

# Disaster and Emergency Readiness

LEADERS & STAFF



# Disaster and Emergency Readiness

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# Leader's Guide

*How to use "Disaster and Emergency Readiness" by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS*

Welcome to Building Church Leaders: your complete guide to leadership training. You've purchased an innovative resource full of concise and complete documents to help your church better prepare for unexpected disasters and emergencies. We have assembled 13 documents that include congregational policies and procedures that are essential for disaster planning. Emergency procedures can be adapted for your church's use, and a property inventory can provide an excellent tool in the disaster recovery process. You may use these sample forms and checklists as part of your training and mock disaster events, testing various roles and responsibilities should a disaster occur. You also will find materials that your members can use in their own households and families to minimize the risk of loss in an emergency. These documents also help congregations to pray as a community of faith in a disaster, seeking God's help and guidance in the midst of sudden stress and loss.

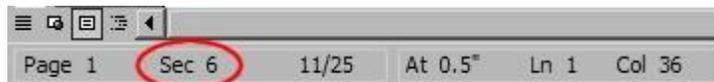
We hope that these forms will assist your church in responding quickly to a community in crisis, and in ultimately pointing the way to the presence of the living Christ that fulfills all human need and comforts all loss.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at [www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com).

To contact the editors:

E-mail [BCL@christianitytoday.com](mailto:BCL@christianitytoday.com)  
Mail BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS, Christianity Today  
465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188

Printing Note: To print out the forms you would like to use, put your cursor on the page to print and notice the section number located on the left side of the status bar at the bottom of the page.



Click "File" + "Print," select "Pages," and type "s" and the section number in the corresponding box. For example, if you would like to print the third form, "Performance Appraisal for Care Ministry Volunteers," type "s6."

Usage Tip: For the purposes of these general forms, we have used "Community Church" wherever you might like to put your church's name. To save yourself some effort in customizing these for your particular congregation, click "Edit" + "Replace," then enter "Community Church" in the "Find what" field and your church's name in the "Replace with" field, then click "Replace all."

\* We've worked hard to make sure this information is accurate and legally sound. However, we remind you that this is not a substitute for legal counsel. If your church has a legal question, be sure to talk with an attorney.

# Disaster and Emergency Readiness in the Local Church

by John R. Throop

Churches may be persuasive in preaching salvation in Christ, but they are often unprepared to save people's lives in an emergency. However, with foresight and planning, churches can meet the challenges that disaster forces upon them, providing emergency services to the community and surviving financially themselves. Church leaders should assess potential risks and outline the necessary policies and procedures for times of crisis, coordinating with other churches and emergency service providers. In this way, churches can be prepared for even the direst of unexpected events.

## Types of Disasters

There are four types of disasters and emergencies that churches ought to be prepared for in order to protect both church members and residents of the community.

**1. Natural disasters.** This category of disaster is the most familiar and dramatic, since people wrestle with the forces of nature wherever they live.

*Hurricanes.* The force of a hurricane measured by the Saffir-Simpson scale is primarily based on wind speed. The National Hurricane Center (<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/index.shtml>) can predict intensity, landfall location, and impact up to 72 hours in advance. A hurricane can produce damage hundreds of miles inland from the point of landfall with high winds and flooding rains.

*Tornadoes.* Tornadoes have occurred in almost every state, but are predominant in the southern Plains and the southeast from February through April, and in the Midwest and Great Lakes region from May through July. Tornadoes are measured on the Fujita scale based on wind strength and size. Other wind damage can be caused by violent thunderstorms and fierce winter gales along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

*Floods.* In addition to flooding rains from hurricanes, other floods can occur along rivers and in low-lying areas from a lengthy period of heavy rain accumulation or from sudden, massive downbursts from thunderstorms dumping many inches of rain in only an hour or two. Even with good drainage in an area, basements and other parts of a building can receive significant water damage.

*Fires.* Massive fires can occur in forested areas and grasslands affected by drought and heat. These fires can rage over thousands of acres, and they are very difficult to control. Localized fires also can be ignited through lightning strikes.

*Earthquakes.* Damaging earthquakes occur in areas where geological fault lines are located. Tectonic shifts in continental "plates" cause the ground to swell, roll, heave, and shake, often with great force as measured by the Richter scale. Earthquakes occur most often on the Pacific coast, but areas of the Midwest also are vulnerable to cataclysmic shifts in the New Madrid fault line.

**2. Biological disaster.** Even with significant scientific and medical advances, humans are subject to biological plagues. Medical professionals and researchers warn that natural infection can have a profound impact on us at any time. Defense experts also warn us that we could be subject to a biological attack by terrorists, with pathogenic bombs planted in urban centers.

**3. Criminal disaster.** Mob action, civil disorder, vandalism, and arson are destructive sides of human nature arising out of irrational anger or thrill-seeking. Churches and other Christian institutions can be ready targets.

**4. Cyber disaster.** Hackers and cyber thieves can invade and take over even a secure computer network to steal personal data, create “zombies” for their networks, or simply disable the function of a computer network. Cyber vandalism can severely disable operations and cause tremendous financial loss.

## **Disaster Recovery**

While no human being can stand up to nor overcome such destructive forces, there are certain preparations that churches and their independent ministries, such as camps and conference centers, can put into place to minimize risks, reduce damage, protect lives, and lower recovery costs. A key goal in disaster and emergency readiness is effective disaster recovery.

**Assess vulnerabilities and weak spots.** Review the condition of the sanctuary, offices, classrooms, kitchens, fellowship areas, and athletic facilities. An annual maintenance and repair assessment helps to anticipate the need for repair, updates, and capital improvement. From the perspective of disaster preparation, special attention should be given to structural soundness of the roofing, glass reinforcement, and ease of utility shut-off. For example, in an earthquake-prone area, the building’s foundation may need reinforcement. In a hurricane area, a Christian education wing may need structural redesign to eliminate a flat roof that high winds can peel away. What is the state of the sprinkler system? A church also needs to examine its environment. To what degree is the church’s location prone to flooding? Are there older trees that can topple onto a church building? How easily can the area be evacuated in an emergency?

**Review and ensure security of facilities and records.** What is the state of computer security and data backup, in the event that computers or network equipment is damaged? What forms of computer network security are in place to prevent cyber attacks? To what extent are hard-copy duplicates provided for essential and/or confidential church records? Is there a lockbox or watertight safe available to store church valuables? What security measures are in place to protect church facilities in the event of a disaster?

**Develop policies and procedures for emergency response.** Churches should develop a chain of command for authorization and decision-making in an emergency, ranked in order of priority. Calling trees should be in place for emergency contact depending on availability of phone communication. It may be a wise idea to provide a two-way paging and communications system to key people in areas prone to more frequent emergencies, so that communication can be maintained when phone lines and cell towers are down. This form of communication is especially important with county emergency services personnel. As noted

below, a church also should determine whether it can function as an emergency services launch site for various authorities and agencies in the area.

**Prepare a short-term contingency plan for operations during and after disaster recovery.** How will the church resume some form of worship life? How soon? Where? In what ways will church leaders attempt to gather information about church members and their needs? How will the church attempt to draw on its members to provide volunteer assistance for disaster relief? Determine who will meet with those doing damage assessment, especially from the insurer. Who in the congregation has professional skills (or access to them) for the repair and rebuilding process?

In every preparedness exercise, churches that are affiliated with a denomination should check with the presbytery, synod, diocese, assembly, or other judicatory to learn about denominational resources, and also to learn some lessons from other churches that have been through a disaster experience.

### **Disaster Relief Station**

Consider whether the church or facility can also be a disaster relief station. This ministry can be essential for a community's well-being and a wonderful opportunity to touch people's lives with the love of Christ. Here are some specific steps a congregation can take to have a disaster relief role.

**Determine whether the church can be prepared as a housing or weather relief center.** Is the kitchen capable of serving large groups and storing food supplies for extended periods of time? Is there sufficient space to set up cots for sleeping? Are the restroom facilities capable of handling large groups, or is there sufficient outdoor space for portable sanitation units? Consider working in tandem with the local emergency services personnel, police, and the American Red Cross chapter or Salvation Army unit.

**Install generator hook-ups to the church's exterior.** The church itself does not need to have an on-site generator, but it can be fitted in advance with hookups for portable generation units provided by emergency services agencies. Then a church without power, but structurally sound, can serve as a shelter.

**Create worship and prayer services to seek God's gracious provision for needs in disasters and emergencies.** A church has a unique and essential role in a community to help people bring their grief, anxiety, and fear before the Lord, seeking his comfort and provision for their needs. Prepare materials for a prayer service, litany, or hymn sing. When life returns to a "new normal," consider also having a service to thank and pray for the emergency service personnel who played such a crucial role in assuring the community's safety, well-being, and recovery.

—John R. Throop

## Community Church

123 Main Street  
Somewhere, State, Zip  
Phone: (123) 456-7890  
www.communitychurch.org

The Rev. John Smith, Pastor  
The Rev. James Jones, Assistant  
Mr. Michael Grant, Music Director  
info@communitychurch.org

## Emergency Procedures

In the event of an unforeseen disaster or other emergency situation, Community Church will observe the following protocols:

### Evacuations

The safety of staff, members, volunteer workers, and other visitors is paramount. All persons are encouraged to exercise their own best judgment in protecting themselves and others around them.

Once an emergency situation develops, the Senior Pastor or his/her designee will issue guidance on the evacuation of buildings or general areas as soon as possible.

In the event of a building evacuation, everyone is to exit using marked fire escape routes and to re-assemble in the following locations:

**Main sanctuary: parking lot**

**Christian education center: rear parking area**

In the event that an entire area is evacuated, the directions of local officials will be followed. Once in a safe location, staff members are to report their whereabouts to their assigned contact person on the phone tree. If necessary, please use the church's emergency contacts: (xxx) xxx-xxxx or office@xxx.org.

When possible without risk to personal safety, personnel in each office will bring vital documents or disks with them upon evacuation of the building.

Depending on the nature of the disaster, persons may be asked to shelter-in-place using the following nationally-accepted guidance:

- Go indoors, close all windows and doors.
- Turn off all sources of outside air such as air conditioners, furnaces, and ventilation fans/ducts.
- Choose a small, interior room with no or few windows, ideally one with a land-line phone.
- Bring the emergency kit into the room.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Stay tuned to the radio for further instructions or updates.
- Remain indoors until notified that it is safe to move outdoors.
- If you are in your car, close windows and turn off vents and air conditioning.
- If unable to come indoors, protect your breathing by covering your mouth and nose with a cloth or handkerchief.

## Fire safety reminders:

- Remain calm and get out.
- If you see smoke under the door, find another way out.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is hot, find another way out.
- Drop to the floor to avoid smoke and fumes. Crawl to safety.
- If your clothes catch on fire, STOP where you are, DROP to the ground, and ROLL over and over to smother the flames.
- Call 9-1-1 from a safe location. Stay on the line until the operator hangs up.
- If you are trapped in a burning building, stay near a window and close to the floor. If possible, signal for help.
- Do not go back inside the building unless instructed that it is safe to do so.

## Communication

Once the staff phone tree has been initiated, this will be the primary method of communication with one another, lay leaders, and church members until the crisis has passed or until phone service is no longer available.

- **Actual phone contact is necessary**; text messages and even voice mail can be highly unreliable in a crisis.

Should cell phones fail, the phone tree will be suspended and staff members are asked to call xxx-xxxx to report their whereabouts and to retrieve important recorded messages.

When possible, important announcements will be posted to the Community Church website, and to staff and member e-mail addresses.

If the e-mail server fails and phone contact is not possible, staff are asked to communicate with the church using the back-up e-mail address: [emergency@xxx.org](mailto:emergency@xxx.org).

## Media

Only the Senior Pastor, the board chair, or other designated person should make statements to the media.

## Emergency Checklist

- Have all emergency agencies been contacted? e.g. police, fire, EMS, utilities, etc.
- Is anyone in shock or injured?
- Are all personnel and members (including volunteers) accounted for?
- Are the building structures intact?
- Are all entrances and exits clear and able to be locked?
- Are the utilities functional?
- Are the computers intact and functional?

- Have the phone tree and call-in systems been activated?
- Have back-up communication systems been activated?
- Has the denominational office been notified?
- Have insurance companies been notified?
- Has the church's attorney or legal representative been notified?
- Have banking arrangements been activated?
- Have food and lodging arrangements been activated?
- Have necessary emergency equipment/computers (and their battery chargers) been set up?

*This form is adapted from the disaster emergency preparedness plan of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana [www.edola.org](http://www.edola.org)).*

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### Congregational Disaster Preparedness Checklist

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Board Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

CDRC phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Preparatory Phase

1. Alert is issued by NOAA, Department of Homeland Security, or state/local Emergency Management Administration.
2. Advise the Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC) to initiate telephone tree for board member notification.
3. Board members notify members of their congregational care groups of the developing situation, status of local shelters, and plans for disaster mitigation.
4. Special attention given to shut-ins and elderly who may need assistance.
5. Board members report completion of their calls to CDRC, noting special needs.
6. Church staff backs up computer files, financial data, rolls, and other vital information, and stores electronic and hard copies in a predetermined secure location, preferably off campus.

CDRC notified Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Board members notified Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Reports received from board member Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Electronics and hard copies of data secured Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Phase

Everyone remains in place, sheltered against the event. Use of NOAA radio encourages people to remain safe until the "all clear" is given.

## Inventory Phase

1. Board members see to the safety of their families and property first.
2. Board members contact those on their congregational care list. If phone service is out, individual visitation should be attempted with respect for public safety and National Guard lines. Information should be given to CDRC.
3. Within 24 hours of the incident, the board holds a called meeting at the church or, if the church is not usable, another location. During this meeting, the following items should be addressed by the CDRC:
  - a. Status of members and their needs to the extent that it can be known.
  - b. Status of church facilities and discussion of possible use for the benefit of the community.
  - c. Status of local shelters, both primary and secondary.
  - d. If the church is a shelter, status of coordination with American Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other relief agencies.
  - e. Schedule a time for congregational gathering and worship.

Called meeting of board scheduled                      Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

CDRC reports shared

Status of members and needs                      Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Status of facilities                      Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion of availability to community

Coordination with relief agencies

American Red Cross

Salvation Army

Local VOAD (Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster)

Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Gathering and Worship of Congregation Scheduled      Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Relief Phase

1. Within 24 hours of the board meeting, the CDRC, Pastor and/or lay leader contact the Regional Coordinator (if any) and give a full report of the impact on the church, its members, and the community.
2. The Regional Coordinator assimilates information from all churches impacted within the same network or denomination and communicates information as to injuries, damages, and needs to the relevant office.
3. CDRC and the Regional Coordinator assist in the formation of a local VOAD, if one is not already formed, and arrange for volunteers, resources, and funding to aid in relief and recovery.
4. During this phase, it is imperative that members with special needs (elderly, shut-ins, chronically ill, families with young children, the poor, the physically and mentally challenged, and others) are closely supported.

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional office notified and report given  | Date and Time _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Status of area churches is received  | Date and Time _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local VOAD formed, if not already in place   | Date and Time _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special-needs members identified and supported.<br>Plans made for ongoing support. | Date and Time _____ |

## Recovery Phase

Each recovery phase is unique to the incident and the community involved. Most often there is not a clear delineation between the Relief and Recovery phases; rather, organizations and events take shape in response to the realities present. As infrastructure is being restored, homes and businesses rebuilt, each congregation can discover its own unique ministry within the community. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- Serve as a childcare center for families affected by the disaster. Have someone familiar with childhood trauma and stress available to consult or assist with care giving.
- Make facilities available for community meetings. Churches often serve as community activity centers. Hospitality has historically been one of the callings of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- Consider offering fellowship halls, education buildings, and even sanctuaries as shelter facilities for volunteers. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other relief agencies have shelter guidelines for victims. Become familiar with these insofar as possible. Volunteers usually need only a place to sleep, eat, and bathe.
- Warehouse space can often be established in church facilities. Have someone with knowledge of materials management available to supervise or consult on the reception, cataloging, and distribution of materials. Establish early on the type of materials which will be accepted. Beware of an influx of unusable items. This is often termed the Second Disaster.

- Serve as a clearinghouse for information about people, needs, and opportunities. This can be as simple as setting up and maintaining a community bulletin board or as complex as working with USPS to establish a temporary mail center.
- In all cases, keep the Regional Coordinator and regional office informed of what the church is doing. As a connectional church, we celebrate and struggle together.

*Used with permission from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Great Rivers Presbytery, Peoria, Illinois.*

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### Church Property Inventory

Date of Inventory: \_\_\_\_\_

The value of the building(s) and/or content items is based on the current estimated cost of replacement. Values for the contents of the parsonage are limited to church-owned contents.

<b>Church Sanctuary</b>				
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
Communion Service	\$	\$	\$	\$
Altar Furnishings	\$	\$	\$	\$
Draperies	\$	\$	\$	\$
Bibles	\$	\$	\$	\$
Hymnals	\$	\$	\$	\$
Choir Robes & Vestments	\$	\$	\$	\$
Choir Music	\$	\$	\$	\$
Musical Instruments and Pianos	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached Seats and Pews	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached Baptismal Fonts	\$	\$	\$	\$
Tables and Chairs	\$	\$	\$	\$
Pictures and Paintings	\$	\$	\$	\$
Statuary	\$	\$	\$	\$
Holiday Decorations	\$	\$	\$	\$
VCRs/Monitors/DVD Players	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached Sound Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
CD Players and CDs	\$	\$	\$	\$
Overhead, Slide, and LCD Projectors	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$

<b>Church Office</b>				
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
Files and Filing Cabinets	\$	\$	\$	\$
Computer Systems	\$	\$	\$	\$
Adding Machines	\$	\$	\$	\$
Copying Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
Telephones	\$	\$	\$	\$
Office Supplies	\$	\$	\$	\$
Books	\$	\$	\$	\$
Typewriters	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other Office Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$

<b>Church School</b>				
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
School Supplies	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached School Desks and Chairs	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached Cupboards	\$	\$	\$	\$
Unattached Blackboards	\$	\$	\$	\$
Bookcases	\$	\$	\$	\$
Maps and Globes	\$	\$	\$	\$
Science Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
Recreational/Sports Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$

<b>Kitchen</b>				
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
Appliances (Stove, Refrigerator, Dishwasher, Washer, Dryer, etc.)	\$	\$	\$	\$
Pots and Pans	\$	\$	\$	\$
Dishes	\$	\$	\$	\$
Silverware	\$	\$	\$	\$
Coffee Maker	\$	\$	\$	\$
Microwave	\$	\$	\$	\$
Warming Oven	\$	\$	\$	\$
Mixer	\$	\$	\$	\$
Toaster				
Carts and Trays	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$

<b>Maintenance</b>				
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
Maintenance Equipment (vacuums, buffers, waxers, etc.)	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other Maintenance Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
Tools	\$	\$	\$	\$
Lawn and Snow Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
Pastor's Business/Personal Property (not otherwise insured)	\$	\$	\$	\$
Property of others (while in care and custody of the church for business purposes)	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$

### High Value Items

<p>Certain building items are high in value and need constant check of current replacement costs to keep your protection adequate. It is recommended that you consult a qualified expert about the cost to replace these items. The person or organization that installed or services these items could be contacted for assistance.</p>		<b>Item</b>		
<p>Pipe organ, including console, pipes, and blowers If value not known:</p>		<p>Number of Stops: _____ Number of Ranks: _____</p>		
Chimes	\$	\$	\$	\$
Carillon	\$	\$	\$	\$
Stained Glass	\$	\$	\$	\$
Security Systems	\$	\$	\$	\$

### Important: For Your Records

For your added protection in case of loss or theft of certain items, it is extremely important to have as much information as possible when filing a claim and making a report to the police.



## Inventory Awareness

**Preparing an inventory of church contents is clearly one of the best ways to obtain better value from your insurance coverage.**

- “Do you remember how many folding tables were stored in the closet next to where we have our church suppers?”
  
- “There were a couple of beautiful oriental rugs in the fellowship parlor. What do you think they were worth?”
  
- “It was a wonderful library. Was there a catalog of books that was not destroyed?”

These questions, as well as perhaps hundreds of others like them, will be raised and somehow answered by some energetic and dedicated member of all congregations that experience serious theft and fire losses—if they had not previously put some of that concern for their church into preparing and maintaining an inventory of church property.

Unfortunately, the most dedicated efforts to reconstruct the numbers, descriptions, and values after the loss occurs will fail to find the truth with the claims adjuster, even when he or she totally trusts the church’s effort. Even though the loss adjustment is regarded as fair and equitable, the lesson from the effort to determine what was lost will never be forgotten by those who had to make it.

*This form is adapted with permission from the SafeChurch web site under Disaster Preparedness/Resources/Protecting Your Church Contents at [www.safechurch.com](http://www.safechurch.com).*

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### Emergency Kit Preparation

#### EMERGENCY KITS

These kits are to be prepared and updated on an annual basis by the Community Church emergency coordinator. Each building is to maintain the following:

- Adequate supply of drinking water (minimum 15 gallons)
- Fire extinguisher(s) in good working condition
- Adequate supply of paper goods including toilet paper, paper towels, and cups
- First-aid book and kit
- At least one cooler

#### And in a plastic bin:

- 2 heavy-duty flashlights, each with 7 sets of extra batteries
- Portable radio (hand-crank or battery-operated with extra batteries as needed)
- Solar cell phone charger
- Water purification kit
- Supply of non-perishable snacks
- Manual can opener
- 2 buckets with tight-fitting lid
- Antibacterial towelettes
- Dust masks
- Mosquito repellent
- Box of plastic garbage bags with twist-ties
- 2 plastic tarps, duct tape, and rope
- Pliers, hammer, nails
- Blanket, towel
- 2 disposable cameras
- Whistle or distress flag(s)
- Laminated map of the area
- Laminated copy of local emergency contact numbers

*This form is adapted from the disaster emergency preparedness plan of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana (www.edola.org).*

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### Annual Disaster Plan: Roles and Responsibilities

Category	Person Responsible	Annually, by June	Hurricane/Storm Evacuations		
			72-Hour Directive	48-Hour Directive	24-Hour Directive
<b>Administration</b>					
<b>Communication &amp; Technology</b>					
<b>Clergy/Staff &amp; Members</b>					
<b>Finance</b>					
<b>Logistics</b>					
<b>Volunteers</b>					
<b>Community Needs</b>					
<b>Response</b>					

1. Disaster Plan enactment will be determined by the Community Church Board of Directors and the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the church staff.
2. All staff members are to report the completion of their assigned tasks, including their own evacuation, using the current Community Church phone tree.
3. In case of hurricanes and other situations with advance warning, staff are encouraged to evacuate prior to the designated times if possible; however, all assigned duties must be completed before departure.
4. The default “remote location” is our regional office at (*Address*). In the event of an evacuation from the area around the regional office, the new remote location will be communicated to staff members using the phone tree and to the general public via the website, selected news media, and the regional office phone message. Staff members evacuating to other locations are asked to keep Community Church informed of their whereabouts.

*This form is adapted from the disaster emergency preparedness plan of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana (www.edofla.org).*

**Sample:**

Category	Person Responsible	Annually, by June	Hurricane/Storm Evacuations		
			72-Hour Directive	48-Hour Directive	24-Hour Directive
Administration	Jane Doe & Anne Smith	Backup data  Laminate safety manual  Update emergency phone tree  Etc.  Etc.	Receive Senior Pastor directive  Initiate emergency phone tree for calls  Distribute blanket e-mails  Etc.  Etc.	Finalize data backup  Check with finance person regarding account status  Etc.  Etc.	Box key documents  Pack laptops  Store fragile items in storage totes  Etc.  Etc.

## Community Church

123 Main Street  
Somewhere, State, Zip  
Phone: (123) 456-7890  
www.communitychurch.org

The Rev. John Smith, Pastor  
The Rev. James Jones, Assistant  
Mr. Michael Grant, Music Director  
info@communitychurch.org

### Disaster Relief Volunteer Agreement and Release

I, the undersigned volunteer of Community Church, will be participating in disaster relief, recovery, and/or rebuilding efforts (hereafter the "relief effort") in <LOCATION> on or about \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that reasonable safety precautions will be taken by the leaders of the relief effort, but that the possibility of an unforeseen hazard does exist. I also acknowledge that there are some known hazards due to contamination following a natural disaster such as this. I hereby assume all risk of injury, harm, damage, or death in connection with my participation in the relief effort.

I understand and agree that neither Community Church, nor its trustees, representatives, employees, or agents may be held liable in any way for an occurrence(s) or incident(s) during the relief effort, which may result in injury, harm, damage, or death. I hereby release Community Church, its trustees, employees, agents, and representatives from any injury, harm, damage, or death that may occur while I am participating in the relief effort. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I agree to save and hold harmless Community Church, its trustees, employees, agents, or representatives from any claim by myself, my estate, heirs, successors, assigns, or other persons arising out of my participation in the relief effort.

I authorize Community Church through its trustees, employees, agents, or representatives to render or obtain such emergency medical care or treatment for me as may be necessary should any injury, harm, or accident occur to me while participating in the relief effort.

I further state that I am authorized to sign this document; that I understand the terms herein are contractual and not mere recitals; and that I have signed this document of my own free act and volition. I further acknowledge that I have fully informed myself concerning this release by reading it before I signed it.

Executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

*This form is adapted with permission from the SafeChurch web site under Disaster Preparedness/Resources/Protecting Your Church Contents at [www.safechurch.com](http://www.safechurch.com).*

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### Disaster Preparedness: Congregational Training Session

#### Why and How to Get Involved

*30 minutes+*

**Explain** that Biblical themes provide the foundation and calling to be the “caring arms of God”:

- Jesus as the compassionate servant and comforter
- God’s compassion for the dispossessed

**Say** that the deep human needs and psychological scars left after a disaster require care beyond the restoration of physical needs.

- Food, clothing, medical assistance, and shelter will protect and restore the body, aiding in healing many of the hurts caused by the crisis.
- Holistic recovery requires emotional/spiritual care, hope, and love.
- People need counseling, understanding, and direction to cope with their anger, grief, loneliness, and turmoil.

**Point out** that the purpose of spiritual care is to devote presence, attention, and respectful assistance to helping people discern:

- What is the meaning in their lives in this new environment
- How they can seek to live out that meaning as the recovery unfolds

**Say** that you will be discussing how to provide spiritual care in the aftermath of a disaster in a later lesson.

**Emphasize** that the faith community has a unique and vital role in disaster preparedness and response, because it:

- Recognizes the sanctity of all human life
- Offers spiritual care along with physical relief to all persons in need, especially those most vulnerable, regardless of economic status and political or religious affiliation
- Advocates for the equitable allocation of material resources according to need following disasters

**Explain** the roles of the faith community in disaster work:

- As an advocate:
  - Stand on the side of the oppressed to work with and for them
  - Assist in long-term recovery of those in need, regardless of the type of disaster or the victim's religious or political affiliation
  
- As a compassionate servant:
  - Focus on relief needs
  - Seek out unmet needs of people who were vulnerable and marginalized before the disaster
  
- As a comforter:
  - Renew people and their communities after a disaster
  - Help survivors to find fellowship and friendship and to share their stories
  - Provide a larger vision of life that includes emotional and spiritual care as well as physical rebuilding
  
- Restore and rebuild community relationships

**Explain** that, by being the tangible presence of God, the faith community:

- Reaffirms values and beliefs
- Offers redemption, renewal, new life, and most importantly, hope.

**Say** that the skills and interests that are most needed by the faith community for disaster preparedness and response programs and activities include the following areas:

- Administration/finance
- Cleanup/repair/rebuilding
- Car/comfort
- Equipment
- Health care

## Personal Assessment

### Instructions:

1. Below is a partial list of the types of skills most needed in disaster preparedness and response programs.
2. Review each area and consider your skills, interests, and talents that you would be willing to use on behalf of your community in preparing for or responding to a disaster.

### Skills of interest to you? Background experience? (If yes, please describe)

#### Administration/Finance

- |                         |                              |                             |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Accounting              | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organizational aptitude | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attention to detail     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Planning                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fundraising             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer skills         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Cleanup/Repair/Rebuilding

- |                              |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| General carpentry and repair | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Maintenance and repair       | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clean-up                     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Repair crews                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rebuilding crews             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Power-tool operation (list)  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Care/Comfort

- |                     |                              |                             |                          |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Casework            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| Pastoral counseling | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| Grief counseling    | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| Sheltering/feeding  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Equipment

Heavy equipment operation      Yes     No

\_\_\_\_\_ Buses

\_\_\_\_\_ Trucks

\_\_\_\_\_ CDL

## Health care

Doctor                                      Yes     No

Nurse                                        Yes     No

Paramedic                                Yes     No

Licensed Practical Nurse              Yes     No

**Other (please list):**

*This form has been adapted and excerpted from Community Arise: A Disaster Ministry Curriculum, Church World Service Emergency Response Program, 2005. The entire document may be found at [http://www.communityarise.com/Documents/Basic Disaster website 8-07/BasicDisasterMinistry\\_InstructorGuideL1-4\\_May2007.pdf](http://www.communityarise.com/Documents/Basic%20Disaster%20website%208-07/BasicDisasterMinistry_InstructorGuideL1-4_May2007.pdf)*

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## The P.A.I.I.R. Method

The following is offered as an easy-to-remember tool in organizing a program of disaster preparation, mitigation, and response.

**P**reparation: Use the time available to organize committees and calling trees, develop current information databases, and evaluate the physical plant of the church for disaster survival. Identify and train CDRCs and other individuals with skills and credentials essential to mitigation for and recovery from disasters.

**A**lert: When news of a possible disaster is received, have the CDRC alert the staff and membership of the church through calling trees or other means. Back up all computer records and store in a safe location. Ideally, e-mail them to a secure location at least 50 miles away (the presbytery office, for example). Secure all storm doors, windows, etc.

**I**nform: Following the event, and when personal and family safety is determined, determine the nature and scope of the disaster. Communicate with church staff and membership to begin assessing needs. Communicate with the other CDRCs for your area.

**I**nstruct: Distribute information as to the location and status of shelters, points of distribution, etc. Inform the congregation as to the status of the church and when a service of worship will be held. Coordinate with Emergency Responders as to areas of danger that should be avoided. Direct people to listen to their radios for official information.

**R**ecover: As Emergency Responders finish their work, help with the formation of a VOAD if there is not one already at work. Pay special attention to special needs individuals and families (e.g. the elderly, poor, chronically ill, those with small children, etc.).

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### Family Disaster Preparedness Checklist

#### WHO WE ARE

**Full Name**

**Address Phone**

**(Home, Work, Cell)**

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#### WHERE WE ARE

Our shelter location in the house will be the \_\_\_\_\_

Our rally point if we must leave the house will be the \_\_\_\_\_

Our closest shelter facility is the \_\_\_\_\_

Our secondary shelter facility is the \_\_\_\_\_

#### WHAT WE HAVE

Non-perishable food for three days

Potable water for three days

First Aid Kit

Sanitation Supplies

Prescription Medications

Flashlight

Battery Operated Radio

Important Papers

All of the above are located in the \_\_\_\_\_

#### WHO TO CALL

**Name**

**Relationship**

**Address**

**Phone**

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## GET A KIT

### PORTABLE KIT



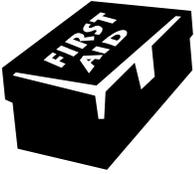
#### Emergency Supplies

**Water, food, and clean air** are the essential items for survival. Each kit should be customized to meet specific needs, such as medications and infant formula, and to include important family documents.

### Recommended Supplies to Include in a Portable Kit:

- **Water**; amounts for portable kits will vary. Individuals should determine what amount they are able to both store comfortable outside the home and be able to transport to other locations.
- **Food**, at least a three-day supply of non-perishables
- **Batter-powered radio** and a **NOAA Weather Radio** with tone alert and **extra batteries** for both
- **Flashlight** and **extra batteries**
- **First Aid Kit**
- **Whistle** to signal for help
- **Dust mask** or cotton t-shirt to help filter the air
- **Moist towelettes** for sanitation
- **Wrench** or **pliers** to turn off utilities
- **Can opener** for food (if kit contains canned food)
- **Plastic sheeting** and **duct tape** to shelter-in-place
- **Unique family needs**, such as daily prescription medications, infant formula and diapers, and important family documents
- **Garbage bags** and **plastic ties** for personal sanitation

## GET A KIT



### FIRST AID KIT

In any emergency you or a family member may be cut, burned, or suffer other injuries. If you have these basic supplies, you are better prepared to help your loved ones when they are hurt. Remember, many injuries are not life threatening and do not require immediate medical attention. Knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency. Consider taking a first aid class, but simply having the following things can help you stop bleeding, prevent infection, and assist in decontamination.

### Things you should have:

- Two pairs of Latex, or other **sterile gloves** (if you are allergic to Latex)
- **Sterile dressings** to stop bleeding
- **Cleansing agent/soap** and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- **Antibiotic ointment** to prevent infection
- **Burn ointment** to prevent infection
- **Adhesive bandages** in a variety of sizes
- **Eye wash solution** to flush the eyes or as a general decontaminant
- **Thermometer** for biological threats
- **Prescription medications** you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- **Prescribed medical supplies** such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies

### Things that may be good to have:

- Cell phone
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

### Non-prescription drugs:

- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Laxative

## GET A KIT



### WATER & FOOD

#### Water

- One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water.
- If you live in a warm climate, more water may be necessary.
- Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.
- Keep *at least* a three-day supply of water per person.



#### Food

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking, and little or no water.
- Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.
- Choose foods your family will eat:
  - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
  - Protein or fruit bars
  - Dry cereal or granola
  - Peanut butter
  - Dried fruit
  - Nuts
  - Crackers
  - Canned juices
  - Non-perishable pasteurized milk
  - High energy foods
  - Vitamins
  - Food for infants
  - Comfort/stress foods

## GET A KIT

### SPECIAL NEEDS ITEMS



Remember the special needs of your family members. **Infants**, the **elderly**, and **persons with disabilities** need the same planning as everyone else, and sometimes a little more, to be prepared.

#### For Baby:

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications
- Moist towelettes
- Diaper rash ointment



#### For Adults:

- Ask your doctor about storing prescription medications such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin, and other prescription drugs.
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

For more information on supplies, see “Your Family Disaster Supply Kit” from American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

#### For Seniors:

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home health care agencies or workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Label equipment like wheelchairs, canes, or walkers.

- Additional supplies for seniors:
  - List of prescription medications including dosage in your supply kits.
  - Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
  - Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment in your supply kit.
  - A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers in your emergency supply kits.
  - Copies of medical insurance and Medicare cards.
  - List of doctors and emergency contacts.

### **For People with Disabilities:**

- Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.
- Additional supplies for People with Disabilities:
  - Prescription medicines, list of medications including dosage, and list of any allergies
  - Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
  - Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen
  - List of the style and serial number of medical devices
  - Medical insurance and Medicare cards
  - List of doctors, relatives, or friends who should be notified if you are hurt

For more information on supplies, see "Your Family Disaster Supply Kit" from American Red Cross and FEMA.

For more information on special needs, see "Disaster Preparedness for People With Disabilities" from FEMA, and "Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors" from the Red Cross.

## GET A KIT

### CLEAN AIR



Many potential disasters could send tiny microscopic “junk” into the air. For example, an explosion may release very fine debris that can cause lung damage. A biological attack may release germs that can make you sick if inhaled or absorbed through open cuts.

Many of these agents can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about **creating a barrier** between yourself and any contamination.

### Nose and Mouth Protection

Be prepared to improvise with what you have on hand to protect your nose, mouth, eyes, and cuts in your skin. Anything that fits snugly over your nose and mouth, including any dense-weave cotton material, can help filter contaminants in an emergency. It is very important that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask or cloth, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children. There are also a variety of face masks readily available in hardware stores that are rated based on how small a particle they can filter in an industrial setting.

Given the different types of attacks that could occur, there is not one solution for masking. For instance, simple cloth face masks can filter some of the airborne “junk” or germs you might breathe into your body, but will probably not protect you from chemical gases. Still, something over your nose and mouth in an emergency is better than nothing. Limiting how much “junk” gets into your body may impact whether or not you get sick or develop disease.

### Other Barriers

- Heavyweight plastic garbage bags or plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Scissors

There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as “**shelter-in-place**”, is a matter of survival. You can use these things to tape up windows, doors and air vents if you need to seal off a room from outside contamination. Consider pre-cutting and labeling these materials. Anything you can do in advance will save time when it counts.

Use available information to **assess the situation**. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you can use these things to tape up windows, doors, and air vents if you need to seal off a room.

### HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) Filter Fans

Once you have sealed a room with plastic sheeting and duct tape, you may have created a better barrier between you and any contaminants that may be outside. However, no seal is perfect and some leakage is likely. In addition to which, you may find yourself in a space that is already contaminated to some degree.

Consider a **portable air purifier**, with a **HEPA filter**, to help remove contaminants from the room where you are sheltering. These highly efficient filters have small sieves that can capture very tiny particles, including some biological agents. Once trapped within a HEPA filter, contaminants cannot get into your body and make you sick. While these filters are excellent at filtering dander, dust, molds, smoke, biological agents, and other contaminants, they will not stop chemical gases.

Some people, particularly those with severe allergies and asthma, use HEPA filters in masks and portable air purifiers as well as in larger homes or industrial models to continuously filter the air.

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### Prayer Service and Litany in Disaster

**Leader:** Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth:

**People:** *Have mercy upon us.*

**Leader:** Holy and Mighty God, redeemer of the world;

**People:** *Have mercy upon us.*

**Leader:** Holy Immortal God, Sanctifier of the faithful:

**People:** *Have mercy upon us.*

**Leader:** Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, One God:

**People:** *Have mercy upon us.*

**Leader:** Remember not, Lord Christ, our offenses, neither reward us according to our sins. Spare us, good Lord, spare your people, whom you have redeemed by your cross and passion, and by your mercy preserve us forever.

**People:** *Spare us, good Lord.*

**Leader:** From all natural disasters, from hurricanes, fires, tornados, earthquakes, blizzards, and floods.

**People:** *Good Lord, deliver us.*

**Leader:** From all disease and sickness, from famine and violence.

**People:** *Good Lord, deliver us.*

**Leader:** In all times of sorrow, in all times of joy; in the hour of death and at the Day of Judgment.

**People:** *Good Lord, deliver us.*

**Leader:** Hear our prayers, O Christ our God.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** For the repose of the souls of those who have died in this disaster that your holy angels may welcome them into Paradise.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Console all who grieve: those whose loved ones have died, whose families are torn; whose homes have been destroyed, whose possessions have been ruined, who are now unemployed.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Heal those who suffer from injury and illness, emotional and spiritual distress. Give them hope and encouragement to meet the days ahead.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Give rest to weary and peace to the restless.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Give strength to the President of the United States, the governors of affected states, and all others in authority and leadership; grant them wisdom and power to act in accordance with your will.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Bless the bishops, clergy, and people in areas of danger and destruction who strive to do your service in the midst of their own grief and pain. Give them fortitude to serve as you would serve.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Grant your people grace to witness to your Word, to open their hearts in love, and to give generously from their abundance, that they may bring forth the fruits of your Spirit.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** Forgive us Lord, for all negligence and hardheartedness, for inequities and injustice that have resulted in bitterness and strife, in injury and death.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** In the midst of incomprehensible loss, grant us eyes that see, ears that hear, and hands that work so that we may discern how you would have us respond.

**People:** *O Christ, hear us.*

**Leader:** We give you thanks, Lord God, for all agencies and individuals who assist in relief efforts. Continue in them the good work you have begun; through them your presence is made known.

**People:** *We thank you O, Lord.*

**Leader:** You are our refuge and strength;

**People:** *Our very present help in trouble.*

**Leader:** In you, Lord, is our Hope;

**People:** *And we shall never hope in vain.*

**Leader:** Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

**People:** *Glory to him from generation to generation in the church and in Christ Jesus for ever.*

## **A Prayer for Hurricane Victims**

Holy God, source of life, lover of souls, out of the depths we call to you; in the face of incomprehensible anguish and sorrow, we lift the cries of our distress and implore you to show mercy upon those who are suffering from the destruction of hurricanes. We pray for those who have died and for their loved ones who grieve, asking you to hold them in the arms of your love; we pray for those who have been injured in body, mind, or spirit and ask you to heal them; we pray for those who are homeless and wandering, for families torn asunder and ask you to shelter them. Strengthen the hands and hearts of those who assist in relief efforts and grant us all firm resolve to stand with our neighbors who are in need, to love them and to offer our generous support of them in this, their time of trouble; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen**

*This prayer service was developed by the Reverend William Stokes of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Delray Beach, Florida, and is posted with permission for use at the Diocese of Southeast Florida web site: [www.diosef.org](http://www.diosef.org)*

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### Tornado Preparedness

Tornadoes are one of the most feared natural disasters and can cause great destruction within a matter of minutes. Most people know where to go in their home and what to do in the event of a tornado. But what if a storm is approaching while people are in the Community Church buildings? What if it happens during worship services or the Christian education or youth group programs?

Since our church is in an area where tornadoes are possible, it is important to be prepared. The key is advanced planning and swift response.

#### Ahead of Time

The following steps are intended to help you prepare and know how to respond to a tornado:

- The **Safety and Security Team** acts as an emergency coordinator for Community Church.
- This team is empowered to develop a response plan for tornadoes and other emergencies.
- Communicate with and train staff members, volunteers, and other key people regarding what to do in emergency situations.
- Have someone available to monitor the radio/television/Internet whenever weather looks threatening in order to be ready to respond to a tornado warning.
- Design a communication method that can reach everyone in the facility quickly.
- Designate with signs the location in your facility that is safest.
- Post instructions and maps throughout the facility with directions.
- Have these critical items on hand in the designated safe place:
  - Blankets
  - Food and water
  - Cell phones
  - Flashlights
  - Weather radios
  - Batteries
  - First-aid kit
  - Emergency contact numbers

*Adapted with permission from the SafeChurch website under Disaster Preparedness/Resources/Protecting Your Church Contents at [www.safechurch.com](http://www.safechurch.com).*

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### Standby Generator and Automatic Transfer Switch Operations

Community Church has installed standby generators and automatic transfer systems in the event of a power outage caused by a weather emergency or other urgent situation. The following descriptions will familiarize the equipment for those who will be supervising its use.

**Standby generators operate automatically as needed.** They do this through the use of an Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS), which can detect when the regular power supplier goes off-line. The ATS automatically transfers the load back to the utility company once steady power has been re-established.

**Automatic Transfer Switches** are an integral part of the power generation process, allowing smooth and immediate transfer of electrical current between multiple sources and the load. When the generator is operating, the transfer switch prevents dangerous feedback of current to the utility's system. Some transfer switches also ensure that different power sources are fully synchronized before their power is combined or loads are transferred, which is imperative for safe operation.

The transfer switch senses when utility power is interrupted, and starts up the generator if the utility power remains absent. In about five to ten seconds, when the generator is producing full power, the transfer switch disconnects the load from the utility and connects it to the generator, restoring electricity to the load. The transfer switch continues to monitor utility power, and when it is restored, switches the load from the generator back to the utility. Once the generator is disconnected, it goes through a cool-down routine and is automatically shut down.

The size of the generator (in kilowatts) is dependent upon the loads the customer wants to have available on standby power. Generators should be properly sized to allow for the customer's load, plus periodic surge from motor loads/start-up. The customer should consult with the generator manufacturer or a local engineering firm for proper size recommendations.

Many facilities test their generators once a month. However, if they simply start the engine, and don't connect the generator, they are only proving that the engine operates. If they simply bypass the transfer switch and manually start the engine and generator, they are only proving that the generator operates. These methods of testing do not test the integrity of the transfer switch. The Hartford Steam Boiler (HSB) recommended practice is to test the generator and the transfer switch, on a monthly basis. Typically this is done by turning off the utility power.

However, facilities should consult the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) guidelines to ensure proper testing and operation of generators and ATS equipment. Testing should only be conducted by qualified personnel familiar with the operation of this equipment.

When a transfer switch is in its normal position of utility company feed, a microprocessor is used to sense the power loss from the utility, start the generator and transfer the load. Because of severe voltage transients frequently encountered with utility distribution systems, the microprocessor is susceptible to this transient voltage from the utility electrical supply.

Thus, some sort of surge protection of this sensitive electronic equipment is imperative. While modern transfer switches may have surge protection, many older transfer switches do not have adequate protection.

Transfer switches should have surge protection that complies with transient suppression standards, such as UL 1449, or the following rigorous IEC standards.

Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) Immunity	EN 61000-4-2:1995
Radiated Electromagnetic Field Immunity	ENV 50140:1993
Electrical Fast Transient (EFT) Immunity	EN 61000-4-4:1995
Surge Transient Immunity	EN 61000-4-5:1995

*This form is adapted with permission from the SafeChurch website under Disaster Preparedness/Resources/Protecting Your Church Contents at [www.safechurch.com](http://www.safechurch.com).*

## **Additional Resources**

*Resources for disaster and emergency preparedness.*

### **Organizations and Electronic Resources**

- Church World Service Emergency Response Program has an excellent instructor and participant manual entitled *Community Arise: A Disaster Ministry Curriculum*. The manual has several lesson plans, excellent direction for the instructor, and PowerPoint slides to assist in the presentation. Go to [www.cwserp.org/login.php?go=/index.php](http://www.cwserp.org/login.php?go=/index.php) for more information, or to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance website listed below.
- The Federal Emergency Management Administration has an excellent free resource for nonprofit agencies and small businesses at its Ready America website ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)). Just click on to “Ready Business” for assessment forms and checklists, as well as sample policies and procedures for disaster preparation and recovery.
- GuideOne Insurance has an excellent array of resources for disaster and emergency readiness for churches at SafeChurch ([www.safechurch.com](http://www.safechurch.com)).
- MyRiskkeeper ([www.myriskkeeper.com](http://www.myriskkeeper.com)) offers a risk awareness and disaster planning tool that is hosted online for easy accessibility.
- The Presbyterian Church USA has an excellent website entitled Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (<http://www.pcusa.org/pda/tools/communityarise.htm>). A variety of congregational resources are provided free of charge, as well as booklets and checklists that may be easily adapted by churches from other denominations.