

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL CHURCH EMERGENCY PLAN

This document is intended for use as a template for local church leaders in developing a site-specific plan for church property. Every church in the Central Texas Conference will have different needs, so please adapt these recommendations to fit the needs of your particular site. For instance, smaller churches may not be able to form a full emergency response team; however, church leaders may be designated to serve in particular functions. Once procedures have been established, it is important that they be relayed to church members and emphasized as often as possible (e.g. church-wide meetings, trainings, drills).

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Mount Olive Baptist Church, Arlington, TX; the Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission; and the Michigan Department of State Police, Emergency Management Division for providing resources for these recommendations.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For All Emergencies Dial 9-1-1—*If your community is not served by 9-1-1, call your local emergency contact number.*

Treat minor injuries from supplies in the first aid kits. The kits are located (provide location here).

OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Building Maintenance/Trustees: (Identify appropriate contact person here)

Call this number to report unsafe conditions.

Also, to report problems with:

- Leaks and drainage.
- Building temperature.
- Lighting.
- Building conveniences.

Pastor(s): _____

Church office: _____

Call this number for appointments or other business.

- Non-emergency assistance.
- Reporting lost ID or valuables.

Where applicable (*refer to following section*):

Building Coordinator: _____

Incident Coordinator: _____

Medical Response Team Members: _____

Emergency Response Team Members: _____

ROLE OF AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The following are guidelines for creating an emergency response team within your congregation should you deem it necessary. The positions listed are recommendations and can be adapted to the needs of your particular site. We recommend that several people be designated and trained for each position and that each position be represented at every possible worship service or event.

Building Coordinator

A building coordinator is a staff member or volunteer trained to know the floor plans of each building and the emergency evacuation procedures for any emergency—medical, fire, tornado, etc. The building coordinator may be involved in long-range planning. *(Your church disaster response coordinator or building trustee might be appropriate for this position.)*

A building coordinator may be responsible for:

- Receiving status reports from the Incident Coordinator.
- Relaying status report information to the emergency agency/agencies involved (e.g., fire department, police, paramedics, emergency management, etc.).
- Coordinating with the emergency agency/agencies any needed evacuations or other emergency actions.

A building coordinator may work with the emergency response team to:

- Coordinate emergency planning activities.
- Assist with recruiting team members.
- Schedule training.
- Communicate ongoing plans.

Incident Coordinator

The incident coordinator on duty assumes responsibility for implementing the local church emergency plan at the time of the incident, providing leadership until personnel with more experience arrive on scene. *(Greeters, ushers, or other church leaders might be appropriate for this position.)* Responsibilities may include the following:

- Ensuring that all emergency response team members are assigned duties and understand all emergency procedures.
- Working with other emergency response team members to evaluate an emergency.
- Ensuring proper emergency communication.
- Delegating needed emergency actions.

The incident coordinator may also be called upon by the emergency agency/agencies involved to aid in crowd control and building evacuation. The incident coordinator

should immediately identify her/himself as such to maintenance personnel and emergency agency personnel responding to an incident.

Medical Response Team Members

Medical response team members are members of the emergency response team who have been trained in medical emergencies. Responsibilities may include the following:

- Providing “first responder (medical) service” to those incurring a medical emergency until medical personnel with higher training arrives on scene.
- Conducting a primary assessment of the medical emergency situations and reporting this assessment to appropriate personnel.
- Participating as emergency response team members in emergency situations when their medical expertise is not required.
- Providing medical assistance and support until professional help arrives.
- Remaining “in charge” of a medical emergency situation until professional help arrives.

Medical response team members should immediately identify themselves as such to any personnel responding to the incident.

Emergency Response Team Members

The remaining emergency response team members are staff members or volunteers who are trained in evacuation techniques and use of fire extinguishers. Emergency response team members know the location of approved tornado shelter areas in the building.

Responsibilities may include the following:

- Building evacuations—responsible for reporting to the incident coordinator that their assigned section has been cleared during an evacuation.
- Work in coordination with the building maintenance/trustees to minimize hazards.
- If available, maintain hand-held radios to coordinate with incident coordinator or other team members.

Emergency response team members should immediately identify themselves as such to any personnel responding to the incident.

BUILDING EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Leader Responsibilities

In the event of an emergency, leader responsibilities may include the following:

- Knowing how to correctly respond to and summon help for a medical emergency.
- Knowing how to correctly report a fire or smoke emergency using the 911 emergency number.
- Knowing the locations of the manual fire alarm pull stations in their area.
- Knowing the locations of the fire extinguishers in their area and how to use them.
- Knowing how to correctly respond to a fire warning alarm.
- Knowing designated shelter areas and precautions to take in the event of a tornado emergency.
- Becoming familiar with exit routes and knowing alternate exits to correctly respond to a call for an evacuation.
- Closing all opened doors as they evacuate an area.

Medical Emergency

Call 911. Be prepared to give the following information:

- Name and extension.
- Location.
- Number of people involved.
- Nature of injury or illness.

Note: Treat minor injuries from supplies in the first aid kits. The kits are located (*provide location here*).

While waiting for professional help do not move the ill or injured person. When professional help arrives:

- Allow responding units to take control of situation.
- Emergency response team members will stand by to assist as needed

Regular CPR/First Aid training is recommended for all church leaders, especially pre-school and Sunday School teachers.

Fire and Smoke Emergencies

If you detect smoke:

- Call 911.
- Give your name, telephone number, and location within the building.
- Describe the situation.

- Advise the building coordinator, incident coordinator, or other emergency response team members of the situation.

If you detect fire:

- Activate the manual fire alarm
- Call 911 (move to a safe area before making this call).
- Give your name, telephone number, and location.
- Describe the situation.
- If you know how to use a fire extinguisher and feel the best course of action is to attempt to extinguish the fire, locate an extinguisher and, without risking injury attempt to extinguish the fire.
- If the fire is beyond the point of a safe attempt to extinguish it, isolate the fire by closing doors in the area before evacuating.
- Advise the incident coordinator or other emergency response team members of the situation.

If the Fire Warning Alarm Sounds

- Evacuate immediately, using the nearest exit. Walk quickly. Do not run.

Note: Evacuation should be toward ground level. If you encounter smoke or heat in a stairwell, proceed across that floor to another stairwell and continue evacuation to ground level.

- Assist disabled persons in your area.
- If you encounter smoke, take short breaths through your nose and crawl along the floor to the nearest exit.
- Feel all doors with your hand before opening. If the door is hot, do not open it. If the door is cool, open it slowly, keeping behind the door in case you have to quickly close it to protect yourself from oncoming smoke or fire.
- Proceed to the ground level and outdoors.
- Move upwind of the building at least 75 feet away from the building and beyond designated fire lanes. Go to your designated assembly area (if possible).
- Do not go to your automobile or attempt to move it from the parking lot. This could hinder access by emergency vehicles.
- Do not congregate near building exits, driveways, or roadways.
- Do not reenter the building until an “all clear” is issued by the incident coordinator. (Note: The “all clear” should be initially issued by the Fire Department.)

Building Evacuation Emergency

All leaders should know the emergency evacuation routes and procedures for the building, and their designated assembly area outside the building. Memorize the exit route closest to your work area or office.

The designated assembly area is located (*provide location here*).

Should the designated assembly area be deemed unsafe, an alternate assembly area will be located (*provide location here*).

If a Building Evacuation is Initiated Important “dos” and “don’ts” are:

- Remain calm.
- Follow the instructions of the incident coordinator or emergency response team, if applicable.
- If you occupy an enclosed office, close the door as you leave.
- Use stairwells (do not use elevator) for evacuation. Be alert for other staff, church members, and emergency agency personnel who might also be using the stairwells.
- Do not return for coats, purses, briefcases, etc, after you have left the area.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not return to your area until the “all clear” signal is given.

Notes: Ensure that (*identify appropriate leader here*) has planned with disabled leaders or church members a procedure to assist each disabled person in evacuating. Emergency evacuation procedures should be provided to all church members (e.g. in member orientations).

Tornado Emergency

The National Weather Service has developed a method of identifying storm conditions that foster the development of tornadoes. The classification and definitions of storm conditions are:

- Tornado watch
- Tornado warning

A “**tornado watch**” status indicates that weather conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. The “watch areas” are usually large geographic areas, covering many counties or even states that could be affected by severe weather conditions including tornadoes.

A “**tornado warning**” is an alert issued by the National Weather Service after a tornado has been detected by radar or sighted by weather watchers or by the public. The National

Weather Service provides the approximate time of detection, the location of the storm and the direction of movement. A tornado can move from 25 to 40 miles per hour so prompt emergency action must be taken.

During a tornado warning, a battery-powered radio should be tuned to the National Weather Service and local weather watchers radio frequency. Should a tornado develop which threatens our area, emergency response team members should initiate actions to notify and protect all staff and church members in the facility.

If a Tornado Warning is Announced

When you hear the announcement for a tornado warning:

- Move to a designated tornado shelter immediately. Move quickly, but do not run.
- Do not use elevators.
- Assist disabled personnel in your area.
- Wait in the shelter until you hear an announcement from a member of the emergency response team and/or a hand-held radio system station (if applicable) that it is safe to return to your area.

Tornado Safety Basics

Tornadoes and tornado-producing weather conditions are common in the Central Texas Conference area. Familiarize yourself with the basics of protecting yourself wherever you may be.

If you are indoors, the general responses to a tornado warning are:

- Move away from windows. If you have time, close any window blinds or shades to help prevent flying glass and debris—the cause of most injuries in office buildings.
- Warn others. Encourage them to get to safety immediately.
- Move away from large expanses of unsupported ceilings.
- Move away from building perimeter area.
- Move to an interior room away from windows—to an enclosed room or conference room, a rest room, an interior stairwell.
- If in an interior hallway, away from windows, crouch down as low as possible.
- If you are in an elevator, stop and get off at the next floor and take cover in an interior hallway or interior room. Do not use elevators during tornado warnings.
- If moving to a safer location in the building is not possible, get under a desk or table in an interior office.
- Once you've situated yourself in the safest place you can find, protect your face and head, and stay where you are until an "all clear" signal is given. (If circumstances change and new dangers are present, seek a different safe place.)

If you are outdoors, the general responses to a tornado warning are:

- If at all possible, move indoors to an interior room.
- If moving indoors is not possible, take cover near objects that are low and securely anchored to the ground, such as culverts or low retaining wall.

Basic safety information specifically related to other disasters likely to occur in your area may be included here (i.e. flooding, hazardous material spills, etc.).

THREATS

In the event you receive a threat call (i.e. bomb threat, armed assault, custody issues), remain calm; if possible, have a pre-arranged signal to alert other personnel to listen to the caller also. If possible, advise the caller that the detonation of a bomb could maim or injure innocent people.

Threat Checklist

Complete this list if you receive a threat.

Exact time of call: _____ Date: _____

Exact words of caller:

Caller's voice: (circle)

Male Female Adult Youth

Estimate Age: _____

Black White Hispanic Asian Other: _____

Calm Disguised Nasal Rapid Accent

Nervous Angry Sincere Slurred Loud

Excited Giggling Stressed Crying

If voice is familiar, whose did it sound like? _____

Background Noise: (circle)

Music Children Typing Airplanes Machinery Cars/Trucks

Other:

Do not hang up! Obtain as much information as possible:

- When is the bomb going to explode? _____
- Where is the bomb? _____
- What does it look like? _____
- What kind of bomb is it? _____
- Method of activation: mechanical, clock, movement/chemical action?

- Method of deactivation? _____
- Did you place the bomb? _____
- Why? _____
- Where are you calling from? _____
- What is your address? _____
- What is your name? _____

Call received by: _____ Department: _____ Ext: _____

Note: In the event you receive a bomb threat:

- Call 911 immediately. Provide the following information:
 - ✓ Identify yourself
 - ✓ State: "I have received a bomb threat."
 - ✓ Give your office location and extension.

REMAIN CALM!

APPENDICES

EMERGENCY EVACUATION MAPS

Insert maps here.

INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT

The following form is a sample that may be helpful should an injury occur during an evacuation or other emergency procedure. It is important to maintain accurate records of any injuries incurred during an emergency in case of insurance or liability questions.

Date:

Injured Person: _____

Completed by: _____

Where were you when injury occurred:

Description of injury and how it occurred: (Use back if more space is needed)

Witnesses:

Action Taken/Medical Treatment Provided:

BUILDING EMERGENCY SYSTEMS

This appendix may include information about the location of emergency equipment and information about warning systems for your particular site. Such systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Fire/Smoke Detection and Warning

Recommended information: automatic sprinklers, location of fire extinguishers (including maps), lighting

Emergency Power System

Recommended information: emergency power backup equipment

Recognizing an Alarm System Warning

Recommended information: description of warnings (sound, light)

CONDUCTING A HAZARD ANALYSIS

Purpose

The purpose of a hazard analysis is to determine the hazards a site is most susceptible and vulnerable to experiencing. By determining those hazards prior to development, the site emergency plan will be realistic.

Starting Point

A good place to look for information regarding potential hazards is the local emergency management office. This office can describe the disaster history of the community, the location of flood plains, frequency of tornadoes, and so on. The local library may also provide some insight on local disasters.

Considerations

Look at disasters or emergencies that have occurred in the community, for example: tornadoes, wind storms, severe winter weather, heavy rains, forest fires, flooding, utility problems, transportation accidents, etc. Consider the geographic location of the site to flood plains, nuclear power plants, heavy forest, major transportation routes, and neighboring sites with might be hazardous. Look into past emergency events onsite. Consider technological problems that could occur due to problems on the site, such as heating and cooling systems, incinerator problems, power failure, etc. Consider the construction of buildings on the site. Do the buildings pose any hazards, such as building collapse?

Hazard Analysis Worksheet

Using the worksheet on the next page examine the listed hazards. List any other possible hazards that the site may face under the first column labeled “Hazards”. Cross off any hazards that are not possible, for example the “onsite hazardous material” incident.

Using a scale of 1 to 3, estimate the possibility of each listed hazard.

1. **unlikely or low possibility**
2. **maybe or average possibility**
3. **likely or high possibility**

In the next three columns labeled, “Employee Impact,” “Property Impact,” and “Economic Impact” use a 1 to 3 scale. Using the 1 to 3 scale estimate the possible impact of each hazard on the employees, property and business. Use a worse case scenario to estimate the probable impact.

1. **low impact** (few hours lost productivity, nick and scratch injuries, slight property damage.)
2. **moderate impact** (loss of wage, loss of short term productivity, serious bodily injury, moderate property damage.)
3. **high impact** (loss of employment, loss of life, destruction of property and business.)

After factoring each impact area, total the row for each hazard. Using the totals, prioritize the hazards to determine which hazards to plan for first. Depending on the needs and resources of the organization, complete the low priorities as possible, or not at all.

HAZARD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Hazards	Possibility	Employee Impact	Property Impact	Economic Impact	Total Possible Impact
Fire					
Tornado					
Severe Winter Storm					
Flood					
Onsite Haz/Mat*					
Off-site Haz/Mat*					
Bomb Threat					
Civil Unrest					
Utility					

* Haz/Mat means Hazardous Materials