



# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

PAWIWMA

AND RESPONSE



*PAWI World Missions Agency*

# CHURCH DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANNING

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This is intended to be a tool for the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies International to use on the local level among its churches as a guide when preparing their own disaster plans to guide emergency actions prior to, during and after any emergency.

Preplanning is the key to being ready for any disaster. The steps taken before and immediately after an event will have a positive effect on how the members of your congregation respond in the event of a disaster. Many hazards do not lend themselves to prior notice. Therefore, this plan intends to address both **prior notice events** and **no notice events**.

Realizing that each of our member churches is different, this document provides guidance to help you formalize your congregation's plan. Each congregation's plan should include the major components of this plan while adding any additional procedures that your individual church feels necessary. In addition, use of this plan as a guide will help standardize a PAWI approach to disaster management. Simply stated, this plan defines the roles and procedures that will enable the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies International to:

- 1. Identify existing individual and corporate resources within the congregations that can be applied to disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.**
- 2. Build individual and corporate resources among the District congregations to assist in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.**
- 3. Link individual and corporate resources in the District to meet humanitarian needs of human-caused and natural disasters and reduce vulnerability of people to potential disasters.**

## ▪ SITUATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND TYPES OF HAZARDS

Local church disaster plans need to be "all-hazards" to address a wide range of human-caused and natural disasters – including incidents related to public violence, terrorism, chemical explosions, transportation accidents, hazardous waste spills, fires, coastal storms, floods, earthquakes, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes or hurricanes. Contact with the local emergency management office may assist in identifying the types of disasters the community might experience.

Initially, it may seem that such a wide range of potential disasters makes prior planning an impossible task. However, many disasters have similar preparatory and post hazard responses. Identifying your actions and completing a local plan will considerably increase your congregation's quality of life during and after any disaster.

It will reduce your burden by helping you to identify the necessary actions, and complete the corresponding tasks with a minimum of problems.

Creating this Plan might well be the most important document you will ever work on. Positive preplanning can help save your church assets. However, in the execution of your plan, remember that members of your congregations and the residents of the community are far more important than facilities. Your plan should cover both church assets and the safety of church members.

## ■ UNDERSTANDING DISASTERS - THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

### Phases of Disaster and Response

- Phase 1: Warning/Anticipation
- Phase 2: Impact/Emergency
- Phase 3: Aftermath/Inventory
- Phase 4: Relief/Remedy
- Phase 5: Recovery/Reconstruction

In addition, any planning model must consider two factors. The first is **people**; any plan must prepare one's congregation for a disaster, as well as help them to survive and then recover from it. The second factor is **property**. A disaster plan must help prepare your facilities to meet a disaster, and address how to recover as quickly as possible when the disaster is over. The planning model that follows is based upon the above criteria. The model addresses each of the five stated phases of a disaster. In addition, at each phase, the model helps you to plan to meet the needs of both your congregation and your facility.

## ■ APPLYING THIS PLAN TO YOUR CONGREGATION

The first task as a congregation is to **determine who will develop and then implement your individual plan**. One such approach would be to develop a committee/task force as described in "Section II: Organization". Whatever approach you take, the resultant church task force should review this planning document and then supplement it whenever necessary to meet the needs of your church.

The checklists may be changed or tailored to meet your needs and requirements. The history of recent disasters shows the importance of educating, training and preparing your congregation on how to respond to save their lives. It also points out the importance of having identified those who are in your congregation who will need assistance to escape a disastrous situation.

(NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR CONGREGATION)

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

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## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Our mission is to establish and manage disaster preparedness and response protocols that will effectively mitigate disasters affecting our church's membership, community and our local church facilities.
- B. This plan seeks to:
1. **Equip** our staff and congregation with the necessary information, training and preparation to protect themselves and the local church facilities.
  2. **Identify** means of contact in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and identify the immediate needs of the membership.
  3. **Have available** reasonable protocols for identification and arrangements for appropriate individuals, parties, or agencies to address spiritual, emotional, and physical needs arising out of a disaster.
  4. **Establish** budgets and mitigation efforts to secure the church. Develop alternative communication systems.
  5. **Seek out** human and physical resources, and prepare contingency plans for employment of these resources to assist staff and members in a disaster event.
  6. **Organize**, select and train preparation and response personnel, determine who is in charge. *(Recognize that the Pastor should not be that person and decide who will activate the protocols.)*
  7. **Recognize** that operations do not take place in a vacuum. Learn about and cooperate with other preparation and response agencies. Do not attempt to perform the work of first responders such as police, firefighters, Red Cross, etc. Coordinate with all local organizations that are involved in emergency response.

## II. ORGANIZATION

- A. This section should **define the organization that your church has chosen to manage the Disaster Preparation and Response Plan**. The following are recommendations for consideration in your organization. A fundamental need in time of a disaster is to have in place a trained organization:
1. That will react immediately to the situation.
  2. That is empowered to make critical decisions regarding actions that need to be taken.

B. It is important to establish in advance, **which persons are empowered to activate your plan** and who will be the media spokesperson for your church. It is also recommended that these individuals have a designated back up. During emergencies, you will not have time to call a meeting of a committee to take this action.

The governing body of the local church should empower a Congregation Disaster Coordinator and charge this person with the overall development, operation, and continuing maintenance of your plan. Also, appoint a team that helps develop and maintain a plan for your church. Many churches have individuals who are responsible for the roles and functions in each of the three assignments that follow.

Each local church may determine the titles, roles and functions of those involved, as well as which roles and functions are applicable to the local church:

### **1. Local Church Disaster Coordinator**

- Serves as Chairperson of the overall team
- Schedules and plans meetings
- Schedules and plans training
- Recruits a disaster team
- Ensures team readiness
- Liaisons with community established disaster relief groups

### **2. Disaster Volunteer Coordinator**

- Conducts skills and talent survey
- Develops a database of volunteer skills
- Identifies members needing special assistance and pairs them with members responsible for maintaining contact
- Develops a communications chain and arranges for its activation

### **3. Resources Coordinator**

- Conducts inventory of facilities, supplies and equipment
- Coordinates with the Local Church Disaster Coordinator all information disseminated to the congregation regarding the use of facilities, equipment
- Maintains supplies in good order and replenishes as necessary

## **C. PREPARING FOR DISASTER - A MODEL FOR PLANNING**

### **➤ Phase 1: Warning/Anticipation**

This phase covers the period when a disaster is anticipated until either the danger has passed or the disaster occurred. During this phase, advanced planning and preparedness steps will be put into action.

During advanced planning, you will have formulated concepts, built a database of information, and made decisions on how you will handle each situation. Checklists should be developed to cover all known tasks so your planned decisions can be accomplished with relative ease.

▪ **Preparing your People**

1. Determine and review the needs of each member. The development and completion of a members' survey is a good way to accomplish this task. This survey can be used to determine members' individual needs, talents, and any other special information necessary for complete planning. Secure and use local/county forms to identify members with special needs, as county authorities need to be notified (of members with special needs) so that such members can receive assistance prior to a disaster whenever possible. As soon as possible make this needs assessment an integral part of information completed by each new member as he/she joins the church.
2. Map the location of each member's residence (You can use **google earth** to do this). Use this information to develop small groups based upon residential proximity. Make sure that all members of each small group know its make-up and establish a phone chain within the group. This phone chain and alternate communications should be activated from the top down and the bottom up.
3. Put someone in each small group in charge, and assign that person the task of (a) calling and/or visiting all members of the group after a disaster, and then (b) reporting their findings to a central committee member. (Assign a second person for each group as backup. If possible, have group leaders call their groups prior to the disaster to check on preparations and reassure them that they have not been forgotten.) In addition, members of the group should keep their group leader informed of their situation.
4. From the survey information, Attachment II Survey Form, identify volunteers with special talents and equipment who can be called upon to respond after a disaster. Use this information to develop groups of volunteers ready to assist church members with specific short-term needs (i.e. debris cleanup, temporary repairs, etc.).
5. Promote preparedness of church members. Encourage pre-disaster planning, and distribute locally/nationally prepared materials helpful in preparing each household to meet disaster needs. (Such preparation should include identification of a "safe room" within the home if possible, and a pre-identified meeting place outside the home where family members can gather.) Encourage members with pets to build their pets' needs into their family planning efforts.
6. Encourage local, county agencies to present preparedness workshops, and host these at our local churches as much as possible. These should be geared to the needs to the community and individual church members as well as those serving in any official capacity. A course in basic First Aid should be taught.

7. Provide specialized training as necessary for those who will be in charge of various portions of the plan. (Such training should include periodic drills or other attempts to test the plan as realistically as possible.)
8. Develop a list of members with self-contained travel trailers, motor homes, etc. that could be moved to church grounds after a disaster to provide temporary comfort stations for volunteers.
9. At the time local authorities announce a pending emergency activate the checklist developed during “Phase 1: Preparing Your People.”
10. Communicate with your District Disaster Coordinator about the disaster plan.

#### ▪ **Preparing Families**

Planning now on how you and your family would respond to any emergency, whether at home, school, work or in transit, will help you and your family remain calm, think clearly and react appropriately to any disaster scenario. Go to <http://www.sesamestreet.org/ready> for a good tool for families to plan together.

Your plans should include the following:

- Phone numbers of a pre-designated contact person for family members to call should you become separated.
- Locations of emergency shelters.
- Locations of shelters for pets.
- How to be safe if you remain in your home during a disaster.

Be sure to assemble an emergency preparedness kit and keep it in a convenient, readily-accessible location. You should have one for your home, office and automobile. Self-preparedness not only increases your and your family's ability to survive, but also reduces the workload of first responders, emergency medical services, fire fighters and law enforcement.

#### ▪ **Prepare A Disaster Survival Kit**

The best time to assemble a three to seven-day emergency supply kit is well before you will ever need it. Most people already have these items around the house and it is a matter of assembling them now before an evacuation order is issued.

Start with an easy to carry, water tight container - a large plastic storage container will do, or line a sturdy cardboard box with a couple of trash bags. Stocking up now on emergency supplies can add to your family's safety and comfort during and after a disaster. Store enough supplies for at least three days, preferably seven days, in one place.

Take a look at the Red Cross Emergency Preparedness Kit.

**Essentials:**


- Water - 1 gallon per person per day (a week's supply of water is preferable)
- Water purification kit or bleach
- First aid kit and first aid book
- Pre-cooked, non-perishable foods, such as canned meats, granola bars, instant soup & cereals, etc.
- Baby supplies: formula, bottle, pacifier, soap, baby powder, clothing, blankets, baby wipes, disposable diapers, canned food and juices
- Non-electric can opener
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes or gel
- Blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Portable radio or portable TV and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Essential medications
- Extra pair of eyeglasses
- Extra house and car keys
- Fire extinguisher - ABC-type
- Food, water, leash and carrier for pets
- Cash and change
- Seasonal change of clothing, including sturdy shoes

**Sanitation supplies:**

- Large plastic trash bags for waste, tarps and rain ponchos
- Large trash cans
- Bar soap and liquid detergent
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Toilet paper
- Household bleach
- Rubber gloves

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - Copies of Important Documents:**

- Mortgage Insurance
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Wills
- Tax Information
- Bank Information
- List of family physicians
- List of important family information, such as style and serial number of medical devices like pacemakers
- Video or picture inventory of household items

**Cash / Checkbook** – ATM's and credit cards machines are not usually available following a disaster. 

**Clothing and Bedding**

- At least one complete change of clothing and sturdy shoes per person
- Blanket or sleeping bag per person





**Water**

- 1 gallon/ day/ person (Keep at least a 3-day supply in your house.)
- Water purification kit or bleach

**Food**

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables; canned juices; soup, etc.
- Food for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Non-electric can opener or utility knife

**Supplies and Special Items**

- Extra pair of eyeglasses or contacts
- Extra house and car keys
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes or gel
- Personal hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc.
- Toilet paper, towelettes

**Pets**

- Pet food, water and feeding bowls
- Carrier, leash, bedding
- Vaccination records

**DO I GO OR DO I STAY?**

In an emergency, your local government officials may order residents to evacuate from dangerous areas. When possible, evacuating within your county reduces the chance of being stranded in traffic and shortens your time to return home. In an extraordinary event, you may be told to go to another county to be safe. In any case, follow the instructions issued by your local emergency management officials. If a mandatory evacuation order is issued or if you are ordered to leave the area, it is to your advantage to evacuate.

**SHELTER IN PLACE**

If you are caught unexpectedly by a disaster or if you decide to ride out a storm in your home, or if local officials recommend sheltering-in-place for other emergencies, be sure to have enough supplies on hand and do the following:

- Review your family disaster plan, and your pet plan.
- Have a disaster supply kit handy.
- Have enough food and water for at least three days, preferably seven, for each person in your household. (Stored water should be changed every six months).
- Stock extra supplies such as batteries for flashlights and radios.
- Listen to local radio and television for instructions.
- Stay alert to weather advisories, and know the difference between weather watch and weather warning.
- If a hurricane is approaching, board up windows and secure lawn furniture, mowers, hanging plants, trash cans and other loose items in the yard.
- Check on your neighbors, particularly the elderly or disabled.
- If a storm hits, gather your family in a safe room. (An interior room with no windows).
- After a storm, watch out for downed power lines.
- If the power is out, do not use candles or open flames as a light source.
- Only use the telephone for important calls so lines will be available for emergency calls.
- Following any disaster, listen to local officials for the all clear.

### ▪ **Preparing your Property**

1. Develop a complete inventory of church property. Be sure to include all equipment, furnishings, etc. Make several hard copies and store off site. NOTE: Make sure that your insurance company has a copy on file. A DVD or camcorder tape that accompanies the inventory is a good way to do it. Review and revise the inventory annually.
2. Review insurance coverage annually, and adjust as necessary.
3. Protect church property. Develop a series of checklists that identify what needs to be done and who is responsible for each task. (Remember to keep the tasks manageable, as those completing these tasks will also be preparing their own homes as well.)
4. Protect church records. Make sure that all records, computer files, etc. are backed up frequently. Arrange for multiple copies, and store such copies at an off-site location. If church volunteers maintain certain additional records, make sure that these are also backed up periodically. Appoint individuals that are directly responsible to do this.
5. Review facility communications systems. Supply back-up and/or alternative means of communication should electricity and/or phones be compromised.
6. Determine personnel plans/responsibilities for all church employees, remembering that they will have personal as well as professional needs.
7. Determine if your facility can serve as a pre-disaster shelter, post-disaster shelter or distribution facility. This should be done with the coordination of your local Disaster Coordinator. A checklist is not provided for this item since the community emergency coordinator will want to organize your shelter to best assist the community needs. They will help you determine what supplies would be necessary in either case, and then arrange for the purchase and storage of the supplies. Make sure that items with limited shelf life are rotated periodically. (Determine if your facility could be used to house volunteers after a disaster, and what prior preparation, stocking of essential items, etc. would be necessary. We cannot overstate the importance that you need to develop this item with the other agencies in your area so they will include your shelter plans in their overall plan.)
8. Develop a building evacuation plan should this be necessary at any time. (Remember that an unanticipated disaster might well force an evacuation when: (a) only a few employees are present, or (b) a major church function is taking place. Such planning should include identification of a "safe room" within the church, as well as a pre-identified meeting place outside the church where church employees/parishioners can gather after exiting the building.)
9. Develop checklists of steps to be taken following an unanticipated disaster. Items here would be completed as necessary and/or given the nature of the disaster, would include calling appropriate authorities, shutting off power, water, gas, etc. Church employees need to be familiar with these checklists and trained in their implementation.

10. All church employees need to be trained in both first aid, CPR, and the use of the defibrillators in case an unanticipated disaster strikes the church facility during working hours.
11. Create a committee to inspect church facilities immediately following any disaster that results in physical damage. Committee members need to have the ability to identify damage as well as implement emergency repairs to prevent further damage.
12. Develop a phone list of disaster committee members, church employees and/or anyone else of immediate importance, following a disaster. Include cell phone numbers as well as land lines. Develop an alternative method of notification should phone service be interrupted.
13. Identify an alternative church office site that can serve as a temporary back up should the church facilities be too damaged to use immediately.
14. Develop off-site capabilities to keep the church web site operational in case church computer systems are damaged or destroyed. This might prove the only way for some members to keep in communication.
15. Identify possible off site locations for church activities in case the church facilities are temporarily or permanently unusable.
16. Identify operational community disaster planning groups and affiliates to share preparation, training, and operational activities both before and during any local disaster.
17. Develop a master list of important emergency phone numbers (i.e. fire, police, gas and electric, telephone) and post prominently next to all phones with outside lines.
18. Determine personnel responsibilities in advance.
19. At the time local authorities announce a pending emergency activate the checklist developed during Phase 1- Preparing Your Property.

▪ **Prepare Your Business People**

Plan to stay in business, talk to your employees, and protect your investment.

- Carefully assess **how your company functions**, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating.
- Identify **operations critical to survival** and recovery.
- Plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not accessible.
  - Consider if you can run the business from a different location or from your home.
  - Develop relationships with other companies to use their facilities in case a disaster makes your location unusable.

## ➤ Phase 2: Impact/Emergency

This phase begins when the disaster actually strikes. In some cases, it follows a varying length of preparation and anticipation (i.e. hurricane), while at other times it can come with little or without any warning (i.e. tornadoes). In the first case, Phase 1 has already been in effect; in the latter case, plan implementation needs to begin directly with Phase 2. Develop a Checklist and include as a minimum those items that are included below. See Attachment I Disaster Checklists Master List and Responsibility.

### ▪ **Preparing your People**

1. When a disaster strikes and you did not have adequate warning to prepare you will need to accomplish those items identified in Phase 1. Complete as much as the checklists as possible but do not take any risks that might put your volunteers in harm's way. Complete as much of the Master checklist for Phase 1 and Phase 2 as possible.
2. If necessary and/or feasible, parishioners need to be able to assist in immediate rescue/first aid activities for those injured as the disaster is happening. Otherwise, this becomes one of the first actions under Phase 3.
3. If necessary and/or feasible, assist the authorities as directed. Otherwise, this becomes one of the first actions under Phase 3.

### ▪ **Preparing your Property**

1. If the building is unoccupied, do nothing until the actual event is over. (Remember property can be replaced; people cannot.)
2. If the building is occupied, call appropriate authorities, (i.e. police, fire, etc.) as soon as possible. (See Phase 1: Preparing Your Property Item 17.)
3. If the building is occupied, implement the evacuation plan if necessary, or shelter in place. (Phase 1: Preparing your Property Item 8.)
4. If possible, take such emergency action as is immediately warranted (i.e. shut off power, gas, water, etc.) to minimize further damage. (Phase 1: Preparing your property Item 9).
5. If necessary and/or feasible, church employees need to assist in immediate rescue/first aid activities for those injured as the disaster is happening. This includes both first aid and use of the defibrillator. Otherwise, this may become one of the first actions to be taken under Phase 3.

## ➤ Phase 3: Aftermath/Inventory

This phase begins as soon as the actual disaster has ended, (i.e. hurricane, tornado, fire, etc.)

People come out, look around, and realize that they are not alone. Initial rescues are completed, the first, often unsolicited volunteers, arrive, and initial damage assessments are completed.

Primary communications are restored if possible. Use the Checklists developed in Phase I above to ensure that all items are covered. The items covered below in Preparing your People and Preparing your Property should be used to develop that checklist.

### ▪ Preparing your People

1. If necessary, call appropriate authorities, (i.e. police, fire, etc.).
2. If necessary and/or feasible, members need to be able to assist in immediate rescue/first aid activities for those injured nearby. Otherwise, follow instructions of the authorities.
3. Implement the phone/visitation chain ASAP to determine immediate, post disaster health/needs of congregation. (See Phase 1 Preparing your People Item 3) Report results to the appropriate disaster committee member.
4. Based upon needs determined in Item 3, begin to help each other as needed. Be especially careful to identify and assist those (a) with special needs, or (b) having difficulty dealing with the immediate stress of events.
5. Assign volunteer groups as needed to assist members. (See Phase 1 Item 4 above) This activity might well extend into Phase 4, depending on the extent of the damage and the needs of your people.
6. Make sure that the pastor or other approved contact person contacts the Disaster Coordinator ASAP to provide an initial assessment of local conditions.

### ▪ Preparing your Property

1. If not already done, take any emergency action necessary to prevent additional damage. (i.e. shut off power, gas, water, etc.)
2. Survey property to complete an initial assessment of damage. (See Phase 1 Preparing your Property Item 11)
3. Contact church insurance carrier ASAP. Committee members identified in Phase 1 Item 11 above should accompany the insurance adjustor during his/her initial tour of the facility. (Contact the District Disaster Coordinator to inform of action.)

4. Complete immediate emergency repairs necessary to prevent further damage. If necessary, such repairs should be initiated even before the insurance carrier is reached. (See Phase 1: Preparing Your Property Item 11)
5. If church facility is usable and previously designated, work with local authorities to open the facility as a shelter, emergency supplies distribution center, etc.

## ➤ Phase 4: Relief/Remedy

Here the community tends to medical and survival needs. Temporary housing issues arise, while temporary repairs are made to homes, businesses. Public works crews swing into action; electricity and telephone service is restored. More volunteers begin to arrive, along with various local, state and national agencies (i.e. Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Emergency Agency). This phase can last up to ten times the length of Phase 3.

### ▪ Preparing your People

1. Assign volunteer groups as needed to assist members. This activity may begin during Phase 3 but will occur primarily during Phase 4, depending on the wider extent of the damage and the needs of your people. Someone needs to take charge of this activity so that it can be carefully organized and monitored. Pay special attention to the elderly and special needs groups who may need help but be reluctant to ask for it.
2. If not needed to assist the immediate church family, determine how local volunteer groups can be of service to other members of the community or beyond. Pre-disaster planning contacts with local/county agencies will be helpful in creating volunteer networks that can be put into use here. The Conference office may also be helpful in coordinating such efforts.
3. Assist members of your congregation as they interact with various relief agencies, (i.e. the Red Cross, National Emergency Agency) and other outside agencies. If possible, have the church facility be used as a registration site so that volunteers can provide congregation members with transportation, assists with completion of forms, etc. If members must travel to other sites, have church volunteers ready to offer rides, assistance etc. as needed.
4. Utilize members identified in initial survey that could assist members in need.
5. Have a person or committee identified in advance to oversee all donations that might come from the congregation, both to assure that they are appropriate, and that they are distributed in timely fashion. Utilize your current church committee structure as much as possible.

### ▪ **Preparing your Property**

1. If not already completed, committee members identified in Phase 1 Item 11 above need to accompany the insurance adjustor during his/her initial tour of the facility. Members also need to be present during any/all subsequent adjustor visits necessary to identify and/or inspect further damage discovered over time or during repairs.
2. Identify a general contractor who will oversee all repairs/reconstruction and serve as direct link between church and insurance adjustor.
3. Let contracts for needed repairs and begin the repairs.
4. If necessary, implement plans to move the church office and/or church activities to off site location(s). (See Phase 1 Prepare Your Property Items 13 and 15)
5. Contact outside agencies for recovery assistance if necessary (i.e. PAWI World Missions Agency).
6. If church facilities are intact and the need is present, offer the use of your facilities to other groups, relief agencies, etc. The facility might be used as a temporary shelter, distribution center, community meeting place, or focal point for outside relief agencies. Use of members' trailers, motor homes, parked on site, can offer self-contained facilities and AC if building is otherwise intact but lacking power.

## ➤ **Phase 5: Recovery/Reconstruction**

This is the long-term rebuilding phase. As it continues, local agencies begin to take over, along with continued help from agencies such as National Emergency Agency. The community begins to look ahead and plan carefully for reconstruction and rebirth. This phase can often take from several months to several years, depending upon the scope of the disaster. Since it is impossible to plan for all types of situations faced after a disaster, your team will need to make an assessment to determine what needs to be done.

### ▪ **Preparing your People**

1. Small group leaders need to maintain ongoing communication with their disaster group in order to spot problems and offer assistance as needed. Often, problems do not arise immediately but appear or build during the recovery phase.
2. Make sure that group leaders are ready and able to pass problems identified in Item 1 above to the appropriate parties. They are not trained, nor should they attempt, to solve all problems themselves.
3. If possible, use qualified members to serve as advocates to assist other members with problems that may arise with insurance companies, contractors, etc.

4. Work in conjunction with other outside groups (i.e. community, faith-based, etc.) to coordinate recovery efforts.
  5. As soon as possible within Phase 5, review the entire disaster plan as it affected the congregation. Determine what worked, what did not, etc. and revise the plan to be better prepared for the next time.
- **Preparing your Property**
1. Committee members identified in Phase 1 Preparing Your Property Item 11 need to accompany the insurance adjustor during any/all subsequent adjustor visits necessary to identify or inspect further damage discovered over time or during initial repairs.
  2. As soon as possible within Phase 5, review the entire disaster plan as it affected the facility. Determine what worked, what did not, etc. and revise the plan to be better prepared for the next time.
  3. Review property damage to identify areas where modifications/improvements can be made to mitigate damage from future storms. These can be built into repairs or completed separately.



# CHURCH DISASTER ACTION PLAN

## A GUIDE TO HELP CONGREGATIONS PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

NAME OF CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING:***

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE (Home/Office): \_\_\_\_\_

### ***ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:***

NAME 1: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (S): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME 2: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (S): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME 3: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (S): \_\_\_\_\_

## I. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT DISASTERS

1. Utility services may be unavailable for extended periods (i.e., electricity, water, and gas).
2. Telephone service may be interrupted.
3. Police, fire, paramedics and 911 responses will be overrun the first 3 to 5 days after a major disaster. Do not expect their help, initially.
4. There will be serious problems with transportation. Road closures will occur.
5. People will largely be "on their own" in the initial days following a major disaster.
6. Your congregation may be limited to working only with the resources within your immediate neighborhood.

## II. DESIGNATE AN EMERGENCY COORDINATOR & TEAM

The Emergency Services Coordinator may put together a planning team or disaster preparedness committee. The following are areas of possible responsibility for the planning team.

1. Prepare the facility to survive a disaster.
2. Ensure the continuity of pastoral services or care.
3. Assist congregation members in their preparation for and recovery from disasters.
4. Decide what roles congregation leadership will play in response to disasters.
5. Consider how the congregation might help meet needs in the community after a disaster.

## III. DEFINE THE CONGREGATION'S DISASTER MISSION

*Examples include:*

1. To ensure the continuation or quick resumption of worship services.
2. To provide pastoral care and support to disaster victims (from congregants to community members).
3. To provide services/resources to help in the community's recovery from disaster (consider what services/resources you plan to provide).

Write a short a statement below that summarizes the disaster mission.

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## IV. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Provide some basic building data (information that may be helpful to emergency services personnel).

1. Occupancy type (i.e., Office Building, School, Church, Temple, etc.):
2. Total square footage of your facility:

3. Year building was built: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of most recent renovation: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of stories: \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a basement? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Type of construction (i.e., wood frame, metal, concrete, masonry, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe any unique features about the building or surrounding grounds that may be pertinent to emergency service personnel:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Attach a floor plan(s) of the facility to the appendix of the Disaster Plan.

## V. FACILITY SAFETY MEASURES & EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

### A. Basic Safety Mitigation:

- |   | DATE DONE |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Do a hazard hunt and mitigate any obvious problems (e.g., move heavy items from top to lower shelves and secure items that might topple.)                        | _____     |
| 2. Check cabinet doors to ensure secure closure.  | _____     |
| 3. Properly store chemical and flammable materials.   | _____     |
| 4. Trim any large overhanging trees that could fall and damage property.  | _____     |
| 5. Clearly mark gas and water shut-off valves with instructions for shut off.<br>(Turn off utilities only if there is a leak or if you suspect damage to the lines) | _____     |
| 6. Ensure working status of fire extinguisher(s) and smoke detectors.   | _____     |
| 7. Take photographs documenting the interior and exterior of your facility to help later in recovering costs due to facility damage or equipment loss.              | _____     |
| 8. Post facility evacuation plan (with exit and assembly information).  | _____     |

### ***(Plan to account for staff and onsite participants in evacuation, and conduct evacuation drills)***

#### B. The following emergency supplies and equipment are located as follows:

1. Portable radio(s) and extra batteries: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Emergency first aid supplies: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Flashlights and extra batteries: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(In case of no electricity, consider also a supply of light sticks that light for up to 12 hours)*
4. Fire extinguisher(s): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Stored drinking water (more is better): \_\_\_\_\_  
*(In addition, use water purification tablets to treat water from other facility sources, such as the water heater)*

6. Emergency (3-day) food supply: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Emergency food and water is necessary for unexpected confines)*

7. Basic tool kit: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Fire Alarm System (include the following):

- Location of fire alarm (and fire panel or fire control & command room if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_

- Sound of the fire alarm (i.e., loud bell, whooping horn, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

- If the system is monitored by an outside agency, identify name and contact info:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Indicate the location of smoke detectors: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Indicate the location of fire alarm pull stations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- If a sprinkler system is installed, indicate the location of sprinkler water flow valves & standpipes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Indicate also the location of tamper alarms for standpipes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Exits (include the following):

- Provide information on fire escapes (i.e., type & location): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Provide information on fire doors and fire door hardware, if applicable (i.e., type & location): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. The following utility shut-offs & tools are located as follows (if applicable for your building):

1. Main gas valve: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Only shut-off the gas if you smell gas or hear a hissing sound; then open exterior doors & windows)*

2. Crescent wrench or gas shut-off tools: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Main water valve: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Electrical fuse box / circuit breaker: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Shut off electricity if electrical wires are shorting or sparking)*

5. Emergency or portable generator (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Take an inventory of neighborhood resources that can assist with your emergency response: (Identify where to go for emergency help, especially if telephone service is unavailable immediately after a disaster)
1. Where can you rent or borrow a generator if necessary? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Where is the nearest medical treatment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Where is the nearest fire station? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. Where is the nearest police station? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. Where can you go for additional water? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  6. Where can you go for additional food supplies? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  7. Where can you get additional medical supplies, medicines and special equipment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## VI. EVACUATION PLANNING

Some Evacuation Planning Tips:

1. Designate where people should go or stand, once they are outside the facility: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Post clear directions on how to evacuate the facility (post in central facility locations).
3. If it is possible and safe to do so upon exiting, staff should shutoff any electrical equipment that may be running in their area and close all doors behind them.
4. After evacuating, take a head count to ensure all staff and clients have exited.
5. Consider people with disabilities (cognitive, hearing, visual, or mobility) who may need assistance.
6. Ensure that ushers are trained in the evacuation plan.
7. Practice evacuation/fire drills (use Appendix 1 to indicate most recent drill dates).

## VII. COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

It is suggested that the congregation have a post-disaster plan for disseminating information to staff, lay leadership, constituents, affiliates, members, and parents.

- |  | DATE DONE |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Develop a list of emergency contact numbers (See Appendix 2 - Phone List).  | _____     |
| 2. Setup a telephone tree for notifying staff and leadership (especially if the disaster happens after hours).   | _____     |
| 3. Setup a telephone tree or system to check on the condition/needs of congregation members when disaster strikes (especially older or disabled members).          | _____     |
| 4. Designate one remote phone number where an emergency message can be recorded and be sure that all congregation members know that number and understand its use. | _____     |
| 5. Identify the names of persons who shall be notified in an emergency in order of priority.   | _____     |
| 6. Plan for connecting with key denomination or community leadership to report status information and for emergency response coordination/assistance.              | _____     |
| 7. Plan for interacting with the media during and after a disaster (identify media contact information and develop scripts for possible scenarios).                | _____     |
| 8. Develop a plan for alternate communications (see tips below).   |           |

### **Given a disruption to telephone service following a major disaster, consider these tips:**

- a. Have access to a standard telephone, as cordless telephones do not operate without power.
- b. Use cell phones from different communication providers or in different area codes.
- c. Use walkie-talkies (or Nextel system) for communications within facility grounds.
- d. Know the location of the nearest pay phones. (A pay phone may operate sooner than a normal business phone; hence keep a roll of quarters with your emergency supplies).
- e. Identify local amateur radio operators; each fire station will have ham radio capacity.
- f. Prepare to use runners (messengers on foot or bicycle).

## VIII. ENCOURAGE PERSONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

- |   | DATE DONE |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Encourage staff and congregants to develop family/home emergency plans.  | _____     |
| At a minimum, individual/family preparedness requires the following:  |           |
| a. Enough emergency supplies to last 3-days (need to be prepared to function without the normal utility, supply and transportation infrastructure). |           |

## b. Identification of an Out-of-Area Contact Person.

Note: A response following any emergency is concern for the welfare of family and home.

Staff persons who are worried about their families will not be effective until they have reassurance. Therefore, staff emergency plans should include the identification of an out of state telephone contact (relative) for family check-in. Connecting out-of-area calls is quicker as local circuits are initially overwhelmed after disaster.

## c. An Evacuation Plan (i.e., identify a reunification spot and determine what you will need to take if evacuating your home; include a plan for pets).

2. Review your disaster plan with all staff. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Train staff in how & when to shut off utilities (if applicable to your facility) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Train staff in how to use fire extinguishers (call Fire Extinguisher Company) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Pre-assign immediate response tasks (see Appendix 3 - Immediate Response) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Train staff about their emergency responsibilities to congregants/community \_\_\_\_\_
7. Make a realistic plan for staff coverage in emergencies. \_\_\_\_\_

## IX. RECOVERY & SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING

It is suggested that the congregation have a plan to ensure it can continue providing services after a disaster.

1. List the supplies/resources needed to keep your congregation operating (then think about alternative vendors or sources for obtaining those items).

Supply or Resource Need

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Alternative Source for Obtaining Resource

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2. Identify the congregation's plan of succession (i.e., the list - by position name or title - that determines which staff or lay person is next in line to assume overall authority).
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
3. List of signatories on bank accounts (in the event that the primary signatory is unavailable).
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Identify how you might backup key staff positions (assume some key staff will be unavailable).

Staff Position

\_\_\_\_\_

Possible Backup Source

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Identify an offsite location for the backup of vital records and duplicate copies of important documents: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Include as an appendix to this plan, or at the location above, an inventory of facility assets so losses can be documented for insurance (insurance policies should be reviewed annually).

7. What neighboring congregations or other community agencies can you join with to share resources in emergencies? (Create mutual aid agreements as appropriate)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

8. What are some of the areas in which you can work cooperatively to support each other's recovery following a disaster?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

## X. NEIGHBORHOOD /COMMUNITY PLANNING

Consider additional roles for community involvement following a disaster - areas in which the congregation might provide services to congregants or community members affected by the disaster. It is suggested this planning be done with other neighborhood congregations and organizations for a more coordinated disaster response. Summarize this plan in the space below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Possible areas for involvement:

1. To provide pastoral care and support to disaster victims (especially outreach and support to more vulnerable congregation members).
2. To use facility space to provide emergency shelter for neighborhood residents.
3. To use facility space (i.e., meeting rooms & offices) for organizations forced to relocate.
4. To use facility resources for the preparation of food for mass feeding.
5. To use the facility as a storage/distribution center (for disaster relief supplies).
6. To use any owned vehicles for transporting people to recovery services sites.
7. In addition, teams of volunteers may be organized to provide the following services:

## APPENDIX 1 - UPDATES TO THE PLAN

1. Date most recent earthquake drill was held:

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2. Date most recent fire drill was held:

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3. Date of most recent staff training in basic emergency preparedness:

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4. Date your most recent staff home phone list was compiled/updated:

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**APPENDIX 2 - EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS LIST**

**Call 9-1-1 for most emergencies. If 9-1-1 is overloaded, then refer to the following:**

Police Department \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance \_\_\_\_\_

Water Department \_\_\_\_\_

PG&E \_\_\_\_\_

Hazardous Material Spill \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control Center \_\_\_\_\_

Local Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Agent \_\_\_\_\_

American Red Cross \_\_\_\_\_

Salvation Army \_\_\_\_\_

Office of Emergency Service \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation District/Regional Disaster Contact \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX 3 - IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IN EMERGENCIES

The following response functions follow the government's Incident Command System (ICS). Given a small organization, the same staff person or volunteers may assume these functions.

1. Incident Command - the person who will lead and make decisions. This function manages the overall response and recovery to an emergency and directs the other functions below.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Operations - the person who will do the work. Has responsibility for whatever the agency does to respond to client or disaster needs. Initial response operations include the following:  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Site Security: Responsible for utilities in an emergency (gas, electricity and water).  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Fire Suppression: Checks for and suppresses small fires; notifies the fire department.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Search and Rescue: If evacuation is required, ensures everyone has evacuated safely.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. First Aid: Administers first aid to injured persons.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Planning - keeps everyone in the know. Monitors the news; comes up with short (i.e., what are we going to do in the next 24-hours), and long-term plans for the congregation's recovery.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Logistics - the person to get the resources. Responsible for getting everything operations (above) needs to function to ensure the health and safety of staff, congregants and other persons.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Finance - the person who will track all activities and costs. This person must also ensure there are safe backup copies for the following agency documents: 1. Articles of Incorporation (e.g., verification of tax exempt status); 2. Recent photographs documenting the interior and exterior of your facility; 3. Insurance documentation; and 4. Licensing documentation, if appropriate.  
Person assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\* END OF PLAN \*\*\*\*