

The Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program



*For Individuals, Families, Parishes and
Your Local Community*

Part II: Parish Disaster Planning

Participant Guide



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.



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Parish Disaster Planning, Video 1

Video 1 Introduction



Catholic Charities USA is the official domestic relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Church.



During disaster response and recovery, Catholic Charities USA supports the efforts of local Catholic Charities agencies in communities, to provide resources and services when there are not enough resources to recover. Through various training initiatives, Catholic Charities USA also supports the disaster preparedness efforts of individuals and families, Parishes and dioceses, and local Catholic Charities agencies. This program is called the Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program.

Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program Objectives

- Prepare as Catholic individuals and families for disasters and emergencies
- Prepare as Catholic Parishes so that our sacraments and services will be available to those recovering
- Prepare as Catholic members of the community to help all of our neighbors in time of crisis



Part I of the Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program is called Preparing Individuals and Families. Part II in the series is titled Parish Disaster Planning. It is offered because “Being Church”, or living as people of God, is especially important in times of disaster; Parishes that are prepared for disasters are better able to answer their Gospel call to help others.



Light Our Way, A Guide for Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster, by the National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters, says: “Disaster disrupts spiritual lives significantly. Nurturing people’s spiritual needs contributes to holistic healing. Everyone can benefit from Spiritual Care in times of disaster.”



Opening Prayer: Lift Up Those Who Have Fallen

Holy One, You are our comfort and strength in times of disaster, crisis, and chaos. Surround us now with your grace and peace through storms, earthquakes, fires, and floods. By your Spirit, lift up those who have fallen, sustain those who work to rescue and rebuild, and fill us with the hope of your new creation; through Jesus Christ, our rock and redeemer. Amen.

Parish Disaster Planning Overview

Parish Disaster Planning focuses on preparing your Parish to protect its members and staff, and to continue administrative, sacramental and communal responsibilities during times of disaster or other severe emergency events. It provides guidance on how to answer the question, “How prepared is my Parish?” It also describes a process for establishing and prioritizing appropriate preparedness goals, and for developing plans that can be put into action when the need arises.

Parish Disaster Planning Video 1 topics include:

- Picture of Parish Preparedness
- Assessing Risks to the Parish
- Assessing Parish Preparedness
- Establishing Parish Preparedness Goals
- Implementing Parish Preparedness Goals

Parish Disaster Planning Video 2 topics include:

- Parish Emergency Operations Plans
- Parish Continuity of Operations Plans

The Participant Guide is for use during and after the training. It summarizes the video content and includes instructions for activities that demonstrate some of the necessary steps of Parish preparedness. The Resources Section contains forms, checklists and links to documents that you can use later to support your efforts.

Picture of Parish Preparedness



Parish disaster preparedness:

- Means taking actions to get ready for and reduce the impacts of disaster
- Requires understanding of existing risks and vulnerabilities and a plan of action to limit the impact of disaster events
- Requires commitment from leadership and assistance from committed members of the Parish

Three Areas of Parish Preparedness

Securing Parish Operations



Take steps to ensure that Parish staff, facilities, and resources are protected and that normal operations can continue or resume as quickly as possible after a disaster.

Protecting the Church Community



Make plans for protecting members and guests should a disaster event occur during Mass, religious education, Parish celebrations or ministry gatherings.

In some Parishes protecting the community may include post-disaster assistance to Parish members and others in the community. This topic will be addressed in Part III of the Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program, Sharing Our Gifts.

Protecting Sacred and Important Items



Establish contingencies for protecting the Blessed Sacrament and sacred items, valuables, sacramental records and other essential Parish documents during a disaster event.

Partners in Parish Preparedness



Regardless of your current state of Parish preparedness, it is always valuable to engage with Catholic and other community partners in preparedness such as Diocesan facilities management offices and your Bishop. Other partners may include:

- Disaster operations component of the local Catholic Charities agency

- Other Catholic and non-Catholic voluntary organizations active in disasters (e.g. the Knights of Columbus, Society of St. Vincent DePaul)
- National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) <https://www.nvoad.org/>
- Local emergency management agency

What Does a Prepared Parish Look Like?



Most Parishes that are in hazard risk areas have learned from their own disaster experience or that of a nearby Parish.

As an example, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community in central Florida has experienced tropical storms and major hurricanes. The goal of their Emergency Response Policy and Procedures is to “guard the work and mission of the church from preventable harm and mitigate the risk of harm to life and property through emergency readiness....” The Director of

Operations works with the Pastor to ensure completion of preparedness tasks including:

- An annual risk assessment
- Review and revision of emergency directives, for example for an emergency during Faith Formation classes
- Training and preparation for the church staff and volunteers
- Ensuring proper functioning of on-site emergency equipment
- Confirming the proper posting and placement of emergency supplies and plans



Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Columbia, Missouri, is at risk from tornadoes and earthquakes. They too have identified an Emergency Preparedness Team and have completed an Emergency Operations Plan.

Copies of Blessed Sacrament’s Emergency Response Policy and Procedures and Sacred Heart’s Emergency Operations Plan may be found in the Resource section of this Participant Guide.

Assessing Risks to the Parish



Base disaster preparedness actions on the best possible understanding of what could happen. You may be able to easily describe the hazards that could affect your Parish and the community in which the Parish is located.



Activity: Assessing Disaster Risk Part 1

In the Hazard Risk Table that begins below, check off the disaster events that have occurred or could occur in your community, based on what you know about your community's history and your Parish location.

- If possible, include details on the earlier events and how frequently they have occurred.
- Then rate the risk from each potential disaster based on the likelihood of its occurrence and potential

Hazard Risk Table

Hazards	Previous Occurrence Y/N	Frequency 1-High 2-Moderate 3-Unlikely	Potential Impact		Hazard Ranking 1 Highest
			1-High 2-Moderate 3-Minimal		
Earthquake			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Extreme Cold / Winter Storm			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Extreme Heat /Drought			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Fires (home fire and/or wildfire)			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Floods (river, coastal, flash flooding)			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		

Hazards	Previous Occurrence Y/N	Frequency 1-High 2-Moderate 3-Unlikely	Potential Impact		Hazard Ranking 1 Highest
			1-High 2-Moderate 3-Minimal		
Hurricane/Coastal Storms			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Man-made			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Pandemic			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Terrorism/Active Shooter			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		
Tornadoes/Severe Windstorms			Members and staff		
			Property and facilities		
			Ministry and services		

Prioritizing risks involves assessing the most important Parish operations. Providing Mass, the sacraments, and other spiritual care for Parishioners requires a functioning Parish administration. Other high priority activities and operations vary by Parish, e.g., operation of a school or food bank, Parish facilities used by support and youth groups, and events that are part of Parish identity. If the risk assessment shows that certain hazard events could negatively affect what the Parish considers most important, they are considered higher priority risks.



Activity: Assessing Disaster Risk Part 2

In the table below, note high priority Parish operations and assets to protect.

High Priority Operations	Related Assets

Assessing Parish Preparedness

After assessing disaster risks review any existing Parish preparedness measures to determine what is needed. Consider these readiness categories: plans, equipment and supplies, facilities, information and training.

Plans



Plans help ensure Parish readiness to respond to incidents that have the potential to threaten the safety of people and Parish operations.

For example, Emergency Operations Plans, Continuity of Operations plans, Disaster Response and Recovery plans, Emergency Response Policies and Procedures.

Equipment and Supplies



These are the tangible items that aid in preventing, planning for, responding to, or recovering from a hazard event such as generators, sandbags, firefighting equipment, and emergency communications equipment.

Facilities



Facilities include any structure, physical asset attached to a structure, identified safety areas, and accessibility measures that aid the Parish in preventing, preparing for, responding to or recovering from a disaster event. include: identified shelter areas, secure storage, and arrangements for those with access and functional needs.

Site assessment is an effective way to check Parish facilities for disaster readiness. Assessment include structural integrity; compliance with building codes and for individuals with disabilities, access and functional needs; location in a flood zone, and emergency vehicle access.

Information



Information is any signage, policy, list, inventory or system that aids the Parish in preventing, preparing for, responding to or recovering from a disaster event. Examples include emergency procedure charts, call-down phone lists, emergency notification software and signage, and facilities maps.

Training



Training is any course, activity, discussion, or educational opportunity that advances Parish disaster preparedness. For example, Parish and community disaster drills and tabletop exercises. Self-paced or instructor-led training is also offered through Federal, State and Local emergency management agencies and some voluntary agencies; links to some offered training are included in the Resource section.

Opportunities for Parish leaders, preparedness committee members and others to complete training include:

CCUSA Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/resource/cdpp/>

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training <https://www.ready.gov/cert>

FEMA Independent Study courses <https://training.fema.gov/is/>

Document the Risk Assessment and the Preparedness Assessment so that Parish leadership and the disaster preparedness committee can review and identify areas for improvement. A sample Parish preparedness assessment form for one hazard is provided on the next page. Make copies to develop assessments for your other high priority hazards.

Parish Preparedness Assessment Form

For each high priority hazard, assess Parish Preparedness in each readiness category.

PREPAREDNESS FOR _____ HAZARD			
Readiness Category	Examples	Hazard-specific Requirements	Prepared? Y/N
Plans	Emergency Operations Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, Emergency Procedures		
Equipment and Supplies	Generators, sandbags, firefighting equipment, and emergency communications equipment		
Facilities	Shelter areas, secure storage, arrangements for those with access and functional needs		
Information	Emergency procedure charts, call-down phone lists, emergency notification software and signage, and facilities maps		
Training	Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program, Community Emergency Response Training, FEMA Independent Study		
Other			
People	Staffing required to meet disaster response and recovery requirements		
Insurance	Policies that address specific hazards		

Establishing Parish Preparedness Goals



Use the list of priority assets, assessment results, and identified areas for improvement to develop Parish preparedness priorities and goals.



What is important to the faith community and why?

Saving lives is always a priority; other preparedness priorities may differ, depending on Parish characteristics e.g. Parish size and geographical area.



Develop goals after the Parish leadership and disaster preparedness committee have identified priority preparedness initiatives. Goals are broad, identify what will be achieved, and identify action needed for a successful outcome.

Examples of preparedness goals:

- Protect Parish assets and people from wind damage and reduce insurance premiums by replacing windows with impact resistant glass.
- Establish and practice a phone tree to communicate emergency announcements to staff and/or members if the Church or Parish facilities have been damaged and a schedule change is required



If a Parish has multiple preparedness goals, how can they decide on which ones to pursue?

The committee and/or Parish members at large collaborate in order to consider all opinions and ideas. One example of a collaborative process is to use “Disaster Dollars.” Each person participating in the process receives an equal number of “dollars” or votes and can choose to assign them to any of the suggested goals, or to only one. When totaled, the goals receiving the most votes or “dollars” are selected for further consideration.

Implementing Parish Preparedness Goals



Parish Preparedness Objectives

Objectives are specific, measurable actions taken to implement goals.

Sample Preparedness Goal:

- Establish a roster of disaster response volunteers ready to perform clean-up and repair work on Parish facilities following a damaging hazard event.

Possible objectives:

- Recruit ___volunteers by _____
- Obtain volunteer release forms by _____
- Communicate with volunteers by _____
- Train volunteers by _____

Objectives should also include completion dates. Once objectives are identified, the volunteer coordinator or other responsible party can pursue resources needed to achieve them.

Resources for Improving Parish Preparedness

There are a wide array of resources and examples of how to improve the disaster preparedness of your Parish in the Resources section at the end of this Participant Guide.

END OF VIDEO 1

Parish Disaster Planning, Video 2

Video 2 Introduction

Video 2 is focused on implementing one of the most critical Parish preparedness goals: putting effective plans in place to address the identified hazard risks.

Opening Prayer: “God is Our Refuge”



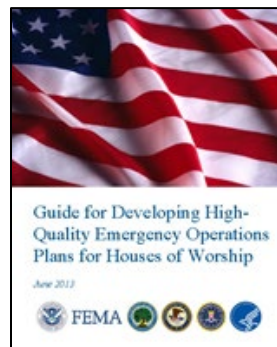
“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.”

Disaster plans may not prevent a hazard event from happening, but a good plan will strengthen the ability of the Parish to protect people from the impacts, to continue serving the church community, and to recover more quickly.

Video 2 discusses two components of Parish disaster planning:

- Parish Emergency Operations Plan, referred to as an EOP
- Parish Continuity of Operations Plan, referred to as a COOP Plan.

Parish Emergency Operations Plans



A Parish EOP is an ongoing plan maintained by a Parish for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards. “Ongoing” means the plan is practiced, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

An EOP describes how people and property will be protected; who is responsible for carrying out specific actions; the personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available; and outlines how all actions will be coordinated.

The EOP planning process in this training follows FEMA’s Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship, developed by experts from across the inter-faith community, including Catholic Charities.

Principles of Disaster Planning

Adapt the planning process to the Parish – accommodate your Parish’s unique characteristics and situation.

Planning requires leadership support– it begins with the pastor, who designates one or more individuals to lead the planning process.

Parish Emergency Operations Planning Process

The process follows a series of steps, which the Parish revisits over time.



Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team

Ask Parish members who have emergency management experience, and other representatives of community first responder organizations to join your team.

Include Parish staff knowledgeable about facilities and Parish functions.

Try to have diverse representation on the planning team, including individuals with disabilities, young adults and the elderly.

Keep the planning team small enough to permit close collaboration, yet large enough to be representative of the Parish leadership and members, and community partners.

When the team is formed, establish and maintain a realistic meeting schedule.



Activity: Assemble a Planning Team

Work individually or as a group, whichever is appropriate for your setting, to complete the “Assemble a Planning Team Worksheet” below.

- Column 1: List categories of experience needed for your team.
- Column 2: List names of individuals you already know that would meet the criteria.
- Column 3: Record ideas for identifying and inviting members of the Parish community and others to join your team.

Assembling a Planning Team Worksheet

Planning Team Experience Needed	Parishioners and Others with Desired Experience	How to Identify and Recruit Team Members
Emergency Management Planning		
Parish Facilities		
Parish Functions		
Parish Ministries		
Diverse Parish Community		
Accessibility		
Other		

Step 2: Understand the Situation

This step, discussed in Parish Disaster Planning Video 1 involves:

- Identifying threats and hazards
- Assessing the risks posed by those hazards
- Prioritizing risks based on the likely impacts and effects on people, property, and Parish functions

Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives

EOP goals and objectives are determined in almost the same way as for overall Parish preparedness, discussed in Video. The planning team decides which of the threats and hazards identified in Step 2 will be addressed in the Parish emergency operations plan.



Some Parishes initially look at the highest priority items and then address others in future planning cycles. FEMA guidance recommends 3 goals for each high priority hazard.



Objectives represent tasks that must be accomplished to achieve goals of the EOP. For example, if the goal is “Protect all persons from injury caused by tornados” objectives might include:

- Communicate the shelter-in-place warning to all persons on site
- Guide all persons on site to designated shelter facilities
- Guide all persons to remain in shelter until safe to emerge

Step 4: Develop the EOP

The EOP defines courses of action that describe how and when each response will be implemented under a variety of circumstances. Identify decision points by walking through scenarios of how an event could unfold, such as whether to evacuate, shelter-in-place, or lockdown. Develop courses of action to achieve goals and objectives by answering a series of questions such as:

- What is the action?
- Who is responsible for the action?
- How will this action affect children, the elderly, and others with access and functional needs?

For example, consider what to do if a tornado warning occurs during Mass.

- One action might be guiding Mass attendees to the designated shelter
- The EOP may assign this responsibility to the ushers
- Children, the elderly, and others with access and functional needs will need assistance

After plan approval develop specific protocols and procedures to support the actions described in the plan.



Activity: Identifying Courses of Action

Pick a hazard that presents a high risk to your Parish. Think about how it could occur and in each circumstance what actions to take.

Hazard Event and Circumstances	Courses of Action

Courses of action, such as Evacuation, Lockdown, Shelter in Place, may best be described in Functional Annexes to the Emergency Operations Plan. Refer to FEMA's Guide for Developing High- Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship for more information.

FEMA's Guide for Developing High- Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF

Step 5: Prepare, Review, and Obtain Approval

Develop a draft of the EOP based on the courses of action developed in Step 4.

Sections of a Parish EOP

Lay out the plan to make it easy for users to find the information they need. EOPs commonly have three main section, as described in the FEMA Guide for Houses of Worship.

- **Basic plan** provides an overview of the Parish's approach to emergency operations. Although the basic plan guides the development of the more operationally oriented annexes, its primary audience consists of the Parish, local emergency management officials, and the community (as appropriate). The elements listed in this section should meet the needs of this audience while providing a solid foundation for the development of supporting annexes.
- **Functional annexes:** detail the goals, objectives, and courses of action of functions (e.g., evacuation, lockdown, and recovery) that apply across multiple threats or hazards. They discuss how the Parish manages a function before, during, and after an incident.
- **Threat- and hazard-specific annexes** specify the goals, objectives, and courses of action that a Parish will follow to address a threat or hazard (e.g., hurricane, active shooter). These annexes,

like the functional annexes, discuss how the Parish manages a threat or hazard before, during, and after an incident.

A template for a Parish EOP based on recommendations from the FEMA Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship is included in the Resource section.

Coordinate to ensure the Parish plan is consistent with local community plans, for example on evacuation instructions, locations of public shelters, and warning. Use plain language and consider using pictures or visual cues for key action steps.

The team reviews the plan, obtains approval from senior Parish management, and shares the plan with the Parish community.

Step 6: Implement and Maintain the Parish EOP



Step 6 involves three important elements:

- Training those who have a role in the plan
- Exercising the plan
- Reviewing, revising and maintaining the plan

Training

For any plan to be effective, those involved need to know their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after an incident. This can be accomplished using a variety of methods.



How will you familiarize Parish staff, ministry leaders and Parish members with the Parish EOP?

Consider the following:

- Meeting to review roles with those who have emergency responsibilities
- Conducting visits to shelter and assembly locations
- Distributing the EOP and related policies and procedures
- Posting information such as evacuation routes and color-coded emergency procedures
- Conducting Information sessions with Parish community members

Exercises

Exercises enable those with a role in the EOP to practice and identify any weaknesses. They require time and resources, but they are important! Exercises:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Improve coordination
- Find resource gaps
- Develop individual performance

- Identify opportunities for improvement

Exercise Types

- **Discussion-based exercises** provide a forum for discussing or developing plans, agreements, training and procedures. They are generally less complicated than operations-based types.
- **Seminars** provide an overview of strategies, plans, policies, or procedures. Lecture based, casual atmosphere, minimal time constraints, facilitator-led.
- **Workshops** are more structured than seminars. Often used to develop a written product as a group, in coordinated activities.
- **Tabletop exercises** facilitate conceptual understanding, identify strengths, and areas for improvements, and/or achieving changes in perceptions. Participants are encouraged to problem-solve together through in-depth discussion.
- **Games** simulate operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or hypothetical situation.
- **Operations-based exercises** are used to validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. They are characterized by actual implementation of response activities in reaction to an exercise scenario.
 - **Drills** are coordinated, supervised activities commonly used to provide training on tasks specific to new equipment or procedures, to introduce or validate procedures, or practice and maintain current skills
 - **Functional exercises** are designed to validate and evaluate capabilities, multiple functions and/or sub-functions, or interdependent groups of functions.
 - **Full-scale exercises** are high stress multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional activities designed to test coordinated responses and rapid problem solving skills. A Parish may be asked by the community to participate in a full-scale exercise if the Parish has a role in the local government's emergency operations plan.

An excellent resource for learning about exercises is FEMA's Independent Study Course, IS-0120.C, An Introduction to Exercises. <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-120.c>

Plan Review and Maintenance



Members of Parish planning teams can expect to participate in reviewing and revising the EOP, as a whole or in parts, every year or two years. Plans may be reviewed routinely or when events occur that may indicate changes are needed.



What events would indicate a review of the Parish EOP is needed?

The following provide good opportunities to check assumptions and assess feasibility of planned actions.

- Actual emergencies occur
- Parish organization or resources change
- Guidance is received from the bishop
- Formal exercises are performed
- Threats or hazards change
- Parish demographics change

Summary of Parish Emergency Operations Planning

The six steps in the Parish Emergency Operations Planning Process can be tailored to apply to most disaster plans.

Parish Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans



How is a Parish COOP Plan different from the Parish EOP?

- The Parish EOP focuses on the immediate life safety of Parish staff, members, and guests during hazard events, protecting sacred objects, and reducing property damage.
- The COOP plan is focused on maintaining essential Parish functions when the church, staff members, and/or Parish facilities are unavailable due to a disaster event.

There are multiple sources of guidance on COOP planning:

FEMA Continuity of Operations Plan Template for Federal Departments and Agencies

[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/5c4896dd74fd2b18bc900e60935debe9/COOP_Planning_Template.pdf)

[data/5c4896dd74fd2b18bc900e60935debe9/COOP_Planning_Template.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/5c4896dd74fd2b18bc900e60935debe9/COOP_Planning_Template.pdf)

National Disaster Interfaith Network http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php

Alliance for Human Services <http://www.allianceforhumanservices.org/about.html>

Links are also included in the Resource Section.

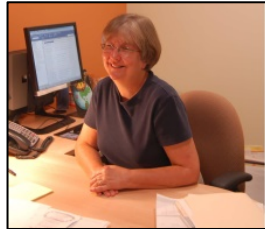
Principles of emergency planning also apply to the Parish COOP Plan; buy-in from Parish leadership is as important to the development of a COOP plan as it is to EOP development.

When selecting a COOP planning leader Pastors look for someone who is credible, knows Parish operations, and has business continuity planning experience.

Parish Continuity of Operations Planning Process

The COOP planning process is similar to that used for the Parish EOP but the expected outcome is different. An EOP addresses immediate response actions; the COOP Plan describes how the Parish will minimize disruption of normal operations.

Step 1: Form the COOP Planning Team



Ideally the COOP planning team includes experts on the day-to-day operation of Parish facilities, functions, and ministries; and Parish community members with risk management or business continuity experience.

Step 2: Understand the Situation

Understanding is based on the results of the Parish risk assessment. COOP planning focuses on identified risks to the Parish that would create a lengthy interruption in normal operations.

When assessing risk consider natural disasters and other potential hazards such as accidents involving hazardous materials, as well as hate crimes, cyber-attacks, and loss of power.

Has the Parish:

- Identified chemical storage or nearby transportation corridors and considered worst case scenarios?
- Prepared to secure and protect the Eucharist and Parish property if the entire staff become ill in a pandemic?
- Assessed and prepared for the impact on Parish operations of an indefinite interruption in power supply?

Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives

Parish priority activities are its essential functions.



What priority activities of your Parish are most important to continue after a disaster?

Consider activities such as the following:

- Spiritual care - Mass and other sacraments
- Essential social ministries
- The Parish school
- Administrative functions such as record maintenance and financial responsibilities

The **goals** of Parish COOP Plan are to continue to provide these essential Parish functions. The **objectives** break down what is required to perform those functions.

Step 4: Develop the COOP Plan

COOP plans describe:

- Essential Functions
- Orders of Succession
- Delegation of Authority
- Continuity Facilities
- Continuity Communications
- Vital Records Management, and
- Human Capital Management

COOP Planning Tips

- Include only essential functions
- Determine Parish leadership succession if the pastor is unable to perform responsibilities; consult the Diocese in case there are guidelines
- Define who is authorized to make decision
- Identify alternative locations and non-traditional options to continue essential Parish functions
- Select communication alternatives consistent with normal Parish operations, which can access critical data systems and partners
- Back up records and store off-site Plan for staff check-ins to address topics including health, safety, and financial issues

Step 5: Prepare, Review and Obtain Approval

There are many different formats for COOP Plans. The Resource section contains a COOP Plan template that your Parish may consider using.

After the COOP Plan is developed, it is reviewed by the COOP planning team, submitted to the Pastor and other appropriate Parish leadership for approval, and shared with appropriate members of the Parish staff and community.

Step 6: Implement and Maintain the COOP Plan



Train – Exercise – Review – Update

The COOP planning team for the Parish is responsible for maintaining the plan, including the training and testing schedule. Parish leadership is responsible for providing the COOP planning team the necessary resources and support. Review the COOP plan annually to incorporate new technologies, procedures, contact information and other changes.

Parish Disaster Planning Wrap Up

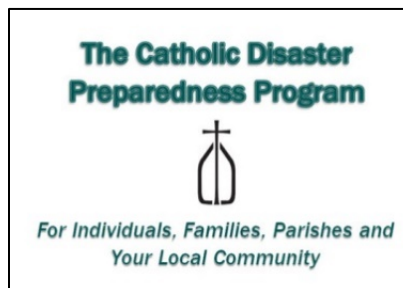


Keeping our Gospel call to help others in mind, has your Parish...

- Assessed its overall state of preparedness for the risks it faces?
- Developed an EOP to enable you to protect your people, your sacraments and your facilities when a disaster event occurs?
- Developed a Continuity of Operations Plan to maintain essential functions even when you lose the use of your facilities for days or weeks?

This concludes the Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program, Parish Disaster Planning training. Catholic Charities USA and its partners wish you God's blessings as you move forward to prepare your parish to protect its people and be able to restore light and hope to Parish members and others after a disaster event.

Visit Catholic Charities USA at Catholiccharitiesusa.org or call (703) 549-1390 for more information about this and other disaster preparedness training opportunities.



Resources

The list below includes hyperlinks to helpful resources that have been referenced throughout the training.

Spiritual Care

Light Our Way, A Guide for Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster http://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2014/04/Light-Our-Way-2013.pdf

Planning Resources

Alliance for Human Services <http://www.allianceforhumanservices.org/about.html>

Continuity Plan Template and Instructions for Non-Federal Entities and CommunityBased Organizations https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1536859210230-a1cc6e2fbae089261fccf7f8ee1693a8/non_federal_continuity_plan_template_508_083118.pdf

Diocese of Davenport Iowa: Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Guide provides information and encourages Parishes in the diocese to prepare accordingly. <https://davenportdiocese.org/disaster-planning>

FEMA, Developing High- Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing EOPs for Houses of Worship FINAL.PDF](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF)

National Disaster Interfaith Network publishes Tips for U.S. Religious Leaders, “Continuity of Operations Planning” http://www.n-in.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php

Sacred Heart Catholic Church Emergency Preparedness Plan, <https://www.sacredheart-church.org/emergency-preparedness/>

Training

CCUSA, Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/resource/cdpp/>

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) <https://www.ready.gov/cert>

FEMA, Voluntary, Faith-Based, & Community Organizations Independent Study Options <https://www.fema.gov/voluntary-faith-based-community-based-organizations/training>

FEMA, You are the Help Until Help Arrives <https://community.fema.gov/until-help-arrives>

Partners

FEMA, Resources to Protect Your House of Worship <https://www.fema.gov/faith-resources>

Knights of Columbus <https://www.kofc.org/en//index.html>

National Council of the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul <https://www.svdpusa.org/Assistance-Services>

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) <https://www.nvoad.org/>



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

Appendices

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Emergency Response Policy and Procedures

- Available in PDF Version of the Participant Guide

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Emergency Reference Guide

- Contact Director of Operations at (352) 394-3562



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Policy and Procedures

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Emergency Response Policy and Procedures

OUR GOAL

Our goal is to create a safe and orderly environment in which people can grow and experience the love of God. As such, we endeavor to guard the work and mission of the church from preventable harm and mitigate the risk of harm to life and property through emergency readiness, safety training, and the implementation of safety protocols.

DEFINITION OF AN EMERGENCY

An emergency is any situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment. Emergencies can vary in nature and may occur unexpectedly. This includes human-made disasters, health hazards, medical emergencies, criminal incidents, natural disasters, or any incident in which the risk of harm and damage are present.

STATEMENT ON EMERGENCY READINESS/RESPONSE

We believe that caring for the welfare of the Body of Christ and our community is a God-given mandate and assignment. As a result, this safety and emergency action plan was developed to help ensure the readiness of the church when responding to incidents that have the potential to impact the safety and protection of our families and property. These written directives serve as a guideline and preferred response to various emergencies and critical incidents. It is understood that emergencies can rapidly evolve and can be highly unpredictable. Therefore, these outlines serve only as a guide and are not intended to be inclusive or restrict good judgment - when acting on behalf of the common good and welfare of others.

PREPARATION AND READINESS

To help ensure the safety of the local church and its members, the Pastor may appoint or assign a security director to oversee and assist in the emergency readiness of the local ministry. This assigned security director should work directly with the Pastor to complete the following:

- The completion of an annual risk assessment report.
- Approve, review, and revise the established written directives.
- Provide safety training and preparation for the church staff and volunteers.
- Ensure the proper functioning of on-site emergency equipment.
- Oversee the volunteer and employee background screening practices.
- Confirm the proper posting and placement of emergency supplies and plans.

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

The following guidelines are intended to serve as an emergency management response model when responding to critical incidents.

The three primary administrative roles, during an emergency, will consist of an Incident Coordinator, an Operations Coordinator, and a Security Coordinator. The implementation of these three roles allows for a safer resolution and provides means for greater delegation, divided responsibilities, and a structured and proficient response to crisis.

INCIDENT COORDINATOR

The Incident Coordinator provides leadership and assumes the primary administrative role during an emergency. This position may be filled initially by any responding staff member until personnel with more experience arrives and assumes control. Ultimately, Pastor or an appointed designee should assume the role of Incident Coordinator during any larger scale event.

The Incident Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Evaluating the extent and nature of the emergency.
- Working to formulate a safe response and aid in reducing the risk of harm or loss.
- Ensuring proper procedures and protocols are followed.
- Delegating responsibilities and assignments.
- Monitoring the overall effectiveness and approach.
- Gather and disseminate timely information to local government agencies and first responders on scene.
- Deal with any media request or release of information to the general public.
- Seek legal counsel or oversight.
-

OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

The Operations Coordinator is responsible for assisting the Pastor/Incident Coordinator with organizing and overseeing the implementation of emergency procedures during incidents.

The roles of the Operations Coordinator include:

- Securing necessary go-kits, maps, blueprints, and administrative resources.
- Work to gather intel and relay information to the Incident Coordinator.
- Identify, allocate, and organize available resources.
- Oversee the joint interaction with outside agencies and arriving first responders.
- Coordinate evacuations and emergency responses.
- Assist with creating assignments and the relaying of timely information to staff and personnel working to address the present needs.

SAFETY COORDINATOR

The Safety Coordinator helps to oversee the orchestration and implementation of the church security team members during an emergency and works in conjunction with the Incident Coordinator/Pastor to address safety concerns and risk mitigation.

The Safety Coordinator assists with the following:

- Oversee the implementation of security team members and those trained in providing medical or emergency services - until the arrival of first responders.
- Conduct a primary assessment of the emergency and relay the evaluations, concerns, and priorities to the Incident Coordinator/Pastor.
- Assist with coordinating and relaying information to security team members.
- Ensure best practices and safety and emergency response protocols are followed.
- Oversee the safe evacuation, sheltering, or lock-down of church members.
- Provide timely updates on any concerns or identified hazards to the Incident Coordinator/Pastor.
- Work in conjunction with the Operations Coordinator to bring a safe and orderly resolution to any emergency or crisis.
- Organize and oversee the proper usage of any emergency response equipment during an emergency.
- Assist first responders with accessing and operating any installed security equipment

INCIDENT REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION

Documentation will be completed for any incident resulting in the notification of law enforcement or medical services, reported injuries, incidents involving the usage of 911, disruptive or confrontational subjects, any allegations of abuse, reported inappropriate conduct, or any incident in which documentation is deemed necessary or requested by administration.

The reporting and documentation of incidents should be completed on an approved church incident report and include the time and date in which the incident occurred, involved parties, any witnesses, the nature of the incident, any responding outside agencies and reports, injuries or allegations of injuries, and any efforts or actions taken by staff and volunteers to assist. Reports should be completed within 24 hrs. of occurrence and submitted to the Pastor upon completion. All reports should be reviewed and retained on file indefinitely.

BASIC FIRST AID KITS

Basic emergency supplies should be assembled and placed into protective kits that are accessible to staff and volunteers. These basic emergency kits will be kept near classrooms, service areas, or in areas where they can be readily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Basic first aid kits should contain the following:

- Basic first aid supplies.
- Disposable gloves.
- Flashlight with spare batteries.
- Hygiene and cleaning supplies.
- Bandages and wound treatment supplies.
- Lotions and ointments.
- Resuscitation face mask.
- CPR and choking reference guide.
- Any additional items to aid in intermediate medical treatment.

EMERGENCY GO-KITS

A “Go-Kit” should be assembled and made readily accessible to administration in the event of an emergency. This kit serves as an emergency response resources for administration and aids in the proper handling and oversight of larger scale events.

Go-Kits should be located in administrative areas and contain the following:

- Copies of church policies, emergency action plans, and emergency response worksheets
- Emergency contact list of local and state government contact numbers.
- Current staff and leadership contact list.
- Member directory.
- First Aid Kit.
- 2 flashlights with extra batteries.
- A megaphone.
- Notebook and writing utensils.
- Overhead maps of the property.
- Internal building diagrams.
- Evacuation maps and outlined meeting areas.
- List of locations for electric panels, water supply, and shut-offs.

EVACUATION PROTOCOL

Only the Pastor, Director of Operations, or a local government employee acting within the scope of their official duties will initiate an evacuation of the church or its facilities. However, in the event of a fire emergency, activation of alarms, or when circumstances dictate, evacuation may be initiated by parties' other than those listed above. In such an event, the Pastor or Director of Operations should be notified immediately and assume the oversight and supervision of the evacuation and emergency.

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The following considerations will be made in the event of a fire emergency, the activation of the fire safety equipment, or the decision to evacuate the facility:

- Evacuate members, visitors, and the entire staff to safe areas.
- Make sure to avoid congregating near the buildings or blocking the roadway access to responding emergency equipment.
- Notification of evacuation should be made through verbal communication, electronic communication, or alarms and the broadcast system.
- Considerations should be made to assist minors, the elderly, and the mobility impaired.
- When able, or safe to do so, the Pastor or staff member should obtain the designated "Go-Kit."
- Staff should conduct systematic sweeps of all bathrooms, unlocked areas, and areas in which persons could be located or hiding. Once completed, a secondary sweep should be initiated.
- During evacuations, doors should NOT be locked - to assist first responders.
- Staff members conducting sweeps of the facility should update administration upon the completion of their task and assigned areas.
- Upon evacuating the facility, workers assigned to the care of minors will ensure they are properly supervised, contained, and accounted for.
- All evacuated minors will stay with their assigned leaders and staff until released to the care of their parent(s) or guardian.
- Missing or unaccounted for members are to be reported immediately.
- Members should not be permitted to re-enter the facility until an all-clear is given and the building deemed safe to occupy by first responders.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

A lockdown procedure may be initiated when there is a concern for the risk of harm to persons inside the facility or the need to isolate entry into hazardous areas. Incidents such as a physical attack, active shooter, hostage incident, disturbance, or any other incident in which the administration deems it necessary to ensure the safety of others may result in a lockdown.

As with evacuations, only the Pastor, the Director of Operations, or a local government employee acting within the scope of their official duties will initiate a lockdown of the church or its facilities. However, in the event of an emergency, in which timing and circumstances dictate, a lockdown may be initiated by parties other than those listed above, and the Pastor or Director of Operations should be notified immediately.

Two different types of lockdowns may be utilized. The first, a **“Stay in Place Lockdown,”** applies to incidents in which specific portions of the facility may need to be isolated or confined to assist in safely addressing situations. Examples include disruptive guests, isolated threats, medical emergencies, or local law enforcement activity in the area. The second, a **“Get Down Lockdown,”** involves the presence of an imminent or active threat upon the campus. Examples include a combative or disruptive guest, an active shooter, or incidents in which the potential for harm to members is present.

STAY IN PLACE LOCKDOWN

The following procedures will be used during a “Stay in Place Lockdown” event:

- Reduce member’s exposure to potential threats and prevent access to emergency areas by creating and manning lockdown points.
- Remove all nearby persons away from the affected areas.
- Advise affected members of the nature of the lockdown and to “stay put” and remain inside the lockdown areas until an all clear is given.
- You should have members avoid hallways, restrooms, or access points to affected areas.
- Unless dictated otherwise, you may resume normal functions inside the lock downed areas – while remaining alert and monitoring activity.
- Communicate and provide regular updates to the Pastor or Director of Operations.

GET DOWN LOCKDOWN

The following procedures will be used during a “Get Down Lockdown” event:

- An announcement made to “Get Down and Lockdown.”
- Move all nearby persons into the closest lockdown area as quickly as possible.
- Persons who are outside and able to withdraw safely should not enter the facility.
- Attempt to utilize lockdown rooms that are free of windows.
- You should avoid hallways, restrooms, or areas without doors that can’t be secured.
- Keep occupants away from windows or doors and turn off the lights.
- Persons inside the lockdown areas should remain silent, to avoid notifying others of their presence, and be prepared to evacuate if circumstances dictate.
- In the event of an active threat, you should utilize additional materials and furniture to barricade and reinforce doors.
- If a threat is presented, you should always remember to “Run, Hide, or Fight.”
- Call 911 and inform them of your location within the facility.
- Remain in place and do not resume normal activities until the “all clear” announcement is given.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Medical emergencies may greatly differ and should be treated with an abundance of caution. Outside of minor injuries, 911 should be called for subjects suffering from any condition in which the extent of the injury cannot be fully determined or treated without the oversight and immediate care of a medical professional.

When responding to medical emergencies, the following actions should be taken:

- Stay calm and assess the situation.
- Immediately call 911.
- Summons any available caregivers with professional training.
- Secure nearby first aid kits or appropriate equipment.
- Render aid within the extent of your ability and knowledge.
- Attempt to isolate any threats and minimize gathering crowds.
- Have a member go outside to flag down arriving first responders and direct them to the person in need of assistance.
- Unless safety or circumstances dictate, do not move the injured parties.
- If the subject is a minor or requesting adult, notify family members or guardians.
- Document the incident on a church incident report.

SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of inclement or severe weather, staff should make every effort to encourage members to shelter in place and remain inside a secure facility until the conditions improve. In the event of severe and inclement weather, the following action should be taken.

- Seek shelter inside the facility.
- Move towards the interior parts of the building.
- Stay away from areas that have windows and exterior doors.
- Avoid rooms that have long span ceilings – like sanctuaries.
- Close nearby doors.
- Remain sheltered in place until the “all-clear” is given.

TORNADO WATCH

When the National Weather Service has declared a tornado watch, it means the weather conditions are considered favorable for tornadoes to form in and near the specified watch area. In the event the church is within or near the watch area, an appointed designee shall do the following:

- Closely monitor the local conditions and maintain updates using radio, television, or media channels.
- Ensure parishioners are entering and remaining inside the facility.
- Monitor the weather for any signs of immediate danger: dark or greenish skies, hail, low lying clouds, loud roar, or the presence of high winds and flying debris.
- If tornadic conditions are present, the appointed person should immediately notify everyone inside the building and follow the tornado warning procedures.

TORNADO WARNING

When the National Weather Service has declared a tornado warning, it means a tornado has been physically sighted in the area or a local Doppler radar indicated an area of rotation that could develop or has developed into a tornado. In the event of a tornado warning and threat, the appointed designee will do the following:

- Have the members immediately seek shelter in the interior portion of the facilities.
- Move members away from windows, doors, or exterior walls.
- Utilize inner storage rooms, bathrooms, or areas with reinforced walls.
- Keep children's classes together and quickly shelter in safe locations.
- Continue to monitor conditions through the use of radios, televisions, or media.
- Provide assistance to persons with disability or mobility impaired.
- Seek shelter under or behind heavy furniture.
- Remain sheltered in place until the weather threat is over.
- Upon conditions improving, you should attempt to conduct a head count and ensure all parties are accounted for.
- After storms have passed, be mindful of potential threats, downed power lines, structure damage, or broken glass and additional hazards.
- Assist persons in need and then assess and report any damages or hazards.

FIRE EMERGENCY

In the event of a fire emergency or the activation of the fire alarm equipment, staff and volunteer workers should begin to immediately assist with evacuating the campus and affected areas. To ensure the safety of others, the following procedures should be implemented when there is a fire emergency:

- If a fire is discovered, and no alarm is sounding, activate the nearest fire alarm pull station to alert others and broadcast the need to evacuate.
- Immediately call 911 to notify them of the fire.
- If able, and the fire is small and partially contained within a confined area, utilize a nearby fire extinguisher and attempt to put out the fire.
- When evacuating, use the safest and closest exit route to get out of the building.
- When evacuating, ensure the occupants within your immediate area are evacuated and then close the doors behind you to confine and restrict the fire from spreading.
- Classrooms and children's ministries should remain together to assist with accountability and supervision.
- Give special attention to persons with disabilities, mobility impaired, and minors.
- Assigned staff should conduct a sweep of restrooms, classrooms, and areas where persons may be hiding or unaware of the evacuation.
- Once evacuated, remain in the specified area and away from the buildings.
- Avoid impeding access to first responders and emergency equipment.
- Identify and report any missing parties, medical needs, or additional hazards.
- Do not permit subjects to get into their vehicles and leave until instructed to do so by responding emergency personnel and staff.

BOMB THREATS

All bomb threats, regardless of the format in which they are received, should be taken serious and reported immediately to the local authorities. It is not the responsibility of the local church administration to investigate or determine the validity of such threats before making such notification to law enforcement. To ensure the safety of the body, church staff will cooperate fully with local investigating agencies to bring a safe resolution.

In the event a bomb or related threat is received, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Immediately call 911 to report any threat.
- Do not delete messages or contaminate any letters or physical evidence.
- Immediately notify the Senior Pastor and on-site administration.
- Photograph or retain any written threats for law enforcement.
- Document any calls in which a threat was made. To include, the phone number, time of the call, demeanor and characteristics of the caller, statements made, Etc.
- Staff may be requested to assist with scanning for any suspicious devices.
- Any suspicious devices should be identified, untouched, and immediately reported.
- Staff is responsible for the safe and orderly evacuation of the occupants.
- Utilize designated evacuation points and prohibit re-entry until permitted.
- Ensure any evidence or associated items are undisturbed.
- While evacuating, leave all rooms unlocked to permit law enforcement access.
- Refer any media request to the Senior Pastor or designated representative.

SUSPICIOUS/DISRUPTIVE PERSON(S)

Identifying suspicious persons and/or suspicious behavior is essential to preventing disruption and reducing the potential of harm to others. Staff and members who observe a suspicious person should notify a staff member or on-duty officer who will work to complete the following:

- Using the role of hospitality, attempt to contact and identify suspected individuals.
- When able, use two members to approach suspicious individuals.
- Attempt to determine the person's intentions and purpose of the visit.
- Attempt to identify any associates and/or related vehicles.
- Closely monitor movements, locations, and the actions of suspicious parties.
- Subjects appearing to be under the influence or acting erratically should not be permitted to enter without prior authorization.
- If permitted to remain, suspicious parties should be continually monitored and assessed.
- Subjects who are verbally argumentative, disruptive, or those who are making threats or inflammatory statements will be asked to leave immediately, 911 called, and a request to have the subject(s) trespassed by responding law enforcement.
- When calling 911, remain on the line with the operator to provide updates on the subject(s) location, description(s), and provide information about the assisting staff members who are present with the subject(s) in question.
- When asking persons to leave, remain professional, use clear verbal commands, and inform them that law enforcement has been notified.
- Create barriers and distance between disruptive parties. If needed, initiate a lockdown to ensure the safety of the members.
- If no recording equipment is presently in use, to capture the contact, consider using cellphones to record your interaction and the activity and behavior of subjects.
- Anytime a law enforcement response is requested, to assist with a suspicious party, law enforcement will be requested to issue a trespass warning.
- After dealing with suspicious subjects or suspicious incidents, security sweeps and searches of the entire facility should be completed.
- All incidents involving disruptive or suspicious persons should be documented on a church incident report.
- A security intel bulletin, containing all known information on suspicious or trespassed subjects, should be created and provided to security team members and administrative staff.

ARMED/AGGRESSIVE SUBJECT(S)

In the event of an incident involving an armed intruder, it is essential to minimize the risk of harm to the body by removing members from the area, isolating the risk, and containing the threat. The preferred response, to an active threat or assault, is to run, hide, or fight. In keeping with that model, the following steps should be considered:

- Make evacuating members away from any potential threats a top priority.
- During an evacuation, encourage members to leave all personal items behind and quickly leave the area.
- Prevent others from entering into the area or returning.
- Upon getting into a safe place call 911 and advise them of your location.
- When unable to quickly and safely evacuate, hide and shelter in place.
- Use any available items to reinforce your shelter area.
- Conceal your location by turning off lights and remaining silent.
- Always attempt to locate alternative escape paths, in the event you are engaged.
- When directly confronted, and no other means of protection are available, you should use every means necessary to defend yourself and others.
- When confronting and attempting to disarm subjects who pose an active threat to yourself and others, attempt to work together as a team to disarm and subdue the threat.
- When safe to do so, and subjects have been contained, you should immediately call 911 to provide information on your locations, descriptions of suspects and staff members present, and any medical conditions or injuries to persons involved.

When first responders arrive on scene to any active threat, it is critical to become familiar with the following appropriate responses:

- Remain calm and avoid yelling or pointing at law enforcement.
- Immediately obey all verbal commands and instructions.
- If applicable, disarm yourself and keep your hands above your head.
- Avoid disrupting potential crime scenes or removing any items of evidentiary value.
- Render aid to injured parties.
- Do not interfere with law enforcement or responding agencies and only assist when requested to do so.

MISSING CHILD

Even with adequate supervision in place, there are times when a child or minor may attempt to intentionally hide, leave unannounced with a guardian, wander away, or become missing. In such incidents, it is important to respond quickly and utilize all resources to locate and recover the minor. When a minor is reported or suspected missing the following measures should be taken:

- Immediately notify surrounding staff members and administration to assist.
- Check the immediate area in which the child was previously located, to ensure they are not hiding in cabinets or concealed under or behind items.
- If not immediately located, call 911. You can always cancel first responders if the child or minor is recovered.
- Lock down the surrounding area and notify all staff – providing them with the minor's name, physical description, and any known medical conditions.
- Contact the parent or guardian to confirm they are not in contact with the missing party.
- Begin doing a systematic search of the campus.
- Question classmates, friends, and assigned staff members or volunteers to establish the last known locations, times, and activities or behaviors.
- Provide first responders with resources and pertinent information.
- Document the incident on a church incident report. To include the outcome and location of recovery and any actions of the minor. Such documentation can assist in future incidents involving the same parties.

