

CMS EPCS Program Declared Disaster Exception Fact Sheet Measurement Year 2025 Declared Disasters

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Electronic Prescribing for Controlled Substances (EPCS) Program gives prescribers who must be compliant with the program automatic exceptions in certain situations when they experience circumstances beyond their control that keep them from being compliant with the program's annual requirement. Automatic exceptions reduce prescriber burden by eliminating their need to submit a waiver application for a measurement year. CMS gives the automatic declared disaster exception to prescribers affected by natural disasters and public health emergencies in the measurement year. This fact sheet addresses the automatic declared disaster exception for measurement year (MY) 2025.

CMS updates this fact sheet when identifying additional events that trigger the declared disaster exception and making changes to already identified events.

Declared Disaster Exception

CMS automatically provides the declared disaster exception for the entire measurement year to prescribers in the geographic area of a disaster or an emergency as determined by CMS. CMS posts a list of the disasters and emergencies that qualify for the automatic exception for each measurement year on the [CMS EPCS Program webpage](#). This may include a [major disaster](#) designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or a [public health emergency](#) identified by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For eligible prescribers, CMS aims to reduce burden by eliminating the need to submit a waiver application and by granting an automatic exception for the entire measurement year.

CMS then identifies which CMS EPCS Program-eligible prescribers in CMS-designated areas were affected by a disaster or emergency, based on the prescriber's practice and mailing addresses in the Medicare Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System (PECOS) and in the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES). Prescribers who are automatically identified will be granted an exception for the entire measurement year.

Note: CMS makes every effort to accurately identify all prescribers who are eligible for this exception. Prescribers should make sure their practice and mailing addresses listed in PECOS and NPPES are up to date to ensure that the declared disaster exception is applied correctly.

At the time of publication, CMS is granting the automatic declared disaster exception to prescribers in the following designated areas:

The designated counties in Texas for severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding. (Counties updated August 19, 2025.)

- [Texas: DR-4879-TX](#)

The designated counties in California for wildfires and straight-line winds. (Counties updated January 15, 2025.)

- [California: DR-4856-CA](#)

FAQ

Q. How do I find out which areas CMS has designated as being affected by a disaster or an emergency?

A. CMS communicates information about disasters and emergencies that trigger the automatic declared disaster exception through the CMS EPCS Program Listserv. You can stay informed by [subscribing to the Listserv](#).

In addition, CMS updates this fact sheet when it identifies additional events that trigger the declared disaster exception or to make changes to already identified events. You can find more information about designated disaster areas in this fact sheet and on [FEMA's disaster declarations webpage](#). [Appendix A](#) lists the counties and parishes in CMS-designated areas that have been affected by a disaster or an emergency in MY 2025.

Q. How can I confirm that I received the declared disaster exception?

A. Starting in mid-September 2026, you can check your MY 2025 compliance status, including any automatic exceptions, on the [CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal](#).

Q. What happens if CMS grants me the declared disaster exception?

A. If CMS grants you the declared disaster exception, you're considered compliant with the CMS EPCS Program requirement for the measurement year, regardless of whether you met the program's compliance threshold.

Q. What should I do if I'm eligible for the declared disaster exception, but CMS didn't automatically grant me the exception?

A. If you believe that you qualify for the automatic declared disaster exception, but the exception isn't reflected in your compliance status on the [CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal](#), CMS recommends that you submit a waiver application on the EPCS Prescriber Portal detailing the circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from e-prescribing controlled substances.

The waiver application submission period is open for 60 days on the EPCS Prescriber Portal. For MY 2025, users may submit a waiver application for a prescriber from mid-September to mid-November 2026. Note that if users can't submit a waiver application online, users may submit over the phone by calling CMS EPCS at 1-866-288-8292 (TRS: 711).

A CMS-approved waiver exception is specific to the Federal e-prescribing for controlled substances program. Check whether your state has additional requirements for e-prescribing controlled substances, including any waiver application requirements.

Q. What should I do if I was impacted by a disaster that CMS didn't identify for its automatic declared disaster exception?

A. If you were unable to meet the CMS EPCS Program's requirement due to a disaster outside of those identified for the program, CMS recommends that you submit a waiver application on the [CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal](#) detailing the circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from e-prescribing controlled substances.

CMS EPCS Program Support

CMS EPCS Program Webpage

The [CMS EPCS Program webpage](#) is the centralized location for program resources and updates.

CMS EPCS Program Listserv

To stay up to date on program information and updates, subscribe to the [CMS EPCS Program Listserv](#).

CCSQ Support Central

If you have any additional questions on the CMS EPCS Program, [email](#) or submit an [online ticket](#) to the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CCSQ) Support Central, and experts will assist you. You may also call CCSQ Support Central at 1-866-288-8292, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET. For those who are hearing impaired and for deaf individuals, call 711 for telecommunications relay services.

Version History Table

Date	Change Description
January 2026	Original posting

Appendix A

The tables in this appendix list the counties and areas located in a CMS-designated region affected by a disaster during MY 2025 for the CMS EPCS Program. This information is current as of the most-recent date in the version history table and might not reflect changes that have already been identified on [FEMA's disaster declarations webpage](#).

Table 1: Texas Severe Storm, Straight-line Winds, and Flooding

<p>Texas Severe Storm, Straight-line Winds, And Flooding – DR-4879-TX The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Texas:</p>
<p>FEMA Category: Public Assistance B (PA Categories A to G)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnet • Coke • Concho • Edwards • Hamilton • Kendall • Kerr • Kimble • Lampasas • Llano Mason • McCulloch • Menard • Real • Reeves • San Saba • Schleicher • Sutton • Tom Green • Travis • Uvalde • Williamson

Table 2: California Wildfires and Straight-line Winds

<p>California Wildfires and Straight-line Winds – DR-4856-CA The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in California:</p>
<p>FEMA Category: Public Assistance A (PA Categories A to G)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Los Angeles