

LOCAL CHURCH

DISASTER MINISTRY

Planning Guide



Prepared by the Disaster Recovery Ministry
Florida Conference of
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Introduction

This guide is designed to assist you in preparing a disaster plan for your local church. When a church knows in advance how they will protect church property and care for their people in the event of a disaster, they are better prepared to minister to their community.

Our hope is that this plan will become a catalyst for developing a holistic disaster response and recovery ministry that empowers your congregation to work in partnership with other organizations and agencies in disaster and serve as a witness to Jesus Christ in your community and beyond.

Depending on the size and needs of your church and community, you may want to expand the scope of your plan to include details not covered by this guide. To assist you in that process, more resources are available on the Disaster Recovery Ministry portion of the Florida Conference Web site: www.flumc.org/DisasterRecovery.

We encourage you to check the Conference Web site for updates to these documents and for suggestions on how to respond to current and future disasters.

Please share your plan with your District Office and/or your District Disaster Coordinator. Your District Office and your District Disaster Coordinator information can be found on the web site (www.flumc.org).

A copy of the plan should also be emailed to the Disaster Recovery Ministry. We have the ability to store the plan “virtually” and make it available to you if you are unable to access it locally.

The Disaster Recovery Ministry, located in the Florida United Methodist Building in Lakeland, will assist you and your community in coordinating recovery efforts in a disaster. The Disaster Recovery Ministry may be reached at 1-800-282-8011 x 148 (or DisasterRecovery@flumc.org).

PLEASE NOTE:

This guide is just that – a guide. The intent is to help you start the process of evaluating the needs and capacities of the church in all phases of disaster: preparation, response and recovery. All the questions are not here, but hopefully, there are enough to get you started.

The forms provided offer one way to track some of the specific information you’ll need in the event of a disaster. Please feel free to modify or create your own forms to meet the needs of your church.

Purpose

To Establish a Disaster Planning, Preparation and Response Team

Local Churches are encouraged to identify a team of individuals who will create a disaster plan for your local church. All the members of this team may or may not be part of the team that implements the plan in the event of a disaster.

The size of the team is dependent on the size and needs of the church. For most churches, a team of 4-6 people is adequate. Skills needed among the team include:

- planning/administrative gifts
- ability to see the big picture
- attention to detail
- creative, problem solving skills

It is helpful if the chair of the team (typically the church disaster coordinator) is a member of the church trustees. If possible, a staff member (preferably the administrator) should also be part of the team.

The team will design a plan specific to the needs and requirements of the local church, including suggestions for:

- What should be done to prepare church property prior to a disaster and who should be involved in the preparation?
- How will the church care for the congregation during and after a disaster?
- How can the church use existing resources before, during and after, a disaster?
- How will the church serve the community before, during, and after a disaster?

Disaster response is a ministry opportunity for the church and therefore, should support the mission and vision of the church.

As with all ministries, it is very important to have the agreement and support of the local church leadership in developing this ministry.

Caring for Church Facilities

Planning Questions

- ☐ What does the church currently do to prepare the physical church buildings and contents (including the parsonage) for a disaster?
- ☐ When disaster is approaching, who is responsible to initiate and coordinate disaster preparedness activities?
- ☐ How will the church protect electronic equipment (musical instruments, sound equipment, projectors, computers, copiers, etc.) in the event of a disaster? Don't forget to consider rising flood and storm surge waters, as well as roof leaks or damage.
- ☐ What is the plan for protecting church documents and data?
- ☐ What routine maintenance should be performed to mitigate damage from a disaster?
- ☐ In the event of damages from a disaster, who is responsible for assessing the damage, contacting the appropriate personnel at the district and/or conference and initiating an insurance claim?
- ☐ Where will the Local Church Disaster Team meet and set up as a central area of decision making, if the church is inaccessible after a disaster? Be sure to inform your District Disaster Coordinator, the District Office and the Disaster Recovery Ministry at the conference, of the church's alternate location.
- ☐ In the event the church sustains significant damage and must be relocated, where will the church go and how will that be communicated to the congregation, the district and the conference?
- ☐ What are the plans if a church needs to evacuate during a worship service or other event? How would this be communicated, and who would communicate it to those present?
- ☐ If you have a day care, pre-school or other ministry responsible for others, do they have a disaster plan? If so, how will that coordinate with the church plan? If not, does the church need to include them in their plan?

PLEASE NOTE:

For the safety of those seeking shelter, as well as those offering shelter, churches are advised **NOT** to shelter people at the church unless the church is trained and certified as an official **RED CROSS SHELTER**.

Caring for People

Planning Questions

- ☐ How does the church currently care for its people through existing ministries and services such as: home repair programs for senior citizens, care teams, senior ministries, ministries for the disabled, etc.?
- ☐ Which of these ministries/services might be useful in disaster response and how?
- ☐ What are the ways your church can help people prepare for disaster? Be specific.
- ☐ How will the church communicate with people before and after a disaster?
- ☐ If you have a day care, pre-school or other ministry responsible for others, does the church have procedures in place to communicate information regarding closings and/or evacuations in the event of a disaster?
- ☐ How will the disaster team distribute general disaster preparation information and the church's disaster plan to the congregation?
- ☐ Who are the vulnerable people in your church who might need additional assistance (seniors, disabled, shut-ins, single mothers, people with inadequate financial resources, people with no insurance or not enough insurance, etc.) and who would coordinate their assistance?
- ☐ After a disaster, how will you manage the good intentions of your church?
- ☐ How will you track volunteer hours and who will be responsible for reporting them to the Disaster Recovery Ministry at the conference or other agencies as directed?
- ☐ How will you respond to those outside your church and/or community who offer to donate material goods or send in volunteer teams?

Caring for the Community

Planning Questions

- ☐ How does the church currently care for the community?
- ☐ Will the church distribute general disaster preparation information to the community?
- ☐ List existing programs in your church or community that may be useful in disaster response (home repair programs for senior citizens, care teams, food pantries, etc.)
- ☐ What other type(s) of community outreach could the church provide after a disaster?
- ☐ Could the church be a collection/distribution site for canned goods, baby needs, clean up buckets, health kits? Is there easy access for loading and unloading of goods? If yes, could that access area accommodate larger vehicles such as tractor trailers?
- ☐ What's needed that no one else is doing? Is it something your church has the capacity to do?
- ☐ How will the church partner with other churches or faith-based groups in the community before, during and after a disaster?
- ☐ How will the church partner with government and social service agencies in the community?
- ☐ How will your church coordinate their response with these and other responding agencies and organizations in the community, so resources are not duplicated, and more help is available?

PLEASE NOTE:

It is very important that the local church work within the process set up by local emergency management. Working cooperatively with others is critical to providing the right help to the right place at the right time. This will also ensure the efforts of the church are helpful and not adding to the disaster. Don't be a cowboy, be the church.

Preparing and Planning for Individuals with Special Needs

Tips to help those in need

(Additional information may be found at www.fema.gov)

| Disability/Special Needs | Additional Steps |
|--|--|
| Visually impaired | May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or visually impaired may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster. |
| Hearing impaired | May need to make special arrangements to receive warnings. |
| Mobility impaired | May need special assistance to get to a shelter. |
| Single working parent | May need help planning for disasters and emergencies. |
| Non-English speaking individual | May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed. |
| Individuals without vehicles | May need to make arrangements for transportation. |
| Individuals with special dietary needs | Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply. |
| Individuals with medical conditions | Should know the location and availability of more than one facility if dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment/treatment. |
| Individuals with mental retardation | May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter. |
| Individuals with dementia | Should be registered in the <i>Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program</i> |

Church Plan Information

This plan is prepared for (insert name of church)

Location of church (please include the physical address, as well as nearby landmarks):

Church Phone Number(s):

Church Fax Number:

Church Web site:

Church Email:

Parsonage Location – if applicable (please list physical address and nearby landmarks):

Parsonage Phone Number:

Location of other church property – if applicable (please list physical address and nearby landmarks):

Members of the Disaster Planning Team

| Team Leader * | Additional Team Member: |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Name: | Name: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Phone number(s) | Phone number(s) |
| | |
| Email: | Email: |
| Trustee Representative | |
| Name: | Name: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Phone number(s) | Phone number(s) |
| | |
| Email: | Email: |
| Staff Representative | |
| Role: | |
| Name: | Name: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Phone number(s) | Phone number(s) |
| | |
| Email: | Email: |

*The team leader is typically the Church Disaster Coordinator and it's helpful if that person is also a member of trustees.

Important Contact Information

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 211 | Connects callers with information and resources available in their community | |
| Pastor | Home | |
| | Cell | |
| Church Disaster Coordinator | Home | |
| | Office | |
| | Cell | |
| Conference | (800) 282-8011 Ext. 148 | Disaster Recovery Ministry |
| | | |
| District Office/Superintendent | | |
| Office of Ministry Protection | (800) 282-8011 Ext.137 | |
| Fire Department | | |
| Police Department | | |
| Sheriff Department | | |
| Other | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Vendor Contact List

This is a list of preferred vendors and alternate vendors the church routinely uses for repairs and other maintenance of church property, including copier, computer, kitchen appliances, air conditioning, etc.

For Goods and Services

| Service(s) Provided | Name | Phone or Other Contact Information |
|---------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

For Goods and Services

| Service(s) Provided | Name | Phone or Other Contact Information |
|---------------------|------|------------------------------------|
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Local Church Emergency Supplies List

Suggested Equipment for Facility Preparation and Clean-up

- ☐ Copy of disaster plan
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags
- ☐ Sealable plastic bags- Waterproof containers
- ☐ Flashlight/extra flashlight batteries
- ☐ Plastic sheeting/tarps
- ☐ 2-way radios/extra batteries
- ☐ Plywood (for boarding windows)
- ☐ Ladders – Hammer – Nails – Duck tape
- ☐ Mops-Buckets-Brooms
- ☐ Disinfectant/cleaning compounds
- ☐ Bleach (at least 3 gallons)
- ☐ Rubber boots & rubber gloves
- ☐ Sturdy work gloves & masks
- ☐ Small dehumidifiers/portable fans
- ☐ Wet Vac
- ☐ Extension cords/50', 3 wire grounded
- ☐ Portable incandescent lamps/extra bulbs
- ☐ Power saws/hand saws
- ☐ Shovels-Crowbar-Wheelbarrow
- ☐ Jumper cables
- ☐ Cameras (standard, digital, or video)
- ☐ Battery operated radio/weather radio
- ☐ Portable gas/electric stove
- ☐ Ice chests
- ☐ Generator(s)

Suggested Disaster Supplies for Persons Onsite

- ☐ Blankets/sleeping bags
- ☐ Sun screen – insect repellent
- ☐ Nonperishable food supplies
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Water (minimum of one gallon per day, per person)
- ☐ First aid kits – CPR kits
- ☐ Paper goods: plates, cups, paper towels, plastic utensils

Facilities

Routine Maintenance Checklist

- ☐ _____ Check roof and foundation of building **annually**. If roof is leaking or foundation has problems, schedule for repair.
- ☐ _____ Monitor use of candles and open flames. Assign someone to be in charge of knowing when these items will be used.
- ☐ _____ Test smoke detectors **annually**. If the alarms are battery operated, routinely replace batteries.
- ☐ _____ Inspect HVAC equipment **annually**. If HVAC needs maintenance, schedule for repair.
- ☐ _____ Have an electrician inspect the wiring, power connections, and circuit boxes **annually**.
- ☐ _____ Inspect water heaters **annually**.
- ☐ _____ Provide backups and surge protection for all power sources.
- ☐ _____ Clean out gutters and drains **annually**, or as needed.
- ☐ _____ Maintain grounds and fences.
- ☐ _____ Trim trees away from the rooflines **annually**.
- ☐ _____ Check the security of canopies and covered walks on a **regular basis**.
- ☐ _____ Check emergency supplies. Replace food and water supplies **every 6 months**.
- ☐ _____ Ensure vehicles have updated preventive maintenance.
- ☐ _____ Ensure jumper cables are on hand.

Facilities

Hurricane Warnings Have Been Issued - Maintenance Checklist

- ☐ _____ Close blinds and curtains to minimize damage from broken windows.
- ☐ _____ If possible, position computers and other electronic equipment off the floor and away from windows.
- ☐ _____ File and secure all papers, books and archival materials.
- ☐ _____ Cover computers and furniture with heavy plastic to prevent wind and rain damage from broken windows. If computers are located on the ground floor, elevate computer towers off the floor.
- ☐ _____ Board vulnerable windows.
- ☐ _____ Remove outside furniture and store inside.
- ☐ _____ Remove satellite rooftop dishes.
- ☐ _____ Check the integrity of storage sheds; close and lock the doors.
- ☐ _____ Check the security of all doors.
- ☐ _____ Check attic spaces and windows for leaks **after every storm**.
- ☐ _____ Contact the Florida Conference Office of Ministry Protection for claim reporting guidelines (1-800-282-8011 x 137) or check the conference website www.flumc.org.

Individual Needs Survey

This form is one way you could survey your congregation before disaster to determine who might need assistance to prepare and/or evacuate in the event of a disaster. This form can be edited to meet the needs of your church or a different form/method could be used.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Alternate Contact (person or phone) _____

List names and ages of additional members in household:

Do you only speak a foreign language? ☐ No ☐ Yes Language _____

Residence Type: ☐ Single Family ☐ Mobile Home ☐ Apt. _____ Floor and Apt. Number

Name of Residential Complex: _____

Are You? ☐ Legally Blind ☐ Deaf ☐ Mute ☐ Aphasic Are you homebound? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you use a wheelchair? ☐ Always ☐ Most of the Time ☐ Sometimes

Do you use a walker/cane? ☐ Always ☐ Most of the Time ☐ Sometimes

Do you require a special diet? ☐ No ☐ Yes Type: _____

List Special Medical Needs (Ex: homeless, severe cardiac, diabetic on insulin)

Do you rely on electricity for home medical treatments? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you registered with the County Emergency Management Dept. for help in an evacuation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Family Physician: _____ Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone Number: _____

Do you have any dog(s)? ☐ Yes How many? _____ Cats? ☐ Yes How many? _____

Other pets? _____

(Note: Pets are NOT allowed in all shelters. Make evacuation-shelter arrangements for them BEFORE a disaster.)

Do you have transportation in an emergency? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Would you need transportation in an emergency? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

If yes, what type? ☐ Standard vehicle ☐ Wheelchair access ☐ Ambulance

Use back of form if needed.

Inventory Form

Churches are strongly encouraged to do a video inventory to accompany this list. A video will capture detail that a list will not.

| INVENTORY OF ASSETS | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Description | Location | Serial Number | Purchase Cost | Current Value |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Communication in Disaster

Disaster Recovery (800) 282-8011 Ext. 148

Ministry Protection (800) 282-8011 Ext. 137

If your church is damaged by disaster

Contact your District Superintendent Contact Ministry Protection
Activate your Church disaster plan

If your community is affected by disaster

Activate your Church disaster plan
Volunteer teams self-deploy per the church plan and their training
Contact your District Disaster Coordinator
Contact your District Superintendent

If another community in your district is affected by disaster

Contact your District Disaster Coordinator for instructions
Check the Web site for updates and instructions
If members of your church are trained and registered with the conference, they will receive email updates and instructions

If another district in our conference is affected by disaster

Contact Disaster Recovery Ministry at the conference to offer assistance (supplies, volunteers, etc.)
Check the Web site for updates and instructions
If members of your church are trained and registered with the conference, they will receive email updates and instructions

Congratulations!

You've taken the first steps towards helping to protect and prepare your church in the event of a disaster. As residents of Florida, we may not be able to prevent disasters from occurring, but by planning ahead we can help save lives, property, and reduce the time it takes for our communities to recover. Be sure to update your Church Disaster Plan regularly as your church information changes.

Remember to Share Your Church Plan!

With your District Office, your District Disaster Coordinator and the Disaster Recovery Ministry of the Conference.

Most Importantly – share it with your church!

Let your church leaders and congregation know that the church has a plan to respond and recover from disaster. Tell them where they can read a copy and how they can be involved implementing the plan when disaster strikes. Church members can't follow a plan if they don't know it exists! Finally, challenge your congregation to create a personal plan for disaster. Help them find and connect with resources. Consider making this an outreach of the church.

How can we help?

The Disaster Recovery Ministry and your District Disaster Coordinator are here to serve you give us a call!

(800) 282-8011 Ext. 148
DisasterRecovery@flumc.org
www.flumc.org/DisasterRecovery