

Morgan Support Services

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters can come in many forms, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, ice storms, blizzards, and earthquakes. In this section, we will focus on those more common to our area. We encourage you to be aware of foul weather predictions so you can plan ahead.

If possible, Morgan Support Services will maintain normal business hours during natural disasters and/or inclement weather conditions. Naturally, if travel conditions are unsafe, we encourage you to stay home. If you are unable to come to work, contact the Program Manager so that we know you are safe. As soon as it is practical, you should attempt to report for work.

MSS will comply with evacuation orders from local, county, or state officials.

MSS will maintain the following supplies in each facility's records room for emergency use:

Drinking water

Flashlights

Batteries

First Aid kit

Battery-Operated radio

The Health & Safety Compliance Officer (HSCO) will check the availability and working condition of these supplies at least quarterly.

Tornadoes

If conditions are right, tornadoes can form at any time in any location. The National Weather Service will issue a Tornado Watch or a Tornado Warning for affected areas.

A Tornado Watch means that tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. People in the watch area should review their plans and be ready to act if a warning is issued, or if they suspect a tornado is approaching.

A Tornado Warning means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar, and that people and property in the warning area are in imminent danger. People in the warning area should immediately go to the designed safe room. If they are in a vehicle, they should get out and go to a shelter in a nearby sturdy building, or lie flat in a low spot away from the vehicle.

Sometimes tornadoes form so quickly that warnings cannot be issued in time. Keep an "eye to the sky" and watch for danger signs, such as:

Dark, greenish clouds – Often some of the clouds turn a greenish color, which indicates a tornado may be developing. The greenish color is caused by hail.

Wall cloud – This is an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm. If it is rotating, it can be especially threatening.

Large hail – Tornadoes are born in large thunderstorms that can produce large hail. They often emerge from near the hail-producing area of the storm.

Funnel cloud – A visible, rotating extension from the bottom of the cloud is a sure sign of a tornado.

Roaring noise – People who have survived a tornado have often commented that it sounded like a freight train. This is caused by the extremely high winds.

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Tornadoes can change direction, speed, and intensity very quickly. Be prepared to act fast and stay inside.

If you are at work when a tornado warning is issued, remember that we are responsible for any of the people we support and visitors to the office. They will be looking to us for direction. Therefore, it is imperative that you remain calm and follow the guidelines below in order to protect yourself and others.

Stay away from all windows

Evacuate to the designated area highlighted on the evacuation route, located in each room of the facility following the General Evacuation Procedures. Take your cell phone with you. Land lines will probably be out of service after a tornado strikes.

After the tornado passes:

Check for any injuries, first to yourself and then to others. Taking care of yourself first will allow you to safely help others until emergency responders can get there.

If there is damage or injury as the result of the tornado, call 911 and give them our address and your specific location in the building.

If you can safely remove any fallen debris and exit the evacuation area, do so. If not, stay where you are until help arrives.

Watch out for and stay away from fallen power lines or broken gas lines. Report them immediately so that utilities can be turned off to prevent further hazard or injury.

Avoid damaged areas and stay out of damaged buildings. Your presence may hamper rescue efforts and you could become a victim yourself.

Be aware of fire hazards. Often a tornado causes broken or leaking gas lines and/or damage to electrical systems that can cause a fire.

As soon as is practical, the MSS management team will contact family members of folks we support to report the condition of the person and to make arrangements for safe travel home if necessary.

If you are in your car and you sight a possible tornado or hear a tornado warning on the radio, do not stay in the vehicle. Tornado winds can pick up a vehicle and hurl it several hundred feet away.

Immediately go to the nearest sturdy building. A sturdy building is the safest place to be.

If there is no building nearby, get out of the car and lie flat in a low spot where wind and debris can blow above you. Use your hands and arms to protect your head.

Do not take refuge under an overpass or bridge. The space underneath can become a wind tunnel for flying debris and the structure itself could collapse.

Avoid buildings with wide-span roofs, such as auditoriums and stadiums. They are frequently damaged or destroyed, providing less protection and greater risk of injury.

Floods

The probability of flooding occurring while you are in the office is rather slim. The possibility of a flooding situation is greater if you are in the community with a person we support when a sudden violent storm occurs.

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Unless there is no other option, do not wade into flood waters. There may be snakes and debris in the water that could cause serious injuries. In addition, ankle-deep water with a strong current can take you off your feet.

If you are driving and you see water standing in the road, do not attempt to drive through it. You will not be able to tell how deep it is and could get caught in a situation where the water is rising and there is a current that could carry your vehicle with it. Instead, turn around and find another route around the flooded road. If you should be caught in a flooded roadway, call 911 immediately and give them your exact location. Stay with your vehicle. Do not get out and attempt to swim to safety.

Tropical Storms and Hurricanes

In our area, a direct hit from a hurricane is unlikely. However, we may receive the residual rain and winds for a coastal storm. The inland path of a hurricane could bring a somewhat weakened hurricane into central North Carolina.

Tropical storm winds range from 39 to 72 miles per hour. When the winds reach 74 miles per hour, the storm becomes a hurricane.

Hurricanes and their paths are generally projected well in advance, allowing residents to respond to the watches and warnings that the National Weather service issues.

A Hurricane/Tropic Storm Watch means there is a threat of tropical storm or hurricane conditions within 36 hours.

A Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning means tropical storm or hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours. You should be ready to evacuate the area if directed by local authorities.

In case of a tropical storm or hurricane, the Executive Director/designee will determine whether or not MSS will be open. We will remain open as long as is practical, based on the forecast. If we close, you will be notified. If land lines are down, contact the Executive Director/designee via cell phone.

Utility Failures

In the event of an extended utility failure that renders the building unsuited for continuation of services, the Executive Director will indicate that everyone is to report to the secondary location where the program will recommence services until each step of the evacuation plan has been implemented and safety/health checks are completed. All staff, people we support, and MSS affiliates in Greensboro are to report to 1105 Willow Road (New Light Baptist Church) and all staff, people we support, and MSS affiliates in Winston-Salem are to report to 3733 Ogburn Avenue (Great Commission Community Church) in the event that the facility is deemed unsafe. Services will continue as closely as possible to resemble day to day operations.

If the power outage is brief, agency functions and activities will continue to the extent possible using emergency equipment.

If telephone service at the office is not available, staff and people we support/families will be able to contact the Program Manager and Associate Clinical Director by cell phone.

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If the power goes out while you are in the facility, notify the MSS management team so they can contact the power company to report the outage. For as long as is safe and practical, remain at the facility and continue working as best you can.

If you are ready to take a quiz that covers this information, click here:

<https://mssconfidential.online/naturaldisastersquiz>

If you feel you need more training or information on the topic in order to understand it fully and implement it correctly, please let the trainer know before taking the quiz.