



MISSION PRESBYTERY
BETTER TOGETHER

Presbytery Disaster Response Protocol

Disaster Preparedness & Response Plan

INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose: To establish and manage disaster preparedness and response protocols that will effectively mitigate disasters affecting our church parishioners and campus.
2. This plan seeks to:
 - **Equip our staff**, congregation and presbytery with the necessary information, training and preparation to protect themselves and the church campus.
 - **Identify means of contact** in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and identify the immediate needs of the parishioners.
 - **Provide protocols for identification** and arrangements for appropriate individuals, parties, or agencies to address spiritual, emotional, and physical needs arising out of a disaster.
 - **Establish budgets** and mitigation efforts to secure the campus. Develop alternative communication systems.
 - **Identify human and physical resources** and prepare contingency plans to deploy these resources to assist staff and parishioners in a disaster event.
 - **Organize, select and train** preparation and response personnel, determine who is in charge (The Pastor should not be that person), and decide who will activate the protocols.
 - **Recognize that response and recovery do not take place in a vacuum.** Proactively contact and cooperate with your local response agencies. Do not attempt to perform the work of first responders such as police, firefighters, EMTs, etc. During an event coordinate with all local organizations that are involved in emergency response.

ORGANIZATION

This section should define the organizational structure your church has established to manage the Disaster Preparation and Response Plan. **During emergencies, you will not have time to call a meeting of a committee to take this action.** A fundamental need in time of a disaster is to have in place a trained organization:

- That will react immediately to the situation.
- That is empowered to make critical decisions regarding actions to be taken.

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. These individuals must have designated backups. That includes a Director of Disaster Preparation and Response who is charged with overall development, operation, and continuing maintenance of your plan.



Also, appoint a team that helps develop and maintain a plan for your church. Many large churches have two trained individuals in each of the three assignments that follow, medium sized congregations should have one in each position and smaller congregations might choose to split the responsibilities between two people:

Director of Disaster Preparation and Response

This position:

- Serves as Chairperson of the overall team.
- Schedules and plans meetings.
- Schedules and plans trainings.
- Recruits coordinators.
- Ensures team readiness.
- Liaisons with established disaster relief groups.

Disaster Volunteer Coordinator

This position:

- Conducts skills and talent survey.
- Develops a database of volunteers / skills.
- Identifies members needing special assistance and pairs them with members, or their backups, responsible for maintaining contact.
- Develops a communications chain and arranges for its activation.

Resources Coordinator (should be a member of the property committee)

This position:

- Conducts inventory of facilities, supplies and equipment.
- Maintains supplies in good order and replenishes as necessary.
- Review insurance policy, making sure coverage is adequate, up to date, and comprehensive.
- Coordinates communications to the congregation regarding the use of facilities and equipment with the Director.
- Responsible for triage of facilities immediately after an event.

(These three positions in the church are not only the administrators of the disaster plan for the congregation, they are the primary liaison with the community and presbytery during a crisis)

Session Preparedness & Response :

1. Appoints and works with their Church Disaster Preparedness & Response Representative
2. Develops local church disaster plan
3. Maintains emergency data form on individuals and pastor(s)
4. Monitors who is going to shelter in-place and who will evacuate
5. Assesses physical needs of congregational members
6. Informs the Disaster Control Center of church shelter capabilities
7. Supports pastor(s) responding to the needs of community survivors
8. Plans and responds according to local emergency management operations requirements
9. Enables the pastor(s) to spiritually support members and the community
10. Determines what programs and services may be reduce, relocated, or temporarily stopped
11. Backs-up church data on a remote server and/or portable storage located offsite



12. Safeguards titles, deeds, membership, minutes, and funds
13. Plans for disruptions in utility service and how to access financial resources
14. Knows what the church's insurance policy does and does not cover
15. Teams up with other church organizations to avoid duplication of efforts
16. Plans religious observances, worship, rituals for the needs of the impacted community(s)
17. Communicates to Presbytery structural, financial, emotional, and spiritual needs

Church Disaster Preparedness & Response Representatives:

1. Appointed by their respective sessions
2. Assists their church in establishing a disaster preparedness & response plan
3. Coordinates with local/county emergency management operations and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)
4. Attends local disaster preparedness training
5. Provides pastoral care to individuals, families and churches
6. Physically checks on facility damage and reports back to the Disaster Control Center
7. Contacts Disaster Preparedness Coordinator to assist with plan development, training, or Minute for Mission opportunities
8. Participates in local religious observances in the impacted community(s)

Congregation/Pastor Responsibilities:

1. Key people in the congregation should have a similar plan as Presbytery above.
 - Send out information to the congregation
 - Alternate location for operation
 - Where they will be if evacuated - contact information, etc.
2. Have a plan (such as a buddy system by deacons) for your most vulnerable members, i.e. who will contact them to make sure they are okay.
3. 24, 48, and 72 hours after a storm at 5:00 p.m., members who can will meet at the church for prayer, check in, communication, coordination, and need sharing.
4. ASAP, either the pastor or **Director of Disaster Preparation and Response** will call 210-826-3296 to let the Presbytery staff know how you are.
5. **Resources Coordinator** of a particular congregation will begin its triage (secure its building ASAP). Also, your records should be put in the **"Cloud"** or on a **"Jump Drive"** for access anywhere.
6. As soon as possible, hold a church staff meeting.
7. As soon as possible, the Moderator of Session will call a Session meeting.