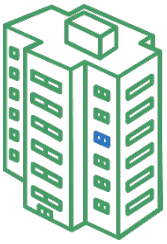


FACT Sheet for Public Housing Authority:

Managing Occupancy and Continued Maintenance Delivery (Routine Maintenance) During an Emergency

This fact sheet presents considerations and tools to manage occupancy during an emergency, and it discusses the challenges to providing routine maintenance during an emergency with tips for preparing for such events.

We learned during the COVID-19 health crisis that staying connected to our tenants can be a challenge in meeting their need for safe and decent housing. Routine inspections performed by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were suspended, and Public Housing Authority (PHAs) were on an altered process and dealt only with emergency work orders. Let us examine the tools available to prepare PHAs for managing occupancy and continued routine maintenance during an emergency.



1. Managing Continued Occupancy

When an emergency arises (local or statewide) due to disaster, the PHA will have to conduct an assessment to identify which families have been displaced and need immediate shelter. Several tools are available to us:

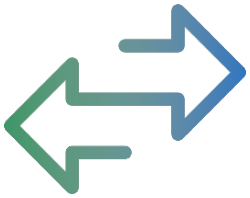


Tenant Protection Voucher

- HUD can issue emergency Tenant Protection Vouchers for public housing units that can no longer be occupied because of damage from a disaster. This allows impacted families to immediately seek housing locally or out of state. The PHA seeks HUD approval and places units impacted by natural disasters in the Information Management System/Public and Indian Housing Information Center (IMS/PIC) system. This ensures that the PHA is not penalized for not meeting occupancy requirements because those vacancies are beyond their control. Refer to Public and Indian Housing (PIH) notice PIH2021-35, Table 1.0.

Portability

- A major disaster can drastically disrupt the supply of, and demand for, a community's housing stock. As a result, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants may find it extremely difficult to locate a unit in their jurisdiction where they can use a voucher. An HCV household may find it advantageous to use portability to transfer its voucher to another PHA with a larger housing supply, so they can secure housing until the local housing stock is restored. Proper communication between the family, initial PHA, and receiving PHA is key to expediting the portability process.



- It is imperative that a standard operating procedure is formulated and disaster preferences are established and periodically reviewed with staff and administrators to maximize support for the vulnerable population. Internal processes for the “what if’s” can be drawn from past experiences, including the COVID-19 pandemic. However, most importantly, evaluate how vulnerable your state or community can be, as disaster can strike anytime.
- Hold discussions with the receiving PHA to avoid absorbing the port, so that the PHA can continue counting the occupancy on their HCV Program. This is especially true when the need is temporary. This will help the affected PHA maintain use and have adequate funding in place for the PHA.
- Porting can create a shortfall in funding against the budget authority, especially when the receiving PHA is in a higher rent market. For this reason, the PHA will have to evaluate frequently if a shortfall situation is on the horizon and work with the local HUD office.

Best Practices

- PHAs should anticipate being involved in post-disaster funding discussions with residents and communities.
- PHAs should become familiar with the post-disaster portability process and associated guidelines.
- PHAs should educate and inform tenants of post-disaster processes and expectations with regard to funding and state/federal assistance, as necessary.
- PHAs should become familiar with potential funding sources and any associated restrictions or requirements.
- PHAs should plan for future capacity needs due to changes in the economic status of the community and tenants.

2. Continued Maintenance Delivery During an Emergency



Providing ongoing maintenance support during emergencies can be challenging, as we experienced during the national emergency created by COVID-19. Processes had to be altered and/or revamped to ensure that work orders could be addressed.

Emergencies happen quickly and cause safety or health issues. They also cause major business disruptions that need immediate attention. Regardless of when the disasters happen, the maintenance team must jump into action.

Emergency situations other than disasters include the following:

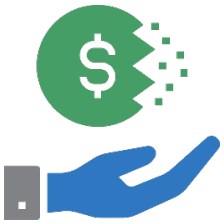
- Fire
- Flooding
- Gas leaks
- Electrical outages
- Boiler breakdown or explosion
- Pipes or tanks breaking or leaking

Below some challenges and helpful tips and strategies for delivering routine maintenance during emergencies are listed.

Administrative Challenges

- Inadequate routine maintenance plan
- Lack of standard operating procedures
- Unreported deficiencies
- Wear and tear going unaddressed
- Tenants not calling in work orders
- Restricted access to units
- Issues with maintenance staff rotation
- Lack of vendors and supplies or restricted access to them
- Not enough qualified staff who understand inspection requirements
- Addressing code enforcement items timely
- Procurement timeline issues
- Coordination among staff for tasks and timelines

Financial Challenges



- Lack of funding
- Insufficient documentation in the annual plan that the action was included in a Capital Fund submission for discussion at the annual public hearing required by 24 CFR 905.300.
- Qualified PHAs not using Capital Funds for modernization must provide documentation that the action is included in an approved five-year PHA Plan. See 24 CFR 903.3(c) for the definition of a Qualified PHA.

Recommendations to Help Overcome the Challenges

- Create alternative work routines and monitor backlog.



  - As needed, create a screening protocol.
  - Hold vendor outreach sessions to help maintain a viable pool of vendors.
  - Create a backup plan for supply chain interruptions.
  - Maintain clear communication with residents and a protocol for access to units.
- Inform tenants in advance of routing inspection activity or routine maintenance.
- Create an NSPIRE assessment tool to help the maintenance team identify areas of need consistent with HUD requirements.
- Review work order reports for repeat issues and target the issues strategically.

- Prioritize past due or most wear items in family units.
- Establish clear parameters with residents before entering the units to avoid issues like unauthorized guests; maintain distance where possible when performing the work.
- Create schedules that blend with annual inspections. This will help identify repairs that lead to future work activity (ripple effect)
- Offer overtime to expedite the reduction of backlog
- Provide incentive pay for meeting benchmarks or key performance indicators.
- Hire vendors to help meet the demand for routine and non-routine work.

How to Prepare for Emergencies

- **Define and identify your emergencies. Start by defining situations that would qualify as emergencies in your property.**
  - Make a clear distinction between true emergencies and other issues that, although urgent, are not emergencies.
- **Define your emergency maintenance workflow.**
  - Manual response to an issue reported to an employee or call center
  - Automated response when a system detects anomalies in high-risk areas that require human intervention.
- **Decide how emergency maintenance situations will be reported, recorded, and processed from start to finish.**
  - Employees should have a general idea of what to do when addressing emergency maintenance requests. Provide training, as needed.
- **Outline emergency maintenance procedures and protocols.**
  - Develop a process to quickly schedule work orders and notify the right members of your maintenance team.
  - Speed up the diagnosing process with instant access to asset maintenance history.
- **Speed up emergency maintenance responses with a mobile system.**
  - Enable real-time communication and coordination across the members of your maintenance team.
  - Speed up the repair process by using maintenance checklists.

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