Watch out for downed power lines, broken glass, debris, structural damage that can cause buildings to be unsafe.

C. Flood

A flood is an overflow of water onto normally dry land. Flooding is a longer-term event than flash flooding: it may last days or weeks. A flash flood is caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a brief period of time, generally less than 6 hours. Flash floods are usually characterized by raging torrents after heavy rains that rip through riverbeds, urban streets, or canyons sweeping everything before them. They can occur within minutes or a few hours of excessive rainfall or after a levee or dam has failed.

1. Before – Flood Watch, Flash Flood Watch

Flood Watch – A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flooding. It does not mean flooding will occur, but it is possible.

Flash Flood Watch – A Flash Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flash flooding. It does not mean that flash flooding will occur, but it is possible.

- a. Identify streets/areas that are prone to flooding in areas where we operate.
[FEMA Flood Map Service Center | Search by Address](#)
- a. Provide alternative routes for employees/residents based on anticipated flooding.
- b. Sandbag critical agency buildings/equipment based on anticipated flooding (Maintenance)

- c. Follow procedures for securing chemicals/hazardous materials in the case of flooding – refer to Material Safety Data Sheets
- d. Relocate agency vehicles to higher ground (Maintenance)
- e. Relocate critical materials to at least one foot above the Base Flood Elevation or Design Flood Elevation whichever is higher (Maintenance)
- f. Identify highest elevation point in Agency buildings in the case of rising flood waters and install signage directing people to that location (Maintenance Manager)

2. During – Flood Warning, Flash Flood Warning

Flood Warning – A Flood Warning is issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.

Flash Flood Warning – A Flash Flood Warning is issued when flash flooding is imminent or occurring.

- a. Do not walk or drive through flood waters. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down, and 2 feet of water can sweep your vehicle away.
- b. If flood waters rise around your car but the water is not moving, abandon the car and move to higher ground. Do not enter moving water.
- c. Move to higher ground or highest point in building.

3. After a flood

- a. Return to building only when authorities say it is safe.
- b. Watch out for debris on roadways.
- c. Monitor traveler.modot.org for road closures and conditions, identify alternate routes.
- d. Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- e. Notify residents if water supply is not safe.

D. Utility Outage

1. During a power/utility outage

- a. Unplug/disconnect important equipment during a power outage (if safe to do so); turn off HVAC systems.
- b. Determine the duration of outage.
- c. Determine if operations can continue or if relocation to alternative worksite(s) is needed (CEO)
- d. Notify residents to keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. (Property Managers)

2. During extended outages

- a. Provide cooling stations (water, mist fan, shade) to residents in case of extreme heat; provide blankets in case of extreme cold (Maintenance Manager)
- b. Consider an alternative dress code for employees working in extreme heat/cold (CEO)

3. After power/utility is restored (Public Housing Manager and Maintenance Manager)

- a. Reconnect equipment and HVAC systems once safe to do so.
- b. Instruct residents to clean out refrigerator/freezer if the outage is for an extended period.

E. Earthquake

1. What to do during an earthquake:

- a. If indoors – take cover under sturdy furniture or against an inside wall. **“Drop, Cover and Hold On”** until the shaking stops. This means DROP down to the floor, take COVER and protect your head and neck with your arms, and HOLD ON to the sturdy piece of furniture you are under until the shaking stops.
- b. If outdoors – stay there. Move away from buildings, streetlights and utility wires.
- c. In a high-rise building – take cover under sturdy furniture away from windows and outside walls. Stay in the building on the same floor. An evacuation may not be necessary. Wait for instructions from safety personnel. Do not use elevators.
- d. In a vehicle – stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses or utility wires.

2. What to do immediately after an earthquake:

- a. Check for injuries.
- b. Be prepared for aftershocks.
- c. Wear sturdy shoes in areas covered with fallen debris and broken glass.
- d. If the electricity is out – use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns. Check the main utility panel.
- e. If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound – open a window and leave the building.
- f. Check your unit for structural damage
- g. Check household appliances for damage.
- h. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, and any flammable liquids.
- i. Do not flush toilets until you know sewage lines are intact.

- j. Open cabinets cautiously because objects may fall off shelves.
- k. Use the phone only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- l. Listen to news reports for the latest emergency information.

F. Fire

Fire is FAST! In less than a minute a fire can triple in size. Fire is HOT! Room temperatures can be 100 degrees at the floor level and 600 degrees at eye level. Fire is DARK! Fire produces black smoke and complete darkness. Fire is DEADLY! Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do.

1. Fire prevention (Maintenance Manager)

- a. Routinely inspect building(s) to ensure exits are not blocked.
- b. Test smoke detectors and replace batteries every six months.
- c. Check fire extinguishers annually. Train employees in how to use a fire extinguisher properly.
- d. Check power cords annually for fraying, broken connectors, or cracked insulation – replace immediately. Only use one extension cord per outlet.
- e. Leave some room behind appliances that heat up (like coffee machines, computers) to allow them to cool down. Keep all appliances away from combustible materials. If possible, unplug appliances at the end of the day.
- f. Post evacuation plan in several locations.

2. During a fire

- a. Call 9-1-1. Tell the emergency operator if someone is trapped or missing.
- b. Sound the fire alarm and alert others to evacuate.
- c. Crawl low under any smoke to your exit.
- d. Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and door. If either it is hot or if there is smoke coming around the door, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- e. If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- f. If you cannot get out, close the door, and close vents and crack around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 and signal for help at a window with a flashlight or light-colored cloth.
- g. If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll – stop immediately, drop to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. If you cannot stop, drop, and roll, smother the flames with a blanket or towel.
- h. Treats burns with cool water immediately for 3 to 5 minutes. Cover with clean, dry cloth. Get medical help right away.

3. Fire Extinguisher Use

- a. Only use a fire extinguisher if everyone has been alerted to the fire and the fire department has been called. Make sure you are safe from smoke and that the fire is not between you and your only escape route.
- b. If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to fight a fire – EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY!
- c. Use the P.A.S.S. technique:
PULL – Pull the pin. This will also break the tamper seal.
AIM – Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.
SQUEEZE – Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
SWEEP – Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out.

4. After a fire

- a. Return to building only when authorities say it is safe.
- b. Verify with the fire department that utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site.

G. Hazardous Materials Incident/Chemical or Biological Threat

1. Major Hazardous Spill

- a. ONLY TRAINED AND AUTHORIZED personnel are permitted to respond to hazardous material incidents.
- b. Call the Fire Department at 9-1-1
- c. Provide the fire dispatcher with type of spill, injuries, type of chemical, flammability of substance if possible.

2. Major Spill or Leak

- a. Activate the nearest fire alarm or announce building evacuation.
- b. Immediately evacuate the building closing doors behind you
- c. Do not attempt to clean up the spill yourself.
- d. Provide clean-up/rescue personnel with the appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets and other pertinent information.

3. Minor/Non-hazardous Spill or Leak

- a. Attempt to contain the spill; do not allow anything to leak into the drains.
- b. Wear proper personal protective equipment while cleaning up.
- c. Notify your immediate supervisor or an on-duty supervisor.

4. Outdoor Spill

- a. Stay upstream and upwind of the spill.
- b. Move as far away from the accident scene as possible and help keep others away.
- c. Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists or condensed solid chemical deposits.
- d. Try not to inhale gases, fumes, or smoke. If possible, cover mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.

H. Natural Gas Leak

Natural gas is colorless and odorless, an additive is used to give it a distinct odor when released into the atmosphere.

1. In case of a gas leak inside a building

- a. Remain calm. Evacuate the building immediately.
- b. Do not turn off lights, equipment or use a cell phone.
- c. Do not operate any electric switches or appliances.
- d. Do not use the telephone inside the building.
- e. Do not use matches, cigarettes, or possible sources of ignition.
- f. Do not use the elevators (if present)
- g. From a safe place, call 9-1-1.
- h. Do not reenter the building until you are instructed to do so by the Utility Company.

I. Active Shooter

1. Training

- a. RUN, HIDE, FIGHT training video <https://youtu.be/5VcSwejU2D0>
<https://www.ready.gov/active-shooter>
- b. DHS Options for Consideration Active Shooter Preparedness video
<https://www.dhs.gov/cisa/options-consideration-active-shooter-preparedness-video>

2. During an active shooter situation

- a. Run
 - Leave your belongings behind
 - Evacuate whether or not others agree to follow.
 - Help others escape, if possible
 - Do not attempt to move the wounded.
 - Preventing others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
 - Keep your hands visible.
 - Call 9-1-1 when you are safe.

- b. Hide
 - Hide in an area out of the shooter’s view.
 - Lock door or block entry to your hiding place.
 - Silence your phone and remain quiet.
- c. Fight
 - Fight as a last resort
 - Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
 - Act with physical aggression.
 - Improvise weapons or throw items.
 - Commit to your actions, your life depends on it.

J. Terrorism/Bomb Threats

Definition of Terrorism – the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for purposes of intimidation, coercion, or ransom. Acts of terrorism include threats of terrorism; assassinations; kidnapping; hijacking; bomb scares; and bombings; cyber-attacks (computer-based); and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons. Terrorists have been known to use a variety of methods to carry out their unlawful activities. In general, a terrorist incident could involve:

1. In the event you come upon an incendiary/explosive device

- a. Do not touch it. Note where it is.
- b. Call the Police Department on 9-1-1
- c. Leave the area and check for other devices on the way out.
- d. Pull the fire alarm or announce a building evacuation and go to the designated safe zone.

2. Chemical/Biological

- a. Some indicators of the possible use of chemical or biological agents include:
 - Unusual occurrence of dead or dying animals
 - Unusual numbers of people exhibiting serious health problems
 - Unusual odors, liquid, spray, or vapor
 - Suspicious devices or packages
- b. Follow procedures for an incendiary/explosive device.
- c. Minimize exposure.

3. Nuclear/Radiological Event Anywhere on Site

- a. Radiation is an invisible hazard. There are no initial characteristics or properties of radiation that are visible. Unless nuclear/radiological material is marked accordingly, it may be some time before the hazard is identified as such.
- b. Follow procedures for an incendiary/explosive device.

- c. Three Methods to Minimize Exposure
 - Shielding – place heavy, dense materials between oneself and the radiation source
 - Distance – place as much distance between oneself and the radiation source.
 - Time – limit the amount of time spent near a radiation source.

4. Telephone Threat

- a. Be calm. Be courteous. Listen. Do not interrupt the caller.
- b. Unless you feel an immediate threat, try to prolong the conversation and extract as much information as possible.
- c. Take the caller seriously.
- d. Notify the Police Department at 9-1-1 immediately. Another staff member can do this while you are on the phone with the caller.
- e. Leave your phone off the hook. Do NOT hang up after the caller hangs up. Leave your phone off the hook. Do NOT hang up after the caller hangs up.

K. Civil Disturbance

Civil disturbance includes riots, threatening individuals, crimes in progress, or assemblies that have become significantly disruptive.

1. If a gathering becomes disruptive, threatening, or violent or blocks your entrance or egress from an office or building:

- a. Call 9-1-1
- b. Avoid provoking or obstructing demonstrators.
- c. Secure area – lock doors, safes, files, vital records, expensive equipment, etc.
- d. Avoid areas of disturbance.
- e. Continue with normal routines as much as possible.

2. If the disturbance is outside, stay away from doors and windows. STAY INSIDE.

L. Medical Emergency

3. Call 9-1-1

If severe illness or injury is life threatening. In the event of a possible life-threatening medical situation, call 9-1-1 immediately for emergency services first. Life-threatening emergencies might include but would not be limited to severe chest pains, uncontrolled bleeding, loss of consciousness, or behavior that is violent.

- a. When calling 9-1-1 be prepared to provide the following information:
 - Your name and location- if you are on a cell phone, the address of the owner of the account will appear, so dispatchers do not always see where you are truly located.

- Phone number from where the call is being made.
 - Location of the emergency (including facility name, building #, full address)
 - Type of emergency (Medical, Fire, Confined Space Rescue, Criminal Act, etc.)
 - Condition of the victim
 - What is needed?
- b. Do not hang up first. Let Emergency personnel hang up first.

M. Pandemic Virus

A pandemic virus (such as an influenza or a coronavirus) refers to a worldwide outbreak of a new virus or a new strain of a virus that can infect humans and spread from person to person.

- a. Be aware of and review government-issued pandemic plans.
- b. Follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC), county, parish, and other local directives regarding office closure, etc.
- c. Prepare and plan for operations with a reduced workforce. Ensure residents are aware of any modifications to standard operations and how they can contact staff.
- d. Work with suppliers to minimize interruptions in supplies and services.
- e. Identify exposure risks to employees. Employees with high-frequency contact with the general population are considered at medium exposure risk.
- f. Stockpile infection control supplies such as soap, tissues, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies and recommended personal protective equipment. Provide employees and customers with easy access to infection control supplies.
- g. Implement policies and practices that minimize direct contact with other employees and customers. For example, have customers mail or email information instead of coming to the office. Conduct interviews over the phone.
- h. Have employees communicate through email, websites, and teleconferences. If possible, have employees work from home.
- i. Educate employees and residents in proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and social distancing techniques. Social distancing means reducing the frequency, proximity, and duration of contact between people.
- j. Minimize the need for group gatherings.
- k. Encourage employees and residents to obtain appropriate vaccinations.
- l. Encourage sick employees to stay at home.
- m. Postpone or cancel travel.
- n. Discourage employees from using other employees' phones, desks, offices, tools, and equipment.
- o. Sanitize commonly used areas such as elevators, door handles, and railings and provide sanitation devices to support self-serve.

N. Shelter In-Place/Lockdown

- a. Close the business.
- b. Lock exterior doors and close windows.
- c. If there are customers, clients, or visitors, provide for their safety by asking them to stay – not leave. Do not drive or walk outdoors.
- d. Unless there is an imminent threat, ask people to call their emergency contact to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- e. Gather essential disaster supplies and go to an interior room (above ground floor) with the fewest windows or vents.
- f. Depending on the nature of the disaster, you may need to seal vents, windows, and doors.
- g. Print the names of everyone in the room and call the Emergency Coordinator (Agency) to report who is in the room with you, and their affiliation (client, employee, visitor, etc.)
- h. Listen to the radio, watch tv, or use the internet for further instructions until you are told it is safe to evacuate.