

Great Lakes Region: Severe Weather Preparedness Guide

Health care facilities across the Midwest face heightened operational risk due to rapidly changing severe weather such as tornadoes, flooding, severe thunderstorms, hail, and lingering winter hazards. This guide consolidates the most relevant, high-value state and federal resources to help facilities strengthen preparedness, protect patients and staff, and maintain continuity of care. It is designed to save time, reduce information overload, and point you directly to the tools that matter most.

Key Preparedness Considerations for Healthcare Facilities

Higher Risk During Severe Weather

- Supply chain delays (medical supplies, oxygen, pharmaceuticals)
- Loss of utilities (power, water, HVAC, communications)
- Increased fall risk for residents/patients during evacuations or internal movement
- Staffing challenges (absenteeism, blocked travel routes, competing family obligations)
- Transportation disruptions (ambulances, transfers, vendor deliveries)
- Child-care disruptions affecting staff availability

Plan Reminders

- Staff sheltering and overnight accommodations
- Food and water reserves
- Backup power testing and fuel levels
- Communication redundancies
- Evacuation and shelter-in-place decision triggers
- Coordination with local Emergency Management Agency's (EMAs), public health, and utility providers

If you'd like assistance with any of these topics, please reach out to info@superiorhealthqa.org

Hazard-Based Preparedness Resources

- Tornado Preparedness: <https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>
- Flooding and Snowmelt Flooding: <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
- Severe Thunderstorms, Lighting and Hail: <https://www.ready.gov/thunderstorms-lightning>
- Late-Season Winter Weather (March – April): <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

State Emergency Preparedness Portals

- Illinois: Ready Illinois, <https://www2.illinois.gov/ready>
- Indiana: Indiana Department of Homeland Security Preparedness, <https://www.in.gov/dhs>
- Michigan: MI Ready, <https://www.michigan.gov/miready>
- Minnesota: Homeland Security & Emergency Management, <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem>
- Ohio: Ohio Emergency Management Agency, <https://ema.ohio.gov>
- Wisconsin: Ready Wisconsin, <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>