

Emergency Preparedness Planning

It's a Team Effort

Churches juggle a host of activities in their ministries on a regular basis. Most of us found ourselves far too busy to reflect on how to respond to a pandemic, for instance, until Covid-19 cast us into a sea of confusion. We know that church transcends buildings and resides in the hearts of our congregants, so it is our duty and obligation to keep them safe. Hindsight may be 20/20, but if our current state of affairs has taught us anything, emergency preparedness planning is mission-critical for the sustainability and well-being of our churches' most valuable assets.

Although we cannot necessarily prevent disasters and emergencies, we can prepare for them. A disaster is a catastrophic event that overwhelms a community; it can damage property and may result in loss of life. An emergency preparedness plan's goal is to mitigate loss of life and property damage, then help the congregation and community recover as quickly as possible.

Natural disasters are sometimes referred to as "Acts of God," which include: hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, etc. Every church should have a plan to address emergencies. Not every natural disaster affords time for warning, response, communication, preparation, and evacuation. Other calamities not considered "Acts of God" include massive power failures, acts of terrorism, active intruder, hazardous materials incidents, civil unrest, and pandemics. These strike with little to no warning.

Your local community should have specific plans in place for addressing natural disasters or other disruptions. Churches should work with community response planners when evaluating their emergency preparedness plan to incorporate regional community planning. Insurance Board encourages you to invite your local first responders into your church to assist in developing your plan.

If you do not have an emergency preparedness plan, form a team to ensure you get many different perspectives and insight. If you have a plan, now is a good time to review it!



PREPARE

then plan

Additionally, view these resources:

- [Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans](#) - FEMA
- [Exit Routes and Emergency Planning](#) - U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910 Subpart E
- [NFPA 101: Life Safety Code®](#) - National Fire Protection Association
- [Employee Alarm Systems](#) - OSHA 29 CFR 1910.165
- [Evacuation Planning Matrix](#) - OSHA
- [Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool](#) - OSHA

A clear and concise emergency preparedness plan will help in an emergency, prevent injury, protect both lives and property, and help the church and your community recover.