



Emergency Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies for Medicare Beneficiaries Impacted by Hurricane Harvey

This guidance is for Medicare beneficiaries and suppliers who need additional information and assistance during Hurricane Harvey. If you live in Texas or Louisiana, the usual rules for your medical care may change for a short time.

Fee-for-Service Medicare Beneficiaries

When durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) are lost, destroyed, irreparably damaged, or otherwise rendered unusable due to circumstances relating to a declared emergency, Medicare will pay for the replacement DMEPOS that a Medicare beneficiary owns or purchased. Examples include home oxygen equipment, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) devices and supplies, hospital beds, diabetes testing supplies, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, artificial limbs, braces, and enteral nutrients and supplies.

Where DMEPOS is lost, destroyed, irreparably damaged, or otherwise rendered unusable, the Secretary has established a blanket waiver under section 1135 of the Social Security Act such that the face-to-face requirement, a new physician's order, and new medical necessity documentation are not required for replacement. Suppliers must still include a narrative description on the claim explaining the reason why the equipment must be replaced and are reminded to maintain documentation indicating that the DMEPOS was lost, destroyed, irreparably damaged or otherwise rendered unusable as a result of the hurricane.

In all cases for which Medicare payment for replacing a DMEPOS item is available, the replacement item must be furnished by a Medicare-enrolled supplier. However, beneficiaries must use a contract supplier if they need a DMEPOS Competitive Bidding item and are in a Competitive Bidding Area impacted by Hurricane Harvey: Houston, Texas (TX); Port Arthur, TX, Beaumont, TX, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (LA); New Orleans, LA. Beneficiaries who are unable to reach or unsure of their supplier, or are unsure of the items subject to the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program, can contact 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for assistance.

Note: DMEPOS Competitive Bidding contract suppliers may subcontract with Medicare-enrolled non-contract suppliers consistent with existing program regulations. For contract suppliers impacted by Hurricane Harvey, under section 1135 waiver authority, CMS is temporarily extending the 10 business day deadline to provide notification of any subcontracting arrangement. Affected contract suppliers now have 30 business days to provide notice of any subcontracting arrangements. CMS will notify contract suppliers directly via listserv when this temporary extension will expire. All other competitive bidding program requirements remain in force.



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DMEPOS Competitive Bidding contract suppliers requiring assistance should call the Competitive Bidding Implementation Contractor (CBIC) customer service center toll-free at 877-577-5331. The CBIC customer service center is available between 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. prevailing Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Additional information about DMEPOS in emergency situations is available in Section I of the two “Medicare FFS – Emergency Q&As” on the CMS’ website:

<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/>

All DME Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) have standard policies in place to process disaster claims according to CMS regulations in the Medicare Claims

Processing Manual: <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/clm104c38.pdf>

All Medicare-enrolled DMEPOS suppliers can contact the DME MAC Jurisdiction C Customer Service Center at 1-866-270-4909 for assistance and guidance.

Medicare Advantage Plan or other Medicare Health Plan Beneficiaries

Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or other Medicare Health Plans should contact their plan directly to find out how it replaces DMEPOS damaged or lost in an emergency or disaster. Beneficiaries who do not have their plan’s contact information can contact 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for assistance.