

CONGREGATION EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORKBOOK

v. 2023-02 b



MAKE A PLAN



GATHER SUPPLIES



STAY INFORMED



★ The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Access this workbook online:

<https://www.epicenter-prepare.org/church-prep>



Access more preparedness resources:

<https://www.epicenter-prepare.org/>



A screenshot of the 'Disaster Preparedness' page from The Episcopal Diocese of Texas. The page features a navigation menu with links for HOME, INDIVIDUAL and FAMILY PREPAREDNESS, CONGREGATION PREPAREDNESS, RESOURCES, GIVE, and CONTACT. Below the menu, there is a bilingual introduction: 'Being prepared for disasters is good stewardship of our lives and our God-given resources. The sooner our church members recover, the sooner we can be the Church to our neighbors in need.' and its Spanish equivalent. The main content area is titled 'EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR CONGREGATIONS & FAMILIES' and includes three icons: 'MAKE A PLAN' (house with checkmark), 'GATHER SUPPLIES' (first aid kit), and 'STAY INFORMED' (phone with signal waves). To the right, there is a vertical list of links: FOR CONGREGATIONS, INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES, OTHER RESOURCES, HELP A STORM SURVIVOR, COVID COUNTY CHECK, and CONTACT US.

Ask about Spanish resources by contacting The Rev. Stacy

Stringer sstringer@epicenter.org



The Episcopal Diocese of Texas
Office of the Bishop

February 9, 2023

Dear Emergency Preparedness Committees:

As stewards of our church buildings, our resources, and our congregations, one of the most important things we can do is to prepare for emergencies.

Too often we think of a disaster as something that affects *other* people and *other* congregations. However, we must realize that our own churches are vulnerable to events that could devastate our communities and congregations. Through preparedness, we acknowledge that vulnerability, consider the worst-case scenarios affecting our congregation, and take precautions to minimize their effects.

In addition, our advance preparation can equip us to respond to crises in our communities and beyond. This should be a goal of every congregation.

To that end, this guide presents suggestions helpful to creating an emergency plan for your congregation. By simply working through the pages and filling in each provided blank, you will create a basic and complete emergency plan.

However, I encourage you to go deeper, and to utilize this guide as a discussion starter. Examine the particular needs and abilities of your congregation to craft a unique and practical emergency plan.

Faithfully,

C. Andrew Doyle, D. D.
IX Bishop of Texas

★ The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

PART OF A LARGER FRAMEWORK

Dear congregations,

This workbook is an offering for your use in developing or updating a disaster preparedness plan for your congregation. It is intended to be a resource for assembling a framework that suits your unique context. You may decide to utilize:

- all or some of this workbook;
- the workbook with your own modifications;
- a planning tool from another organization;
- your own, in-house preparedness tool.

Whichever you choose, at minimum please review the contents. You may discover something useful, something that might be added, or something that needs correction.

Your congregation's emergency preparedness plan is a vital component of the diocesan disaster preparedness framework. Included in this is our emergency messaging system. If you are the head of a congregation, you may have received occasional text messages which begin with: *DIOCESE OF TEXAS: HEADS OF CONGREGATIONS...*

We utilize the AlertMedia system for a rapid, two-way check-in procedure with our heads of congregations. Replies to these text messages which indicate impact to your congregation or community are shared with diocesan leadership.

Together our documented plans, routinely practiced and honed through experience, equip us to become more resilient and respond more confidently under stressful and even traumatic conditions. Small amounts of preparedness yield significant benefits when disaster threatens or arrives. We cannot prevent disasters, but we can somewhat mitigate or "make less worse" their effects.

Another offering: If you would like a consultation or a facilitated workshop with your leadership, be in touch.

Finally, refer back to page 3 of this workbook for easy access to online resources, including this Workbook which is available in PDF to print or to fill in online.

Yours in Christ,
Stacy+

The Rev. Stacy Stringer
Director of Disaster Response
sstringer@epicenter.org
1225 Texas Street
Houston, TX 77002
713.520.6444 x2106

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▶ **Pages with borders** Indicate they are APPENDIX pages.

COVER SHEET

Congregation

Name _____
Address _____
Office phone, email _____
Head of Congregation + contact info _____
Sr / Bishop's Warden + contact info _____
Jr Warden + contact info _____
Treasurer + contact info _____
Insurance Administrator + contact info _____
Website _____
Other _____

Property Insurance Company

Name, Phone, Website _____
Date policy last renewed _____ Policy No. _____
Comments _____

Diocesan Offices

Houston 713-520-6444 **Austin** 800-947-0580 **Tyler** 866-579-6012 **Ft. Worth** 817-534-1900

Date this workbook was last updated: _____

Contributors _____

Where stored? _____

Update notes _____

Notes: _____

Contents of this Workbook

All Disasters:

Nearly all disasters involve certain basic preparedness and response actions. These items comprise the majority of this Workbook.

Certain Disasters:

Certain disasters involve specific types of preparedness. Specialized resources are provided in this Workbook in the [DISASTER-SPECIFIC RESOURCES](#) section.

Prioritize

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” -Arthur Ashe

Don't feel pressured to complete this entire workbook.

- ✓ Look over the topics and identify those you want to complete.
- ✓ Prioritize the topics you've chosen.
- ✓ A small amount of preparedness yields large results when faced with a disaster.

Of particular importance are sections related to:

- ✓ your [Membership Directory](#) (page 12)
- ✓ having an emergency communications plan (page 12)
- ✓ listing [Who does what?](#) (page 17)

Three Ways to Use this Workbook

1. Paper & Pen

- ✓ If you print and write on paper, be sure to scan or photograph your paper copy so it is available electronically, ideally in an online location.

2. Electronically

- ✓ Enter your data directly into this PDF file, save it, and store it in an easily accessible, cloud-based location. **(Please let us know if you have difficulty working with this file.)**

3. Request Assistance

- ✓ Assistance is available by phone, Zoom, or in person. Contact The Rev. Stacy Stringer at 713-520-6444 or sstringer@epicenter.org

QUICK RECOVERY CHECKLIST

Listed below are tasks which are important when potentially under threat through the aftermath of an emergency.

Before, during and after:	
	Contact Head of Congregation
	Contact vestry / bishop's committee
	Contact Congregation Emergency Coordinator
	Check in on members. Provide accurate information as available and instructions as necessary.
When it is safe:	
	Assess facilities for potential damage. If damage is visible and/or if damage may be present but not readily visible:
	Contact your property insurance company.
	Notify Jonathan Blaker at the diocesan office jblaker@epicenter.org or 713-520-6444, x2134.
	Notify the diocesan disaster response coordinator, The Rev. Stacy Stringer, at sstringer@epicenter.org or 713-520-6444, x2106
	Take photos of damage and suspected damage. Store photos safely (in the cloud if possible) for use with insurance claim and for other potential needs.
	Apprise ministry partners, suppliers, and others who use your facilities of the emergency situation.
	Coordinate clean-up and repairs. IMPORTANT:
	Follow the recommendations of your insurance provider before contracting any repairs.
	Take photos before beginning clean-up. Use caution. Remain aware that there may be hidden and potentially dangerous issues that may have resulted from the event.

PREPARE THE CONGREGATION

1. Your Emergency Communications Plan

A method for rapidly connecting with your leaders and members is vital, and this begins with regularly updating your directory and distributing it to leadership.

If you do not already have a process for this, see below for some considerations to help you think through a process that can work well for your context.

Membership Directory

Considerations

1. Who maintains our Membership Directory? _____
2. Where is it stored **electronically**? _____
3. Who has access to the electronic version? _____
4. Who regularly gets updated directories? _____
5. In what format are updated directories distributed? (paper or e-copies)

6. What technology system is used for the directory? _____
7. Are there procedures we might need to modify? _____

Tip 1

- ▶ Regularly provide updated directories to the Head of Congregation and vestry or bishop's committees, both in printed format (to keep in the car) and electronically.
- ▶ Attach your most recent directory to this document.

Notes: _____

Tip 2

- ▶ During interruptions to electricity, **text messages are often more reliable** than voice calls because of diminished bandwidth during outages.
- ▶ If you do not have a rapid text messaging system or procedure, consider the info below.

Technology Options

Technology ranging from simple to sophisticated can provide **rapid, efficient, 2-way communications** with groups of individuals.

- ✓ Technology offerings provide **texting** and **phone calling** features.
- ✓ Most systems also provide “dashboards” which show the status of your message and message recipients.
- ✓ **Often texting works when phone calling does not** because of diminished cell phone bandwidth resulting from power outages.
- ✓ Routinely test the system you select with a small group of members at least twice a year. (Add this to your congregation calendar.)
- ✓ To grow skills with the system, consider employing it for routine, non-emergency usage, such as communicating monthly with vestry or bishop's committee members, so that you are better able to quickly and confidently activate your system when the need arises.
- ✓ Below are some reasonably priced products:

[One Call Now](#)

[Slack](#)

[Dial My Calls](#)

[text-em-all](#)

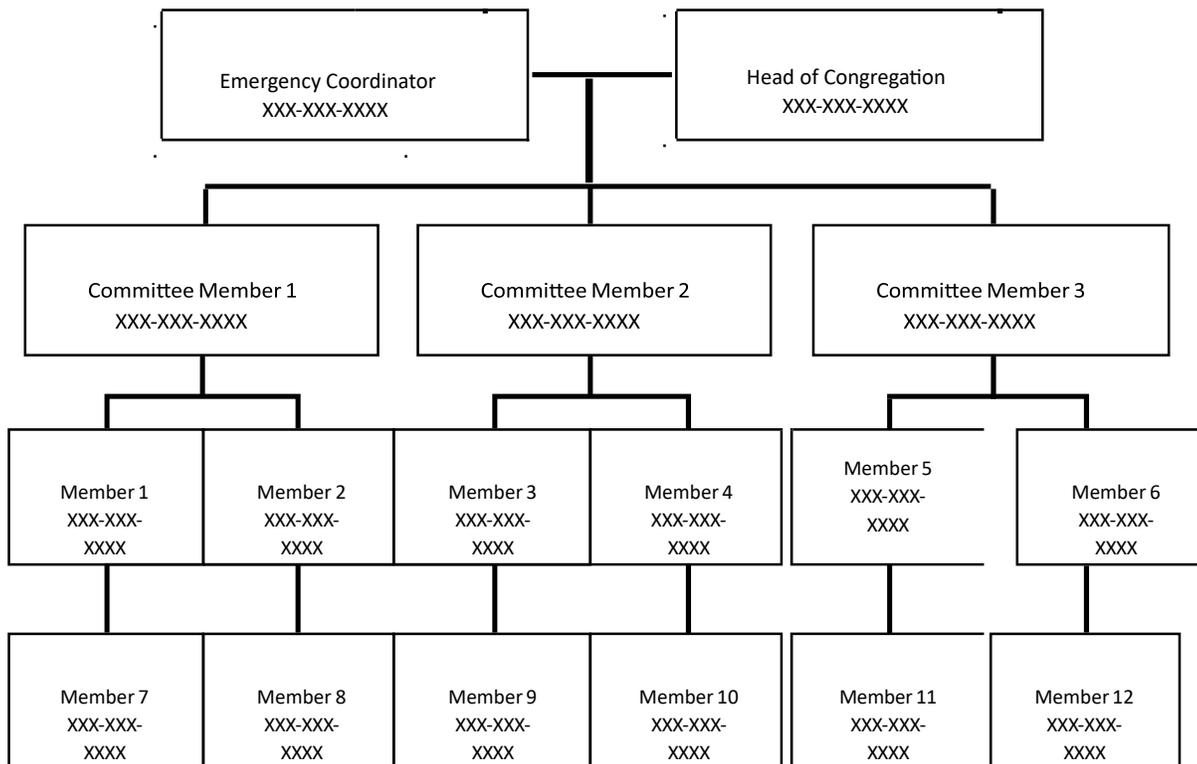
[Call Fire](#)

[SnapComms](#)

Notes: _____

Manual Phone Tree

A communication tree can be created to fit congregations of all sizes, and it can be used for phone calling (voice to voice) or texting. For texting purposes, your directory should clearly indicate which phone numbers are cell phones.



This example shows a simple approach in which your Emergency Coordinator ("EC") contacts your head of congregation. After conferring, and with permission, the EC contacts those Emergency Committee Members who will participate in activating the communications tree.

If any person within the communication tree cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time and number of attempts, the caller/texter should contact the next person on the list.

- ▶ Your Emergency Committee may wish to consider how to address that situation in an emergency, as an inability to make contact with an individual could indicate heightened concern for the person's safety.

Notes: _____

Addressing the Media; Social Media

See [APPENDIX: Media Communications](#)

Notes: _____

2. Your Team

Emergency Coordinator

This individual should be a faithful member of the congregation and familiar with its facilities and membership.

They must be available to enact the emergency plan and to assist in overseeing the collective activities of your Emergency Committee members.

Whenever possible, clergy should *not* try to fill the role of Emergency Coordinator, as they will be engaged in numerous other vital activities with the congregation and wider community.

Consideration should be given to annually verifying the Emergency Coordinator's readiness to serve during the coming year.

- ▶ Consider a team of 2 ECs (Emergency Coordinators)

Emergency Coordinator #1 _____

- ▶ *Be sure to include this person on your annual Journal Directory Report to the Diocese.*

Cell phone _____

Email _____

Other contact info _____

Emergency Coordinator #2 _____

Cell phone _____

Email _____

Other contact info _____

Notes: _____

Emergency Committee

The *Head of Congregation, Emergency Coordinator, Senior / Bishop's Warden* and *Junior Warden* are suggested core members of the Emergency Committee.

Thinking through who does what **during ordinary times** will help you determine which of those **functions** require membership on your Emergency Committee.

You may want all or just some of these individuals on your Emergency Committee.

Who does what?

	During <u>ordinary times</u> .	As <u>emergency backup</u> .
Membership directory	_____	_____
Vulnerable members	_____	_____
Facilities security	_____	_____
Facilities physical assessments	_____	_____
Community connections <i>(i.e. local gov't, other faith orgs, social service agencies)</i>	_____ _____	_____ _____
Property insurance	_____	_____
Technology <i>(Include online donations)</i>	_____ _____	_____ _____
Finance	_____	_____
Social media	_____	_____
Media relations	_____	_____
Emergency communications	_____	_____
	▶ Reference this Workbook's 1. Your Emergency Communications Plan section.	
Event monitoring	_____	_____
	▶ Reference this Workbook's 4. Weather & Hazards Watch section.	
Evacuation or relocation	_____	_____
	▶ Reference this Workbook's APPENDIX: Evacuation or Relocation .	
OTHER	_____	_____

Notes: _____

3. Establishing Priorities

This Workbook may contain more information than is needed for your context. Consider prioritizing the categories of disaster preparedness you wish to undertake.

Additionally, your priorities may change over time or even during an incident.

Examples of items to prioritize include:

- A. Protecting congregation assets
- B. Ensuring safety of older and vulnerable members
- C. Educating members about family disaster preparedness
- D. Providing accurate, current event information to members
- E. Providing first-response assistance to the local community
- F. Coordinating with local government and/or agencies
- G. Assisting unhoused community members with sheltering or other immediate needs
- H. Other _____
- I. Other _____
- J. Other _____

Priorities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Notes: _____

4. Weather & Hazards Watch

Emergency Alerts

Sign up for alerts from reliable sources. Some agencies have special apps for their alerts.

Many government offices post emergency alerts and updates on social media.

At minimum, the Emergency Committee should sign up for from your city or town, county, state, FEMA, American Red Cross, the National Weather Service.

- We provide links to many Texas agencies at <https://www.epicenter-prepare.org/stay-informed>



Members Needing Assistance with Alerts

There are likely members who, for various reasons, are unable to sign up for or make use of emergency alert systems.

List those individuals, discern how to be of assistance, and be prepared to do so.

Name & Comments

Notes: _____

4. Safeguarding Records and Property

Administration & Operations

► **Reference page 19, “Who does what?”**

Each person with oversight should plan in advance for assuring that those functions deemed vital during a disaster are performed in a manner suitable to the emergency conditions.

<i>Who does what?</i>	During ordinary times.	As emergency backup.
Membership directory	_____	_____
Vulnerable members	_____	_____
Facilities security	_____	_____
Facilities physical assessments	_____	_____
Community connections <i>(i.e. local gov't, other faith orgs, social service agencies)</i>	_____	_____
Property insurance	_____	_____
Technology <i>(Include online donations)</i>	_____	_____
Finance	_____	_____
Social media	_____	_____
Media relations	_____	_____
Emergency communications ► Reference this Workbook's 1. Your Emergency Communications Plan section.	_____	_____
Event monitoring ► Reference this Workbook's 4. Weather & Hazards Watch section.	_____	_____
Evacuation or relocation ► Reference this Workbook's APPENDIX: Evacuation or Relocation .	_____	_____
OTHER	_____	_____

Notes: _____

Records and Files

Computer Files & Other *Electronic Church Records*

Certain files and records are essential to continued functioning of operations and ministries following an emergency. These functions may need to take place offsite. To be prepared:

- **Store** these files securely both on-site and remotely.
With technology, preserving documents has become as simple as setting up an automatic cloud storage system. Active files can also be stored online, in the cloud, on a remote server, or on a portable drive.
- **Passwords:** Maintain secure lists of passwords and names for all computers, software, and websites to help ensure access to these resources in an emergency. Appropriate security for passwords should be exercised.

Some questions to consider for your emergency preparedness include:

Email: Where are electronic email communications stored?

If email is **not** accessible online or “in the cloud,” how often - and where - is this data backed up in case of a computer failure?

Who has oversight of this data? _____

Financial and confidential data: Where are these data files stored and in what system/s?

If computer files are not stored online or “in the cloud,” how often – and where - is it backed up in case of a computer failure?

Who has oversight of this data? _____

Notes: _____

Other important computer documents, spreadsheets, etc: Where are these stored?

If computer files are not stored online or “in the cloud,” how often - and where - is it backed up in case of a computer failure?

Who has oversight? _____

Where are church records stored electronically?

Vital Physical Records

- ▶ *Be sure to safeguard your **vital physical** records if a disaster threatens to affect the church property.*

Indicate where these items are stored:

Church registers _____

Facility blueprints,
electrical diagrams, etc. _____

Other vital physical records:

Property Inventory

Photos and videos are helpful in recording items for reference after a disaster or break-in. Be sure to store this information in the cloud, easily accessible by leadership.

Church Insurance provides an extensive [Parish Inventory](https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/forms/cic-parish-inventory-workbook.pdf) workbook.

<https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/forms/cic-parish-inventory-workbook.pdf>

- ✓ Choose the sections that are most useful to your congregation.
- ✓ The inventory workbook spans from **office equipment** to **liturgical items**.
- ✓ [Click](#) to access the inventory document in pdf format.

Location of inventory data / records / files:

Evacuation or Removal of Items

See this Workbook's section, [APPENDIX: Evacuation or Removal of Items](#).

Notes: _____

Facilities

Utilities

In an emergency, monitor the recommendations of local emergency management for guidance. In certain instances, you may be ordered **not** to disconnect certain utilities.

	NAME	ACCT. #	PHONE #	WEBSITE if applicable
Electricity	_____	_____	_____	_____
Gas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Phone Co.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Security	_____	_____	_____	_____
Internet	_____	_____	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____	_____	_____
Trash	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____

Notes: _____

Security System

Keep records which identify individuals granted secure entry status to facilities via key or alarm code and indicating to which portions of the property access has been given.

Designated staff, vestry members, and certain ministry leaders should be equipped for the armament and disarmament of the security system, if one is installed.

To aid emergency responders and others who must arrive and assist quickly, outside doors should be clearly numbered or labeled.

Properties with numerous outside doors should prominently number each door.

NAME & PHONE NUMBERS

Security Company _____

Locksmith _____

Other _____

Congregation member who oversees security system _____

SECURITY ALARM LOCATIONS:

Notes: _____

PREPARE YOUR PEOPLE

Families & Individuals

Keep Watch and Stay Informed

Encourage your members to **sign up for alerts** applicable for your region.

- ▶ See this Workbook's [4. Weather & Hazards Watch](#) section.

Emergency Supplies

Checklists for assembling emergency supplies plus more in-depth resources from county, state, and federal agencies are available online.

- We provide links to resources on epicenter-prepare.org for:
 - [families](#)
 - [persons with disabilities](#)
 - [pets](#)
 - [congregations.](#)



Vulnerable Members

In every congregation and nearby community there are persons without the ability to prepare themselves or their homes for a disaster. Likewise there are individuals without a means of evacuation.

Finding out who these individuals are and helping them become better prepared could be a ministry project for members of your congregation who possess appropriate understanding and sensitivity to persons with vulnerabilities.

Some examples of vulnerable persons may include but are not limited to:

- Elderly
- Low-income
- Illness or disability
- Single parents
- Persons with limited physical or communication abilities
- Non-English speakers

Vulnerable individuals and families may need additional information and assistance in order to prepare for and/or survive an emergency.

Notes: _____

DISASTER-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Below are links to websites which contain information specific to types of disasters.

Chemical or Hazardous Materials Spills

Chemical Emergency Preparedness

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/chemical-emergency.html>

Hazardous Materials Incidents

<https://www.ready.gov/hazmat>

More resources from Texas A&M

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/accidents-that-are-disasters/chemical-or-hazardous/>

Earthquakes

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/earthquakes/>

Fires & Wildfires

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/fires-wildfires/>

Preparing for summer wildfires

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/summerwildfires/>

Texas A&M Forest Service “Fire Danger: Current Situation”

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/currentsituation/>

Floods

Prepare

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/preparing-for-the-unexpected-floods.pdf>

More resources <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/floods/>

Heat Waves

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/heat-waves/>

Hurricanes

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/hurricanes/>

Loss of Power & Utilities

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/power-loss/>

Severe Weather

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/severe-weather/>

Tornadoes

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/tornadoes/>

Winter Storms

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/naturally-occurring/winter-storms/>

Other Disasters: Texas Extension Disaster Education Network

Resources are categorized under these headings:

- Agricultural
- Naturally Occurring
- Accidents that are Disasters
- Violence & Terrorism
- <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/by-type/>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Searchable, research-based information and sustainable solutions for improving the well-being of the land, people and animals across the State of Texas. <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/>

Notes: _____

APPENDIX



APPENDIX: Serving the Community

Congregation Facility Assets

In an emergency the church has an opportunity to respond in love to a hurting community.

Discuss assets of your organization that may be valuable to the wider community in an emergency and the ways in which they can be used to offer relief. Discuss these in advance with the Red Cross as there are many health and safety restrictions.

A congregation's assets may include:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shower facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Washer and dryer | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large kitchen facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Large meeting space,
indoor or outdoor | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary office space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food pantry | | <input type="checkbox"/> Community connections |

Other assets present in our congregation: _____

Temporary Sheltering

The American Red Cross (ARC) offers training for organizations who can qualify to serve as an ARC temporary shelter. Contact your local ARC office for more information.

Whether or not you want to serve as an official ARC shelter, their resources can be helpful in advance of an emergency. Some related videos are available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@americanredcrossdisastertr9422/search>

Vulnerable Neighbors

What nearby unhoused individuals and/or communities would need assistance?

Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

People experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable during disasters. Learn how to work effectively with unhoused individuals before, during, and after a disaster.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-planners/homelessness>

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Media Communications

Addressing the Media

To ensure an accurate representation of the congregation and the emergency situation, establish who may speak to the media on behalf of the congregation:

For assistance in addressing the press, contact Tammy Lanier, Director of Communications for the Diocese of Texas at (713) 520-6444 or tlanier@epicenter.org.

► Persons authorized to **speak with the media on behalf of the congregation** are:

Social Media

To ensure an accurate and appropriate representation of an emergency situation, establish in advance who may provide and post related information on authorized congregation social media channels ***in the event of emergency conditions***.

For assistance in developing your policy, contact Tammy Lanier, Director of Communications for the Diocese at (713) 520-6444 or tlanier@epicenter.org.

It may be that the individuals who regularly post information on your social media would not be those who would post emergency information.

Ensure that your emergency communicators (1) will have login credentials to post information to these channels or (2) will provide information to those who will post information.

Notes: _____

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNEL	INDIVIDUALS CREDENTIALLED FOR THIS CHANNEL	Y/N: EMERGENCY ONLY?
COMMUNICATORS:		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Identifying Risks

History

Create a list of all local disasters and emergencies in recent memory.

Consider going back as far as 50 years, even. Emergencies of the past can help prepare for the future.

Though structures may have been built and steps taken in order to prevent these crises from happening again, do not assume that they are infallible. Human-made infrastructure may be insufficient to mitigate against future disasters.

Future

List potential disasters/emergencies, regardless of their actual likelihood, considering even the most extreme possibilities.

Types of events may include chemical spill, fire, hurricane, tornado, flood, mass shooting, public violence, mass job loss, prolonged heat wave, power / electricity failure, public health crisis, etc.

Notes: _____

Emergencies Most Likely To Occur

1. Review your lists of historic and possible crises.
2. Identify the emergencies most likely to affect your community or congregation.
3. List them below in order of likelihood, and identify the means through which your Emergency Committee would receive warning.

▶ See this Workbook's [Emergency Alerts](#) section for info about staying informed.

Event type 1 _____

Warning systems _____

Event type 2 _____

Warning systems _____

Event type 3 _____

Warning systems _____

Event type 4 _____

Warning systems _____

Event type _____

Warning systems _____

Notes: _____

Risk Mitigation

Certain areas of the building(s) may be more vulnerable to or pose greater risk in an emergency.

- ✓ Walk through your facilities and make note of vulnerable areas
- ✓ Enlist the help of an outsider who may have fresh eyes to see.
- ✓ identify steps to alleviate these concerns.

Examples of vulnerable areas include:

1. Rooms with only one exit, which could hinder evacuation.
2. Doors that do not properly latch or lock.
3. Dead trees which can be uprooted and tossed about in high winds.
4. Electronics, such as computers, which are not on surge protectors.
5. Candles left lit inside the church.
6. Large or fragile windows, vulnerable in wind and driving rain events.
7. Areas prone to flooding.
8. Deteriorating roofing or walkway covering.

Our vulnerable areas include:

Area 1 _____

Risk reduction plan _____

Area 2 _____

Risk Reduction plan _____

Area 3 _____

Risk reduction plan _____

Area 4 _____

Risk Reduction plan _____

Area 5 _____

Risk reduction plan _____

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Safeguarding your People from an Active Shooter Incident

Below are resource references for assisting your congregation as it undertakes preparing and training for appropriate action in the event of a violent intrusion.

These are not prioritized by the diocese but are a sampling from the large volume of online resources, some of which are geared toward active shooter safety for houses of worship.



Local resources. Consider meeting with your local law enforcement agency when preparing a congregation safety plan.

Theological reflection. Discuss within your congregation the tension between being a welcoming community and the need to be a safe place for all people. This book can help you begin the conversation: [Open Arms, Safe Communities: The Theology of Church Security](#) by Jeanie Garrett.

“Gentle as a Dove, Wise as a Serpent”

Published in ECF (Episcopal Church Foundation) Vital Practices “Vestry Papers.” Author is Haley Bankey, an active member of The Episcopal Church.

Bankey offers theological and pastoral perspectives with additional resources and practical steps to take for increased campus safety. <https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/article/1060/gentle-as-a-dove-wise-as-a-serpent>

FEMA’s Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship (updated 2022) provides a wide range of voluminous information regarding emergency operations planning for the spectrum of threats and hazards they may face. “Scalable for use by small to large-sized houses of worship.”

This section of the aforementioned Guide, **“A Closer Look: Active Shooter Situations”** presents house of worship emergency planning for an active shooter situation. <https://www.fema.gov/node/guide-developing-high-quality-emergency-operations-plans-houses-worship>

C.I.S.A.’s “Protecting Houses of Worship” portal. <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/protecting-houses-worship>

C.I.S.A. (Cybersecurity & (physical) Infrastructure Security Agency) is an operational component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and works to understand, manage, and **mitigate risk** to the nation’s cyber and **physical infrastructure** in the **public and private sector**.

C.I.S.A.’s “Protecting Places of Worship: Six Steps to Enhance Security Against Targeted Violence Fact Sheet” <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/protecting-places-worship-six-steps-enhance-security-against-targeted-violence-fact-sheet>

Ben’s Lighthouse. <https://benslighthouse.org/>

“Ben’s Lighthouse” was founded in December 2012 in response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The purpose and mission is to create a more compassionate and connected world by helping kids feel empowered and connected to the community. Helping is Healing™ and each child has their own unique “light” to share.

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Partner Congregation

Partnering with another congregation within the diocese provides an opportunity to both serve others and receive services in an emergency.

Partnering congregations should be located in a separate region which is likely not susceptible to the same emergencies at the same time as your congregation.

Partners can serve as a center for communications, an evacuation site, or a source of relief volunteers, among other things.

Partner Congregation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ **Website** _____
Social Media _____
Contacts _____
Date of Agreement _____

Services which may be offered:

From Partner to Us

From Us to Partner

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Items to Evacuate or Remove

Items to Safeguard

Sometimes it may be necessary to ensure continuity of operations and prevent irreparable damage by removing items from the site – but only if it is safe and prudent to do so.

Note: There are times when relocating items to another location is not safer than to leave them on your church campus.

Examples of valuable items that might be removed and preserved whenever prudent and safe include

- computers
- church heirlooms
- physical church registers and records

Many congregations have learned how to efficiently "work from home" and gather online or outdoors during the pandemic which began early 2020. Lessons learned can be applied to preparing for an emergency incident.

You may wish to prepare and have ready a "church in a box" for worship, such as chalice and paten, purificators, a book of common prayer, and a hymnal.

Items to Safeguard during an Evacuation

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Utilities

Shutting Off Utilities & Services

Record the location of and instructions for shutting off each utility connection.

Train key staff, clergy, vestry, and ministry leaders in the task.

- ▶ Monitor the recommendations of local emergency management for notice to disconnect certain of your utilities.
- ▶ You may be ordered **not** to disconnect certain utilities.

Location and instructions for shut-off:

Electricity 1 _____

Electricity 2 _____

Electricity 3 _____

Natural Gas 1 _____

Natural Gas 2 _____

Natural Gas 3 _____

Water 1 _____

Water 2 _____

Water 3 _____

Other 1 _____

Other 2 _____

Other 3 _____

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Hazard Alarms

✓ Check hazard alarms monthly.

✓ Replace batteries or alarms as necessary.

Alarm Locations

- 1) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 2) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 3) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 4) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 5) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 6) Smoke/Fire: _____
- 7) Carbon Monoxide: _____
- 8) Carbon Monoxide: _____
- 9) Carbon Monoxide: _____
- 10) Other: _____
- 11) Other: _____

Considerations:

How often are these alarms checked?

If there is a map of these locations, where is it located?

Name of congregation member who oversees these systems:

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Fire Extinguishers

- [] Train staff and ministry leaders in the location and use of fire extinguishers.
- [] Post clear instructions with the fire department's phone # next to each extinguisher.
- [] Check fire extinguishers regularly for expiration/replacement. Add critical dates to the office calendar.

Fire extinguisher locations	Expiration dates
1) _____	_____
2) _____	_____
3) _____	_____
4) _____	_____
5) _____	_____
6) _____	_____
7) _____	_____
8) _____	_____

If there is a map of fire extinguisher locations, where is that located?

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: First Aid

First Aid, CPR, AED

Build a First Aid Kit

<https://www.ready.gov/kit>

First Aid Kit Locations

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

Date Last Checked

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Find CPR & First Aid Classes

<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class>

Indicate which training is applicable

Name of person trained	First Aid	Adult CPR	Infant CPR
1) _____	_____	_____	_____
2) _____	_____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____	_____
4) _____	_____	_____	_____
5) _____	_____	_____	_____

Notes: _____

Find AED Training & Resources:

<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/aed/using-an-aed/what-is-aed>

Location of AED _____

Person(s) responsible for
maintenance and battery check _____

Person(s) trained to use it: _____

Notes: _____

APPENDIX: Sample Emergency Preparedness Calendar

	CONGREGATION	HOUSEHOLDS
JAN	Schedule Emergency Preparedness Plan kick-off meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make an Emergency Plan • Maintain first aid kit
FEB	Inventory church property and assets	Store water for emergency
MAR	Safeguard critical records	Make sheltering plan in the event of evacuation or shelter-in-place order
APR	Update member contact list	Gather emergency food supply
MAY	Post preparedness information on website and in newsletter	Prepare for Unique Family Needs: pets, medicines, disabilities, etc.
ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON JUNE 1 ST THROUGH NOV. 30 TH		
JUN	Send emergency test message to members	Know your work, school, & community emergency plans
JULY	Safety check building security (alarms and doors)	Review family communications plan
AUG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance on First Aid Kit and AED. • Verify those trained in First Aid, CPE, AED 	Be informed: know sources for trusted information
SEP	Check fire alarms, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors	Check fire alarms, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors
OCT	Verify accurate fire exits posted in all rooms	Have alternative power sources: batteries, generator
NOV	Winter safety and preparation	Collect emergency supplies
DEC		Winter safety and preparation



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