



Compliance TODAY

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Thank you
Roy Snell





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by Nancy J. Beckley

FEMA: The must-have emergency app

Nancy J. Beckley (nancy@nancybeckley.com) is President of Nancy Beckley & Associates LLC, a rehab compliance consulting firm in Milwaukee, WI.

[in](#) /in/nancybeckley [t](#) @nancybeckley [g+](#) +NancyBeckley

As the year comes to an end, it is likely that your region of the country, whether it's Hawaii, Maine, Florida, California, or parts in between, experienced some type of disaster or emergency. Whether it was an active erupting



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volcano, a tornado, raging wildfires, mudslides, a hurricane, or an act of violence, it likely impacted your healthcare facility and its services, as well as your community at large. FEMA plays a central role in assisting providers and communities to anticipate and manage disasters. FEMA's mission statement is "Helping people before, during and after disasters." With the rollout of the FEMA app, they promise to deliver real-time alerts from the National Weather service for up to five locations nationwide.

In addition to real-time alerts, important features of the app include emergency safety tips for more than 20 different types of disasters, including earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and more. Once a disaster has struck, or is eminent, the app assists the user in locating open emergency shelters and disaster recovery centers. Users can toggle

between Spanish and English in the app, as well as upload and share disaster photos through the "Disaster Reporter" function.

After writing what seems like dozens of policies and procedures for the CMS Emergency Preparedness Condition of Participation, and referencing all the web-based resources from FEMA, Homeland Security, and Ready.gov, I stumbled upon the FEMA app. The app is a great complement following a hazard vulnerability risk assessment, development of training materials, and participation in facility and community exercises.

I live a mile from Lake Michigan, and directly across the street from the Milwaukee River. I never dreamed of getting a flood alert, when an app flash flood warning indicated a storm dropped a high volume of rain that created a flash flood on an elevated overpass on the interstate. What? During the morning rush hour, people were sitting on top of their cars waiting for rescue. I had the local news to rely on, because the app beeped me an alert. Other notifications that I get include tornado warnings, severe storm warnings, and "beach hazards" (after all, I live a mile from Lake Michigan!).

Head on over to your favorite app store, pick up the FEMA app, and start receiving alerts for your location. I've already plugged in my 2019 vacation location to get alerts. (Hawaii. Thank you for asking.) 📍