

Durable Medical Equipment During a Disaster

Overview | Durable medical equipment (DME) is [defined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) as equipment that provides therapeutic benefits to a patient in need because of certain medical conditions and/or illnesses. Patients relying on DME may have access or functional based needs that make them particularly vulnerable during disasters. DME *must be ordered and prescribed* by a doctor and meet these criteria:

- Durable (can withstand repeated use)
- Used for a medical reason
- Used in your home
- Has an expected lifetime of at least 3 years
- Not usually useful to someone who isn't sick or injured

Effect of Disasters | Emergencies can result in disruptions to critical infrastructure systems (electricity, power, water) which adversely impact Community Health Centers (CHCs) and their communities. These impacts can result in life-threatening situations for individuals who rely on electricity or water-dependent DME for daily living and life-support functions.

Emergencies that cause prolonged power outages or that require evacuation, can quickly create life threatening situations for people who depend on DME. Individuals will be looking to CHCs and other healthcare providers for information, guidance, and assistance, making it imperative for CHCs to have plans to meet the needs of electricity and water-dependent DME patients in their communities.

Checklist of Electricity-Dependent DME | Review the following checklist of DME that could be affected during an emergency and find ways to reach out to your critical patients.

Oxygen and Related Respiratory Devices	Infusion/Intravenous and Feeding Equipment	Mobility Assistive Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Ventilators	<input type="checkbox"/> Infusion Pumps	<input type="checkbox"/> Power Wheelchairs
<input type="checkbox"/> C-PAP-Continuous Airway Pressure Device	<input type="checkbox"/> Insulin Pumps	<input type="checkbox"/> Power Scooters
<input type="checkbox"/> BiPAP Bi-Level Positive Airway Pressure Device		<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Electric Wheelchairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Powered Suction Pumps		
<input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen Concentrators		

Priority | If electricity is available, priority should be given to electricity-dependent DME users who use life sustaining (respiratory, cardiac) medical equipment. Those who depend on electricity-powered wheelchairs and scooters for mobility must be able to frequently recharge this equipment to ensure they are able to move about.