

Appoint a disaster response coordinator and a disaster response committee for the congregation

Formulate plans in conjunction with the Borough Emergency Plan for participation in evacuation in case of an emergency or disaster.

In the event of a disaster, public worship opportunities should be offered as soon as possible. It is particularly important to hold public worship the Sunday following a disaster, even if it is necessary to secure an alternate location for worship because your church has been damaged or compromised. This is an act of Christian hope that affirms that God is at work even in the midst of the destruction. Please see page 13 for possible readings and prayers to use.

B. Do You Have a Plan? Developing A Parish Disaster Plan

Being prepared for a disaster is an important pastoral obligation. By preparing for a disaster, the congregation is demonstrating God's love for both its own members and the surrounding community. Steps for developing a plan:

1. Appoint a disaster response coordinator and a disaster response committee for the congregation to coordinate and oversee preparedness efforts, communications, and any actual response to an emergency or disaster. Preparedness should not be limited to the clergy. The participation of the wardens, vestry members, and other individuals is not only appropriate but vital. The Building and Grounds Committee or the committee responsible for property is a natural choice for involvement.
2. Begin by making an inspection of the church and any additional buildings. Are exits clearly marked? Are fire extinguishers up to date? Do the smoke alarms have fresh batteries? Please see Appendix 4, Links and Resources, for a parish emergency checklist written by the Emergency Response Team from the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Tennessee.
3. Have the church or vestry complete the following risk survey.
 - a. List the local disasters and emergencies that have happened in the last ten years.
 - b. Identify what disasters and emergencies are most likely to occur in your community. Identify potential areas of vulnerability. Consideration should be given to physical proximity to potential dangers. Examples include the proximity to a river or other significant body of water and the potential for flooding, or the proximity to a nuclear power plant and the radius of potential fallout.
 - c. Discuss with wardens, vestry and key lay leadership the potential impact of these disasters.
4. Formulate plans in conjunction with the Borough Emergency Plan for participation in evacuation in case of an emergency or disaster. There should be a plan for evacuating the church during the week (emphasis is on church staff and personnel), and on a Sunday morning when member traffic is high. These plans should be rehearsed and

reviewed on a periodic basis. They should also be shared with groups that use the parish's facilities like Alcoholics Anonymous and a Boy and/or Girl Scout troop.

5. Write the disaster plan and distribute it to key lay leadership in the parish and put it on the Parish web site. Conduct a review session with wardens and vestry annually.

6. A communications network is essential. Each parish must establish a communications mechanism for reaching all members in the event of an emergency or disaster, providing for a means of communications both during and after an incident. A roster of the members, along with all available contact numbers should be kept up to date and copies of this list should be stored in several protected places. Parishioners with special needs should be checked on at the very earliest possible moment.

7. The parish disaster plan should be reviewed and updated at least once per year.

8. Encourage parishioners to maintain Disaster Supply Kits and to prepare a family emergency plan. Guidelines for the creation of a Disaster Supply Kit and for the development of a family emergency plan are provided in the Links and Resources section.

C. Church Property Protection¹

1. It is important to develop a complete inventory of church property and holdings. Both a written list and a video or photographic record are advisable. Update the inventory annually. Store a copy safely in a second location, preferably offsite. Use a blue print, diagram, or drawing of the facility with the following clearly marked: safe spots, first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, utility cut-offs, building exits, alarm controls, and fire-safe storage. Surge protectors are recommended for all major electrical appliances. Purchase of a generator should be considered.

2. Annually review the church insurance policy to determine adequate coverage and liability especially with regards to natural disasters, man-made disasters, and the use of the facilities in the event of a disaster. Be sure to keep copies of the church insurance policy in locations other than church.

3. Annually review the building and grounds for high-risk problems. This should include maintenance smoke/fire alarms, fire extinguishers, security system, and other alarm or protective devices.

4. Establish a priority listing of shutdown procedures. Who will be responsible for shutting down each system? Know the locations of utility controls and items needed for shutting down each system. What will be done with items to be removed from premises? Consider the following:

Write
the disaster
plan and
distribute it

Establish a
communications
mechanism for
reaching all
members in the
event of an
emergency or
disaster, provid-
ing for a means of
communications
both during and
after an incident

Parish
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