



World Health
Organization

Safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities

AIDE-MEMOIRE

For enhanced country action towards safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities



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Liste

Safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities (HCFs) are essential for achieving universal health coverage and deliver high-quality care and. They require: (i) safe and reliable supplies of electricity, water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH); (ii) adequate cleaning and waste management services; (iii) sound management of chemicals, plastics and radiation; (iv) climate resilient and low-carbon infrastructures and less toxic supply chains; and (v) trained, supported and protected health workforce.

It is essential that HCFs remain fully functional during emergency situations such as extreme weather events. Climate change causes an increased demand for their services, but the health sector is also responsible for approximately 5% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. HCFs therefore need to be both climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable, capable to respond to climate-related stresses while minimizing negative impacts on the environment.

WHO support to countries

- Provides national estimates and supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring for climate resilience, GHG emissions, WASH, waste, electricity services, and the management of chemicals and radiation in HCFs.
- Provides a compendium and supports implementation of interventions to achieve safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs.
- Provides advice and guidance on strengthening climate resilience and decarbonization of health systems and facilities including the power demands of essential health care services.
- Engages with partners and global and regional political agreements and processes to integrate targets and accountability measures for safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs.
- Provides technical support for solar electrification of HCFs.
- Delivers training and supports vulnerability assessments, WASH FIT (Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool), and climate resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs tool.
- Influences financing banks and global health, climate, energy and WASH funding institutions to support investments in: (i) establishing and revising national standards and road maps; (ii) implementing the Global Framework on Chemicals to minimize harm from chemicals and waste; (iii) assessing vulnerability to climate hazards and GHG emissions from HCFs; (iv) monitoring progress through existing national monitoring systems; (v) establishing or revising a programme for occupational health and safety for health workers in HCFs.

✓ Checklist

Situation assessment

- ☐ Vulnerability of HCFs to climate hazards assessed.
- ☐ GHG emissions of HCFs assessed.
- ☐ WASH, waste and electricity services regularly monitored.
- ☐ Chemical, occupational and infrastructure hazards assessed.

Policies & actions

- ☐ National policies and regulations for safe and sustainable WASH and waste services (including regular budgets and monitoring) in place.
- ☐ HCFs equipped with reliable electricity supply
- ☐ Programme to ensure occupational health and safety of health workers at the national, subnational and facility level in place.
- ☐ Country commitment to climate-resilient and low carbon health systems and joined ATACH Programme in place.
- ☐ Contingency plan for climate change impacts in place.

Awareness raising & capacity building

- ☐ Training programme for health workforce in place.
- ☐ Data on WASH, waste and electricity services in HCFs accessible.

Key elements for country action

Governance

- Engage the health sector to cooperate across sectors to advance towards safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs.
- Ensure that plans and policies for HCFs consider the impacts of climate change and the health and wellbeing of health workers.
- Strengthen core national capacities to enable health systems to develop and implement the health component of national action plans and effectively respond to extreme weather events and emerging infectious diseases.
- Increase awareness about the health impacts and cost of inaction of unsafe HCFs among decision makers and the health workforce.

Climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs

Comprehensively assess, develop and implement safe, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable systems throughout HCFs, including (see below columns for detail):

- Conduct assessments on vulnerability to climate hazards and GHG emissions.
- Develop, implement and monitor improvement plans for climate resilience, GHG emission reductions and environmental sustainability of HCF across WASH, energy, infrastructure, technologies and supply chain, and health workforce.
- Build capacity of the health workforce for climate resilient and environmentally sustainable HCFs.

Safe and sustainable WASH and waste

- Conduct baseline assessment and regularly monitor WASH and waste services through existing national monitoring systems and disseminate data.
- Implement the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse and recycle health products.
- Establish, implement and update standards, taking into consideration the impact of extreme events.
- Develop, resource and implement national road maps to guarantee HCFs with safe and sustainable water supplies, hygiene services and practices, and environmentally friendly waste management to ensure infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.
- Improve and maintain critical infrastructure.
- Train and empower health workforce on using, performing and maintaining safe and sustainable WASH, health care waste management, and proper hand hygiene.

Reliable electricity and efficient technologies, processes and products

- Conduct electricity access assessment in HCFs and monitor electricity status and usage.
- Identify resources and financial support, design and implement plans for electrification of HCFs
- Ensure long term operation and maintenance of the solar energy systems.
- Train and empower health workforce on environmental cleaning and energy services.
- Procure and adopt climate-resilient, energy efficient technologies, sustainable products and infrastructure climate-resilient and with low environmental impact.
- Implement environmentally sustainable, decarbonized supply chains.
- Implement the WHO Chemicals Road Map to address chemical safety in HCFs and endorse radiation safety policies to minimize health risks.

Healthy and safe work environments in HCFs

- Establish a programme for occupational health and safety for health care workers that applies the hierarchy of controls at the facility:
 - develop a policy on safety, health and working conditions;
 - identify a responsible person for occupational health;
 - create a joint labour-management health and safety committee;
 - establish safe procedures and provide ongoing training to prevent exposure on managing chemicals, health care waste and radiation protection;
 - establish procedures for identifying and reporting hazards, accidents and diseases;
 - provide occupational health services and a policy for vaccination;
 - use information systems for data collection, tracking, analysis and reporting;

Additional information:



Main resources: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/electricity-in-health-care-facilities>; [https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health-\(wash\)/health-care-facilities/wash-in-health-care-facilities](https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health-(wash)/health-care-facilities/wash-in-health-care-facilities); <https://www.who.int/activities/protecting-health-and-safety-of-health-workers>

Please note that this aide mémoire provides summary information on health care facilities only. More detail on environment, climate change and health are provided in various other materials and additional aide mémoires on specific topics.