

Survey & Certification Group
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Emergency Preparedness Regulation

Clarifications on Definitions

Definitions

All-Hazards Approach: An all-hazards approach is an integrated approach to emergency preparedness planning that focuses on capacities and capabilities that are critical to preparedness for a full spectrum of emergencies or disasters, including internal emergencies and a man-made emergency (or both) or natural disaster. This approach is specific to the location of the provider or supplier and considers the particular type of hazards most likely to occur in their areas. These may include, but are not limited to, care-related emergencies, equipment and power failures, interruptions in communications, including cyber-attacks, loss of a portion or all of a facility, and interruptions in the normal supply of essentials such as water and food. Rather than managing planning initiatives for a multitude of threat scenarios all-hazards planning focuses on developing capacities and capabilities that are critical to preparedness for a full spectrum of emergencies or disasters. Thus, all-hazards planning does not specifically address every possible threat but ensures those hospitals and all other providers and suppliers will have the capacity to address a broad range of related emergencies

Business Impact Analysis (BIAs)¹ are a method of identifying and evaluating the effects various threats/ hazards may have on the ability of an organization to perform its essential functions and the resulting impact of those effects. It is through the BIA that organizations can identify problem areas (gaps, weaknesses, vulnerabilities) and in turn, organization leadership may use the BIA results to support risk management decision making.

Emergency/Disaster: An event that can affect the facility internally as well as the overall target population or the community at large.

Emergency Preparedness Program: The Emergency Preparedness Program is a facility's comprehensive approach to meeting the health and safety needs of their patient population and provides facilities with guidance on how to respond to emergency situations that could impact the operation of the facility, such as natural or man-made disasters. It includes (1) all-hazards risk assessment and emergency planning, development and implementation of policies and procedures, a communication plan, and training and testing. The program as a whole consists of the Emergency Plan, which is based on the four core elements.

Emergency Plan: An emergency plan is one part of a facility's emergency preparedness program and provides the framework which includes conducting facility-based and community-based risk assessments that will assist a facility in addressing patient needs along with the continuity of business operations. Additionally, a plan will support, guide and ensure a facility's ability to collaborate with local emergency preparedness officials.

¹ The Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Continuity Guidance Circular 2 (CGC 2) July 22, 2010
https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/coop/cont_guidance2.pdf

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Facility-Based: When discussing the terms “all-hazards approach” and facility-based risk assessments, we consider the term “facility-based” to mean that the emergency preparedness program is specific to the facility. Facility-based includes, but is not limited to, hazards specific to a facility based on the geographic location; Patient/Resident/Client population; facility type and potential surrounding community assets (i.e. rural area versus a large metropolitan area).

Full-Scale Exercise: A full scale exercise is a multi-agency, multijurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional (for example, joint field office, emergency operation centers, etc.) and “boots on the ground” response (for example, firefighters decontaminating mock victims).

Hazard Vulnerability Assessments (HVAs)² are systematic approaches to identifying hazards or risks that are most likely to have an impact on a healthcare facility and the surrounding community. The HVA describes the process by which a provider or supplier will assess and identify potential gaps in its emergency plan(s).

Potential loss scenarios should be identified first during the risk assessment. Once a risk assessment has been conducted and an facility has identified the potential hazards/risks they may face, the organization can use those hazards/risks to conduct a Business Impact Analysis.

Risk Assessment: This is general terminology that is within the emergency preparedness regulations and preamble to the Final Rule (81 Fed. Reg. 63860, Sept. 16, 2016) which describes a process facilities are to use to assess and document potential hazards within their areas and the vulnerabilities and challenges which may impact the facility. Additional terms currently used by the industry are all-hazards risk assessments are also referred to as Hazard Vulnerability Assessments (HVAs) , or all-hazards self-assessments. For the purposes of these guidelines, we are using the term “risk assessment,” which may include a variety of current industry practices used to assess and document potential hazards and their impacts.

This guidance is not specifying which type of generally accepted emergency preparedness risk assessment facilities should have, as the language used in defining risk assessment activities is meant to be easily understood by all providers and suppliers that are affected by this final rule and is aligned with the national preparedness system and terminology (81 Fed. Reg. 63860, at 63875). However, facilities are expected to conduct a full assessment of hazards based on geographical location and the individual facility dynamics, such as patient population.

Staff: The term "staff" refers to all individuals that are employed directly by a facility. The phrase "individuals providing services under arrangement" means services furnished under arrangement that are subject to a written contract conforming with the requirements specified in section 1861(w) of the Social Security Act.

Table-top Exercise (TTX): A table-top exercise is a group discussion led by a facilitator, using narrated, clinically-relevant emergency scenario, and a set of problem statements, directed

² The Assistant Secretary for Response and Preparedness (ASPR) Technical Resources Assistance Center and Information Exchange (TRACIE) Hazard Vulnerability/Risk Assessment. <https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/technical-resources/3/Hazard-Vulnerability-Risk-Assessment/0>

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messages, or prepared questions designed to challenge an emergency plan. It involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios, including computer-simulated exercises, in an informal setting. TTXs can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures.