


<b>MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES</b>	
<b>Subject:</b> <b>EMERGENCY PLAN</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b> <b>31</b>
<b>Number of Pages:</b> <b>7</b>	<b>Section:</b>
<b>Attachments:</b> <b>A. MDHS Disaster Plan</b>	<b>Related Standards &amp; References:</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>Approved:</b>  <b>Kathy Pittman, Director</b>

**I. POLICY**

It is a policy of Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services that Community Services staff will adhere to all emergency procedures established for the building in which their offices are located. Additionally, the appropriate community Services Emergency Plan will be followed (see page 2 through page 5). As well as the appropriate county emergency management plan where applicable.

It is required that the orientation of new employees include appropriate and essential training in the action to be taken in various types of emergency situations.

Copies of the Emergency Plan will be located in each office, and emergency telephone numbers will be posted at each telephone.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

As used in this policy and procedure, the following definitions apply:

Emergency Procedures – refers to the steps that will be taken if and when an emergency occurs.

**III. PROCEDURE**

See pages 2 through 7.

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES EMERGENCY PLAN: GENERAL RULES

### Unanticipated Emergencies:

In emergency situations where advance preparations cannot be made (e.g., fire), the evacuation, safety and security of juveniles and staff will be the primary concern.

Removal of agency property, or any other action intended to protect files, equipment, materials, etc. will only be taken when all juveniles have been evacuated and secured. Such action will not be taken in/when it threatens the physical well-being of any parties.

### GENERAL RULES:

If/when an emergency situation occurs, any employee(s) present should immediately:

- A. Evacuate the problem area.
- B. Account for all juveniles and staff.
- C. Notify the proper authorities of the problem (fire department, police/sheriff department, local utility company, etc.)
- D. Determine what immediate actions need to be taken to reduce potential for further damage or injuries, and to prevent recurrent.
- E. Take necessary action to return to conditions that are conducive to normal operations.

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES  
EMERGENCY PLAN: GENERAL RULES**

**THUNDERSTORMS & LIGHTNING**

1. Move inside as quickly as possible.
2. Stay away from open doors, windows, electrical outlets and appliances.
3. Unplug electrical appliances, if possible.
4. Seek shelter immediately if outside and unable to get into building.
5. Stay away from trees and fences.
6. If shelter cannot be reached, crouch on knees in open area with hands overhead.

**TORNADOES**

TORNADO WATCH - means that conditions are favorable for the development of a tornado.

TORNADO WARNING - means that a tornado has actually been sighted.

If a tornado warning is issued, move to the designated area in the building.

If a tornado strikes, assemble in a safe area. If it is unsafe to remain in the building, move to a safer location.

**HURRICANES/SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS (Advance preparation)**

When official weather predictions give reason to believe that a Community Services office will be experiencing severe weather conditions, there may be some opportunity for advance preparation. After the protection of human life has been provided for, special steps may be taken to safeguard agency property. See page 6 for additional information.

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES  
EMERGENCY PLAN:  
FIRE EMERGENCIES**

The following steps are to be taken in case of fire:

1. Sound the alarm.
2. Evacuate the building; move in a single line to the nearest exit.
3. Assemble in a safe area and sit down. Insure proper count.
4. If anyone is missing, determine when and where they were last seen. Be prepared to give as much information as possible to local fire department personnel.
5. Report the exact location of the fire and other pertinent information. Advise if there is a need for other emergency vehicles (ambulance, etc.).
6. Do not re-enter building until an "all clear" has been given.

General safety rules to follow in a fire emergency:

1. Know all exits from the building.
2. Walk, don't run, when leaving the building.
3. In a smoke filled room, crawl close to the floor to the nearest exit.
4. Touch each door before opening it. If the door is hot, do not open it; try the next exit.
5. If anyone's clothing is on fire, instruct them to stop, drop on the floor or ground, and roll. If the person does not respond to these instructions, attempt to cover them with a blanket or other covering, and roll them to extinguish the flames.

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES  
EMERGENCY PLAN: PROCEDURE FOR HOSTAGE SITUATION**

In the case of an emergency involving hostage(s), it is essential that all personnel remain calm and alert and avoid impulsive actions that might endanger human life or alienate the hostage takers, reducing the possibility of dialogue and negotiation.

As in all written procedures, it is to be understood that the Director or Designee may at times alter these procedures to adapt to special circumstances.

The following steps are to be taken to resolve the situation with the least probability of injury or loss of life.

**Emergency Procedure:**

1. Call 911. Make sure the 911 operators understand that there is a hostage situation. If possible, stay on the line until you are instructed to disconnect by the emergency operator.
2. Notify all staff that you have an emergency situation. The emergency signal is **GO TO LOCKDOWN**. Please keep all clients inside your office until further notice. All office doors should be locked at the sound of the emergency signal or at time of notification of hostage situation.
3. Determine, if possible, the precipitating cause of the incident and what demands/requests are being made by the hostage takers. Determine who is involved (names and number of juveniles, staff and/or others), type and number of weapons in the possession of the hostage takers, and other details.
4. A staff person will be assigned the responsibility of recording all actions taken and coordinating communication.
5. Develop profile(s) of hostage taker(s). Identify hostage(s) - their physical condition, medical history, etc. Identify hostage(s) - their physical condition, medical history, etc.
6. Procedures from this point on are determined by the local law enforcement officials.
7. Notify the Director of the Division of Youth Services and Community Services Director. The Director or designee will notify the executive Director of the Department of Human Services.
8. Isolate and contain the situation as soon as possible.
9. Clients and staff should move away from doors and glass.
10. Notify all clients outside of your office (including those outside the office building) to report to the nearest safe office or conference room. All clients should be brought into a locked area.
11. The staff in charge should make a list missing client and staff on index card to be given to the law enforcement and central office.

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12. If the hostage taker or armed person can be contained in one section of the building, clients and staff should be evacuated from the building to designated safe area.
13. Clients and staff will not re-enter the building until the building has been evaluated and determined safe by the police department.
14. If safety permits, a staff member should be directed outside the building to warn all approaching visitors of the danger.
15. The staff in charge will document actions and decisions concerning hostage incident.
16. Don't attempt to negotiate with the hostage taker, leave this to the professionals.
17. Don't allow any school or district leader on the phone with the hostage taker.
18. Deactivation: All equipment mobilized in response to the emergency incident will be returned to its proper storage area. All employees will be returned to their original assignments or released to return to their homes.
19. The Administrator will have specific responsibility for compiling a comprehensive report of the incident as well as assuring that all paperwork incidental to the emergency, including Employee Incident Reports, etc., is completed properly.
20. Debriefing: As soon as practical, after resolution of the emergency, all staff will be debriefed and an evaluation will be conducted of the response to the situation. Also included in the debriefing will be an analysis of how to prevent similar future emergencies. Included in such analysis will be a review of possible indicators of signs of the tension that, if responded to, could have prevented escalation to the point of an emergency situation.

### **If Taken Hostage:**

- Get word to the office (via word, note, or hand signals to passerby).
- If possible, remove clients and staff from the area.
- Do not try to disarm intruder.
- Keep calm.
- Direct clients and staff to be quiet and to sit away from intruder, windows, and exits.
- Police may be able to hear what is taking place and may enter the room at any time.

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**DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES  
COMMUNITY SERVICES  
EMERGENCY PLAN**

1. Regional Directors and community staff are to provide the community services director current contact staff contact information quarterly.
2. Community staff is to follow local law enforcement directives regarding the emergency procedures for the current situation.
3. Community staff is to contact their regional director as soon as possible to update them on their whereabouts and to report their living conditions following the emergency. If the regional are not available, they are to contact the community services director as soon as possible.
4. If conditions permit and the area is officially cleared for travel and occupation, staff is to report to their offices or to an assigned shelter to assist other DHS staff providing care to those displaced following the emergency.
5. Community staff in the affected area will assist with locating parents of children in the training school in order to keep the youth there informed of their whereabouts and general status.
6. If the training school is within the affected area, all community staff will assist the training school with emergency releases in order to control the population of the facility and to assist with diverting as many youth as possible for commitment during the crisis.
7. Regional directors are to track the time staff is working at the shelters to report to the community services director.
8. Regional directors are to work with local officials and the youth court judge to develop a general evacuation plan to relocate youth that are held in detention. This plan may be developed already and DYS would just request a copy for the records to allow us to locate youth following the emergency.
9. Community staff will ensure services within their areas continue such as the Adolescent Offender Program. Counselors will verify the safety of facility prior to any students entering site after a disaster or emergency event shutting the facility down and report their findings to the community services director.