Healthcare Emergency Operations Plans: CMS Rule Requirements and All-Hazards Approach

THE DIRECT ANSWER

Medicare-participating hospitals must maintain a comprehensive, all-hazards emergency preparedness program under 42 CFR § 482.15, including a risk-based emergency plan, policies and procedures, a communication plan, and a training and testing program. State survey agencies enforce these requirements alongside physical environment rules in § 482.41 and adopted NFPA 101, NFPA 99, and NFPA 110 standards. Survey success depends on documented exercises, corrected gaps, and staff who can describe their roles—not binders that never leave the shelf.

UNDERSTANDING THE CMS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RULE

- 42 CFR § 482.15 replaced the older § 482.54 citation in the hospital CoPs. The rule shifted facilities away from standalone flood or earthquake binders toward capabilities—incident leadership, patient tracking, evacuation, shelter-in-place, and continuity—that work regardless of the trigger.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- Hospitals (§ 482.15), long-term care facilities (§ 483.73), home health agencies (§ 484.22), critical access hospitals (§ 485.625), and other Medicare-certified provider types each carry parallel emergency preparedness CoPs
- Enforcement through state survey agencies and accrediting organizations on behalf of CMS
- Survey interpretive guidance remains in the CMS State Operations Manual Appendix Z (CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule resources)
- Deficiencies can affect your provider agreement; treat emergency preparedness as a Condition of Participation, not a safety committee side project

FIELD QUESTION

Where does this come from?

This sheet distills the full Healthcare Facility Hub article linked below, which carries the complete text, references, and sourcing.

From Healthcare Facility Hub - free, like everything on the site. The full article is at the link below.

Caution: codes, editions, and targets vary by facility and authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Figures marked as common practice are facility targets, not code requirements. Confirm against your AHJ and the current code text before acting.