

UPRIGHT MINISTRIES

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Emergency Response

# Emergency planning series

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# Emergency Response

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## Introduction

All organizations are subject to some level of risk. Being prepared in the event of a disaster not only can reduce a loss, but can make the difference between life and death. This document has been created to provide a basic level of understanding for those who need to create an emergency response plan. It is not intended to be comprehensive, nor complete for your organization. Creating a plan requires an in depth knowledge of your environment, combined with a risk assessment that identifies the risk to which your organization may be subject. The complexity of the plan will be directly proportional to the size of the organization and facilities. The purpose of this document is to inform and not alarm those responsible for church ministry. This is a compilation of data from various sources that seeks to provide general information on responding to emergencies. Information in this document that is in the public domain that is not under copyright is attached as Appendices. All church ministries are granted permission to use this document in support of the Great Commission.

In order to adequately protect your facilities, personnel, and visitors, an emergency response process must be created. Since every church is different each emergency response plan is different. While some common elements may exist between plans, it is necessary to perform other tasks outside of this discussion paper.

This discussion document basically covers evacuation and shelter in place, it is not intended to cover all emergency response situations. Other areas must be considered, including but not limited to: computer systems, facility restoration, records recovery, etc.

## About the authors

This discussion paper is a collaborative effort of Upright Ministries and Business911 International, Inc. The authors have extensive experience in church administration, risk assessment, emergency response, and disaster recovery planning.

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Patti Malott has served in the area of Business Administration for more than 20 years. She holds certification in Risk Management from Cambridge University and in Business Administration from the National Association of Church Business Administration (NACBA). She also holds certification from the Southern Baptist Church Business Administration Association (SBCBAA).

Patti has served churches of all sizes and denominations. Whether helping churches become incorporated, restructuring their accounting system, reviewing

their insurance package to make sure they are adequately covered, or touring their property to look for ways to reduce risks to people and property, her passion for serving in this capacity is very evident.

Patti is an active member with the Houston and North Metro Houston Chapters of the NACBA, with prior service as a Chapter President and Regional Director. She has served on various boards of other non-profit organizations serving in rolls such as chairman, treasurer and secretary.

Patti has a heart for ministry, a love for people, and a desire to serve with excellence. Believing that one must be a life-long learner to adequately serve churches, she actively continues her education by attending seminars that offer studies in all areas of administration including tax and legal updates. She also serves as guest speaker to many organizations.

Patti is married and resides in Spring, Texas with her husband John. They have two sons and four grandchildren.

### ***Robert Janusaitis, CISA, CISM, CBCP***

Bob Janusaitis has served in various capacities assisting his church for over 10 years. He holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Merrimack College. He is a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), a Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), and a Certified Business Continuity Planner (CBCP). Bob is a former emergency medical technician, fire department lieutenant, and advanced first aid/CPR instructor.

Bob has a heart for organizing and equipping church staff with access to resources that enhance their ministry. His expertise is sought by national and international organizations to address information technology, audit, business continuity, and security. He has delivered dozens of presentations domestically and internationally. He has served on various boards of non-profit organizations such as president, treasurer, and webmaster.

Bob his wife Patti, their son and daughter reside in Houston, TX. He is active in the music ministry, FAITH evangelism, and is the web team chairman at The Metropolitan Baptist Church in Houston.

## Objectives

The Emergency Response Plan has as its primary objectives:

1. To save lives and avoid injuries;
2. To safeguard property and records;
3. To promote a fast, effective reaction in coping with emergencies;
4. To restore conditions back to normal with minimal confusion as promptly as possible.

For these objectives to be accomplished will require clear activation procedures and responsibilities, identification of all tasks to be performed and by whom, an organized yet flexible response, and the dedication and cooperation of all.

It is vital to the continued functioning of the ministry, and its staff and members that we be prepared to respond effectively in times of emergencies. Such preparations will also help us meet our obligations to the Great Commission.

This plan is developed to be used in case of emergency. All members of the staff, ushers, and other ministry personnel should:

1. Familiarize themselves with the plan,
2. Be prepared to activate it immediately, and
3. Perform any duties to which they are assigned to make its activation effective.

Parts of the plan will be posted in the room (building evacuation maps) and shall be in a prominent spot. All who use that room should familiarize themselves with the provision as it applies to that room

Members of the staff or designee shall teach the Emergency Response Plan to the staff and members as appropriate. The members of each classroom shall be instructed in the evacuation plan so they can respond immediately upon receiving the necessary warning. The first step in building a plan is a comprehensive risk assessment.

## Components of an Emergency Response Plan

An Emergency Response Plan for a church is comprised of the following elements:

1. Performing a risk assessment
2. Developing a recovery strategy including duties and responsibilities
3. Documenting the plan
4. Training personnel

5. Maintaining the plan
6. Regular testing or drills

## **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment provides an opportunity to identify, and where possible reduce the risk of a loss to people and property. Upright Ministries can help you accomplish your church's mission by:

1. Assessing your exposure to risk.
2. Analyzing the impact of the identified risks.
3. Selecting the best risk management technique to avoid, retain, share, transfer, or reduce the risk.
4. Guide you in implementing the selected risk management techniques.
5. Providing you with written documentation and evaluation.

## **Documenting the Plan**

All Emergency Response Plans must be documented in order to insure their effectiveness during an incident. Plans may be documented in various ways including word processors or specific disaster recovery planning software. The plans must be accessible during an incident. This may require that personnel keep a copy of the plan with them at home, in their vehicle, on a Pocket PC or Palm Connected Device, or accessible via the Internet.

## **Duties of the Pastor or Designee**

1. Designate an Emergency Response Coordinator
2. Order and monitor drills and training purposes.
3. Provide the staff with copies of the Emergency Preparedness Plan and initiate processes to maintain the plan.
4. Keep in contact with designated personnel monitoring information sources for information on emergency warnings.
5. Cooperate with community groups interested in emergency preparedness.
6. Provide a copy of Emergency Response Plan to all ministries that use church facilities.
7. Report any missing persons to Emergency Operations Center.

## **Duties of Administrative Assistants**

1. Maintain current list of all church staff contact information.
2. Maintain a supply of first aid equipment.
3. Provide a message center during an event.

## **Duties of Building Engineers/Custodians**

1. Assume responsibility for the safety factors of the physical plant during an emergency. Report structural defects to the Emergency Operations Center.
2. Assume responsibility for the inspection and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment.
3. Chart shutoff valves and switches for gas, water, and electricity. Add chart to Emergency Response Plan and post for others to use in an emergency.
4. Assist in checking for power line or building damage for exit safety.

## **Notification Duties in an Emergency**

The individual who identifies the emergency is to notify the appropriate agency such as the Fire Department, Police Department, or other agency as directed by the Pastor or Emergency Coordinator. Waiting for such direction is not considered necessary if circumstances obviously dictate which agency should be called.

## **Communications**

It is likely that the public address system will be operational in most emergencies during which inside-the-building announcements need to be made. If it not, communication will be either by messenger(s) from the affected area to other areas or megaphones/ walkie talkies if there is no threat from airborne toxins .

Communication between the custodial staff and the office staff will be by radio. One radio shall be assigned to each of the following people: Emergency Operations Center or designee, Emergency Coordinator, Engineer/Custodian and others as deemed necessary.

If the phones are working, we will use the phone system. If the phones are not working, try the cellular phone and call cellular to cellular. During a regional disaster cell phones may not be operational.



## **Incident Management**

During a drill or an emergency, the line of command is as follows:

1. The Emergency Operations Center or designee is in charge of the operation. He is the Emergency Director/Coordinator.
2. The Emergency Coordinator directs and coordinates efforts of the Emergency Operations Center. When the Emergency Operations Center is absent, the Executive Emergency Operations Center assumes his/her duties. If he/she is absent, the Emergency Coordinator under the direction of its chair shall be in charge.
3. The Emergency Operations Center coordinates the efforts of the facility response.
4. Each area in the facility should have a pre-assigned coordinator. Sunday school teachers/directors are immediately in charge of their classroom.
5. The building engineer, media coordinator, executive pastor, work under the direction of the Pastor or designee unless he/she is absent. In such a situation they work under the direction of the Emergency Coordinator. If he/she is also absent, the designated Emergency Coordinator shall be in charge.

## **Emergency Operations Center**

The Emergency Operations Center will be identified in advance. If there is structural damage, or fire, the backup will another building on the campus (see map). If there no other building is available, an alternate site must be identified prior to an incident. Options may include any facility which will accommodate several personnel to manage the incident.

Decisions will be made here, and responsibility rests with the principal or his designee (see chain of command). The Emergency Operations Center, emergency director/coordinator, and community agencies will meet at the command area. Logs of suspicious materials will be taken to this area. Staff and any other personnel who find suspect parcels or who notice any unexplainable changes in room appearance will send a message of findings to the command area. At the command area an analysis will be made of the threat.

Any search should be conducted by local law enforcement officials.

Because of the severe problem involved in terrorist activities, the following people and organizations should be involved in any decisions concerning the terrorists within the facility(s):

1. The Emergency Coordinator - if available (they could be still in an affected portion of the campus).

2. The Police and Fire Departments with assistance from the County Sheriff's Department.
3. Other emergency response personnel.

## **Alarm Signals**

Fire Alarm:

(Describe sound of alarm)

All Clear:

Describe method to return to building.

Earthquake:

No audible signal. Directed instructions during quake to take cover.

Bomb Threat:

Open intercom and announce " \_\_\_\_\_ "

Then ring the fire drill signal.

Fallen Aircraft/Space Debris:

Fire signal to evacuate building.

Civil Disturbances:

Open intercom and announce " \_\_\_\_\_ "

Use runners to relay messages.

Terrorist or Hostage Situation:

Use intercom or runners to relay message to/from office.

Use runners to relay message to other buildings.

Code word: " \_\_\_\_\_ "

Nuclear Attack:

Use intercom or runners to relay messages.

Other:

In the event of unforeseen emergencies requiring evacuation, the fire alarm will be used.

## **Emergency Kit**

Each defined area will have an emergency kit. This kit or backpack shall be stored in an accessible area for emergency team members. It will contain the items described in Appendix A.

The Disaster Coordinator's backpack shall include forms to keep records of the emergency, a copy of the Emergency Response Plan, extra batteries and a walkie talkie, and a bullhorn.

## **Building Evacuation**

1. Any one with special duties will perform them.

2. Immediately upon hearing the Fire Alarm signal, staff, members, and visitors in the building shall evacuate the building via prearranged evacuation route (see map) quickly, quietly, and single file. The last person out of the room shall pull the door closed, but will not lock it. If the incident occurs during a service, the ushers will direct the evacuation.
3. People with special needs will be assisted by one or two other staff members.
4. The first person out will monitor the exit and keep people from re-entering the building.
5. Everyone will exit the building via the closest exit and then walk quickly to their assembly area (see map).
6. No one will take time to collect personal items.
7. If regular exit is blocked, the designated fire warden will lead the group to an alternate exit.
8. First aid should be performed as necessary. Everyone shall await further instructions. Re-entry or further instruction will come only from the Emergency Coordinator.
9. The Building Engineer/Custodian will notify the utility companies of a break or suspected break in utilities.
10. The Pastor or his designee will determine whether the occupants will go home, or any further action should be implemented. He/she will also report any missing personnel, members, visitors to emergency personnel.

## **Return to the Building**

If it is safe to return to the building, the Emergency Coordinator will advise all staff and members/visitors.

## **Evacuation or In-Place Sheltering**

An accidental release of hazardous materials may require the evacuation of people from certain areas to prevent injury or death. Facilities may be directly affected by toxic fumes and gases. Additionally, schools may be effected during the course of the incident, through wind shift, or a change in site conditions. Evacuation is a complex undertaking; it will be decided by the local fire or police department. The facility(s) will be notified by emergency responders.

Responders will decide whether to order people to remain indoors (shelter-in-place), rescue individuals from the area, or order a general evacuation. The "remain indoors" option will be considered when the hazards are too great to risk exposure of evacuees. Rescuing people from the hazardous area may involve supplying protective equipment for evacuees to ensure their safety, so that it may not be used. A general evacuation requires a significant amount of lead time, which may not be available.

## **General Evacuation**

Evacuation decisions are very incident-specific. If the release occurs slowly, or if there is a fire that cannot be controlled within a short time, then evacuation may be the sensible option. Evacuation during incidents involving the airborne release of chemicals is sometimes necessary.

If a general evacuation is ordered, you will be sent home. If there is a school involved students may be evacuated by walking, by means of private transportation, or by school busses. Transportation should be considered prior to any such incident.

If your facility has been evacuated, the response personnel will need to decide when it is safe you you to return. They will need to verify data collected by the monitoring crews and consider the advice of the health officials concerned.

## **In-place Sheltering**

Airborne toxicants can move downwind so rapidly that there would be no time to evacuate residents. For short-term releases, oftent the most prudent course of action for the protection of the nearby schools would be to remain inside with the doors closed, and the heating and airconditioning systems shut off. An airborne cloud will frequently move past quickly.

In-place sheltering, therefore, may be a sensible course of action when the risks associated with an evacuation are outweighed by the benefits of in-place sheltering. In order for this protection measure to be effective, the effected population must be advised to follow the guidelines listed below:

1. An announcement will come over the PA system telling you that the "In-place-shelter procedure" is in effect.
2. Close all doors to the outside and close and lock all windows. (Windows seal better when locked). Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels, and those around doorways and windows with duct tape (or similar thick tape) and sheets of plastic (precut and labeled before the incident). Have personnel assigned to specific tasks ahead of time.
3. Building Engineers/Custodians should set all ventilation systems to 100 percent recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the structure. Where this is not possible, ventilation systems should be turned off.
4. Turn off all heating systems and air conditioners.
5. Seal any gaps around window type air conditioners, exhaust fan grills, exhaust fans, range vents, dryer vents, etc. With tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum wrap
6. Close as many internal doors as possible.
7. If an outdoor explosion is possible, close drapes, curtains, and shades over windows. Avoid windows to prevent potential injury from flying glass.

8. If you suspect that the gas or vapor has entered the structure you are in, hold a wet cloth over your nose and mouth.
9. Use a weather radio and monitor the Emergency Broadcast System or the radio or television for information concerning the hazardous materials incident and in-place sheltering.

The emergency response personnel decide when it is safe for you to leave the building. You are to do the following: remove the plastic and tape; open all doors; and turn on blowers, heaters/ air conditioners.

## **Training**

Under the direction of the Emergency Director or the person that the Pastor designates, a training program will be set up. This program will include training for all staff and ministry personnel.

The person responsible for training will organize the method to be used, place and time, and will provide the Pastor a list of names of those who have completed the training. In case personnel are absent at the time the training is given, a follow-up procedure will be established to insure the training is given, a follow-up procedure will be established to insure that all will be trained in emergency procedures.

The following general objectives will be accomplished by the training officer:

1. Personnel will be able to:
  - Respond to a fire drill and evacuate the facility within the designated timeframe and follow all other procedures as listed in the emergency plan on fire and evacuation.
  - Recognize the difference between warning systems for different types of emergencies.
  - Respond to a drill for any identified hazard and follow all procedures as outlined in the "Emergency Response Plan" on the hazard.
  - Know how to call for emergency help and know where the emergency phone numbers are listed.
  - Recognize the procedures to follow if hazardous materials, wind and other types of severe weather, medical, flood, utility failure, nuclear explosion or radioactive fall-out, bomb threat, civil disturbance, aircraft crash, hostage situation, or any other type of emergency should arise.
  - Know where emergency and first aid equipment is found in the building(s) and how to use such equipment, or know someone who does know how to use it.
  - Know where the Emergency Operations Center is and understand how the chain of command works.

- Know how and where to evacuate the worship center and any other related facilities.
  - Know and understand the early dismissal plan if there is a school on the premises.
  - Personnel will be made aware of the safety features of the building and sources of help that are available.
2. Assignments will be made to specific people to assist in special duties as outlined in the Emergency Response Plan

## **Drills**

Fire drills and other drills will be held on a regular basis. Drills will be held for all areas that have a daily school program to insure that all students, teachers, and others are sufficiently familiar with such drills that they can be activated and accomplished quickly and efficiently. These drills shall be held at both regular inopportune times to take care of almost any situation. Everyone in the building, including other employees, all office workers, all lunch workers, all custodial staff, and visitors must obey the instructions in the room or area they occupy when the alarm is sounded. Drills will also be carried out for quick evacuation of all facilities.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix A - Emergency Equipment and Supplies

### Emergency Equipment in the Main Office

- Flashlights (with extra batteries)
- Emergency lights/lanterns
- Megaphones portable - Self Contained Power
- Walkie Talkies (one for each coordinator)
- Portable battery (or solar) powered radio
- Air Horn or Bell
- Answering machine
- Unlisted phone line
- Megaphone
- Paper and marker pens
- Stretcher

### Survival Supplies

- Metal Container and Lid
- Plastic Containers
- Plastic Bags and Ties
- Disinfectant
- Old Sheets
- Plastic Sheeting
- Duct tape
- Paper Drinking Cups
- First Aid Supplies
- Large Garbage Can
- Toilet Paper
- Hand Soap
- Washcloths
- Towels
- Pail or Basin
- Sanitary Napkins
- Blankets
- Books, Cards, Games, etc., for entertainment
- Tools
- Water

### Additional Items

- Exit Plans Posted in Each Room
- Bomb Threat Checklist at each Phone
- Emergency Phone Numbers Verified
- Date of Checklist Completion
- Evacuation Plan/Master Lists

## **Appendix B – Church Schools and Preschool Programs**

Additional areas to be included for churches with daily school and pre-school programs.

- School Foods Personnel
- Teachers
- Teacher's Assistants
- Shutdown Notification
- Early Dismissal Plan
- Release of Students to Parents
- Parent Release Form
- Log for School Fire and Other Emergency Drills
- Medical Release Form
- Student Release Form
- Unaccounted students and staff
- Safe Sites (Alternate temporary locations)
- Emergency Transportation

## Appendix C – Hazards

Areas of risk to be reviewed for inclusion in emergency response planning.\*

- Bomb Threat
- Chemicals
- Civil Disturbance
- Earthquake
- Aircraft/Space Debris
- Fire
- Flood
- Hazardous Materials
- Medical Emergencies
  - First Aid Instructions
- Nuclear Explosion or Radioactive Fall-out
- Technical Problems
- Terrorist or Hostage Situation
- Utility Failure
  - Power Outage
  - Gas Leak
  - Water-line Breakage
- Wind and Other Types of Severe Weather

\* Note: This list is not exclusive.

## Appendix D – Other areas of consideration

- First Aid Instructions
- First Aid Supplies
- Radio Station Notification
- Shelter and Mass Care

### FORMS

- Bomb Checklist (FBI form)
- Local Life Safety Code
- Notification Checklist
- Safe Building Evacuation Plan Worksheet
- Unsafe Building Evacuation Plan Worksheet

### OTHER ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR PLAN:

- Call Up List - Staff
- Office Phone Numbers
- List of First Aid/CPR Qualified Personnel
- Maps:
  - Evacuation
  - Utility Shut-offs
  - Emergency Operations Center
  - Safe Sites

### WWW RESOURCES:

- [American Red Cross](#)
- [Business911 International, Inc.](#)
- [FEMA](#)
- [Office of Homeland Security - Ready guide](#)
- [Upright Ministries](#)