Southern Baptist

Church Preparedness for Disaster Relief

North American Mission Board, SBC

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Churches Ministering In Crisis

Goal:

- To assist churches to prepare for disaster by developing strategies for preparedness
- To create plans for response activity within the church and community
- To assist churches in developing training to prepare and respond to disaster

Introduction

A disaster is defined as anything that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the disaster survivors cannot alleviate themselves.

A church must plan how it will respond to disasters, large and small, within the church and in the community. Plans need to be well developed and discussed by the church leaders and shared with the members. Families and individuals within the congregation need to participate in training to understand their role. A community action plan also needs to be developed for the churches response within the greater community of partners.

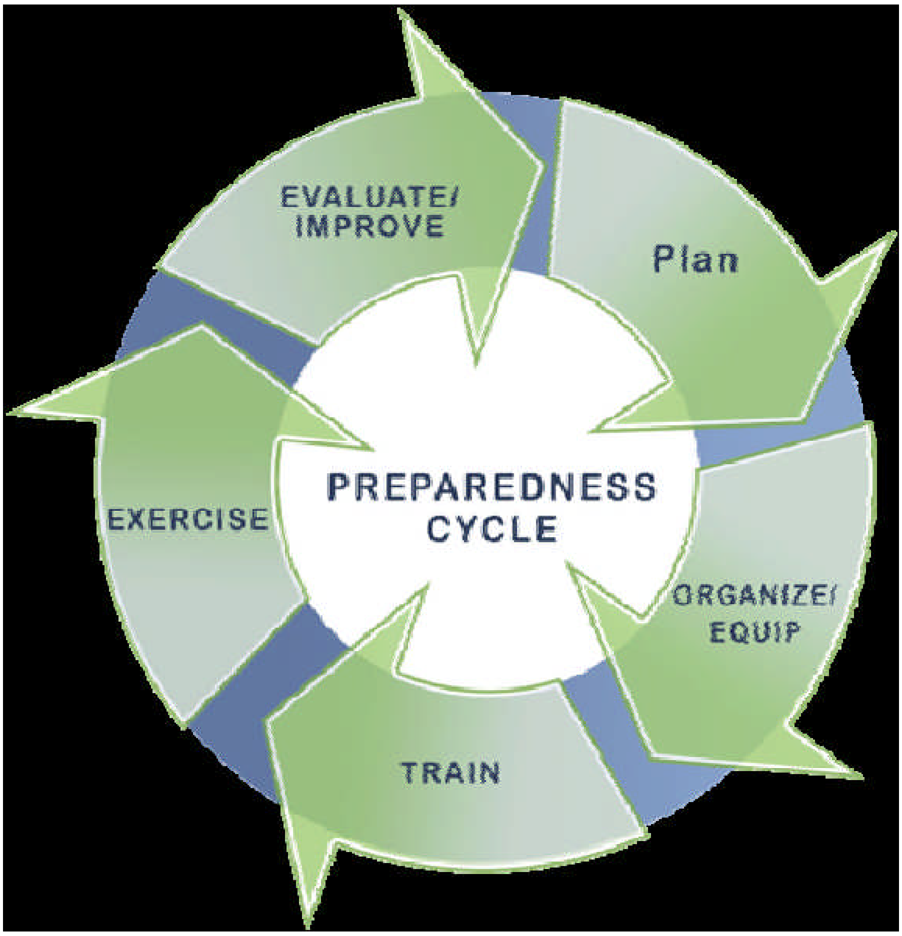
The unprepared church will miss valuable opportunities to minister if not prepared. By planning before a disaster occurs and coordinating with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, local government agencies, The Salvation Army, and local American Red Cross chapter, a church can be prepared to minister fully in a time of crisis.

Part of the local church's disaster relief plan should consider the needs of individuals and families who have experienced disasters in their lives. These plans might include ministries such as a food pantry, clothes closet, and/or financial assistance. Preparedness is an essential part of the plan and can be achieved through training for families within the local church and community.

A church must first be prepared to face its own disaster.

Church Preparedness

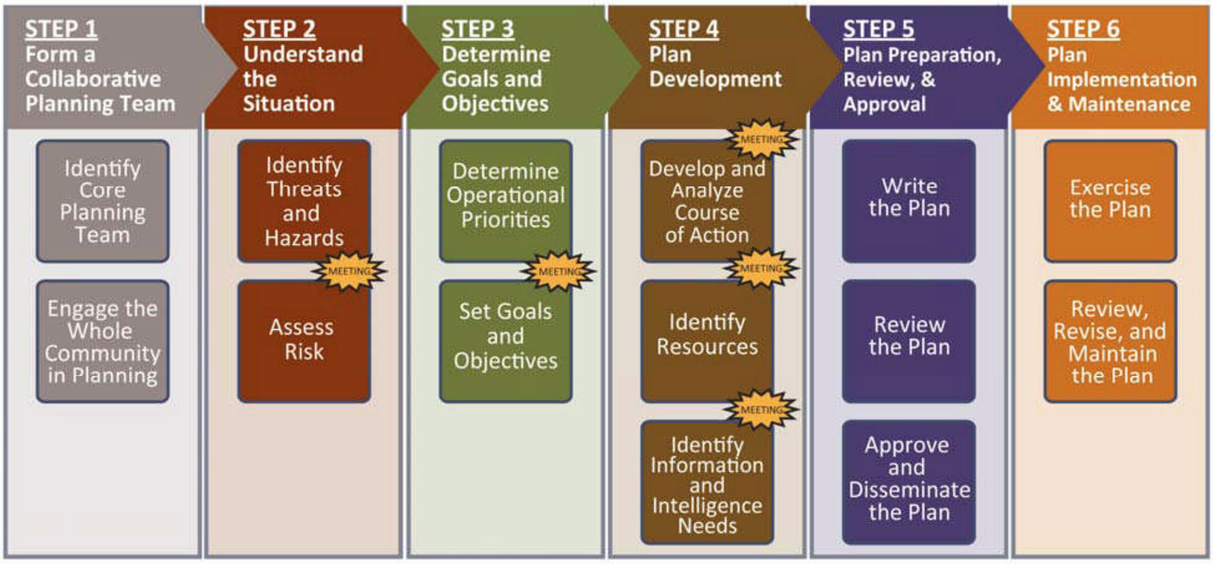
The National Incident Management System (NIMS) defines preparedness as "a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during incident response." This 'preparedness cycle' is one element of a broader National Preparedness System to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.



Most businesses and organizations fail to prepare for any type of disaster. Close to 60% of businesses and organizations are unprepared for any disaster. 15 to 40% of businesses and organizations fail following a natural or man-made disaster. Preparedness makes good business sense. However, preparedness cannot be done alone. It requires a lot of different sectors in the church and community helping and working together to create a plan. The planning process should be flexible and allow the church to adapt depending on varying characteristics and situations.

A new tool which can be used to help a church determine their preparedness level is the Ready Rating program. American Red Cross has prepared the online tool to allow businesses, schools and organizations determine their readiness level. The 120 point assessment is broken up into 84 questions and will give a final score. The assessment can be found at www.readyrating.org.

Once an assessment has been completed, the planning process can begin. The planning process should be flexible and allow for churches to adapt to a variety of characteristics and situations. While not ideal, if time is a constraint, steps can be minimized or skipped in order to accelerate the process. Small churches can follow just the steps that are appropriate to their size, known risks, and available planning resources. The graph below depicts steps in the planning process.



Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team

Experience and lessons learned indicate that operational planning is best performed by a team. Using a team or group approach helps organizations define the role they will play during an operation. A church always benefits from the active participation of all stakeholders.

Identify Core Planning Team

A church disaster relief planning team should be elected by the church membership, headed by a church disaster relief team leader who will give general direction to mitigation, preparation, organization, and training. Other recommended members are the men's ministry director, the Woman's Missionary Union director, the missions committee chairman, the pastor, and other staff.

Initially, the team should be small, consisting of a few members and staff. They will form the core for all planning efforts. As the plan matures, the core team will expand to include others partners. Additional input may come from the following:

- Emergency management
- Law enforcement
- Fire services
- EMS
- Public Health
- Hospitals
- Public works
- Utility operators
- Education
- Agriculture
- Animal control
- Social services
- Childcare, child welfare, juvenile justice facilities
- National Guard
- Private sector
- Civic, social, faith-based, educational, professional, and advocacy organizations

Regardless of the core planning team structure, the involvement of partner agencies and departments is critical. They are able to speak with authority on policy, provide subject matter expertise, and provide accountability as it relates to their agency or department.

Engaging the Whole Community in Planning

Engaging in community-based planning – planning that is for the whole community and involves the whole community- is crucial to the success of any plan. Determining how to effectively engage the community in this planning process is one of the biggest challenges faced by churches. It is important to remember that community leaders have a keen understanding about their community's needs and capabilities and are a valuable stakeholder that can support the planning process in many ways.

Communities may or may not be geographically constrained. The geographic community includes a number of communities of interest. The communities of interest are not necessarily confined to the borders of a jurisdiction and may center on physical, social, cultural, or philosophical structures. Examples include:

- Civic, social, faith-based, educational, professional, and advocacy organizations
- Immigrant and limited English proficiency constituencies
- Voluntary organizations
- Private service providers
- Critical infrastructure operators
- Local and regional corporations

The private sector is a critical component in community engagement. Not only are they often the primary providers of critical series to the public, the also possess knowledge and resources to supplement and enhance preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Often, private sector and governments missions overlap- early coordination ensures effective sharing of information and resources and facilitates the establishment of common goals and objectives.

Disasters begin and end locally. After the response is over, it is the local community that lives with the decisions made during the incident. Therefore, communities should have a say in how a disaster response occurs. They should also shoulder responsibility for building their community's resilience and enhancing its recovery before, during, and after a disaster.

The foundation for community-based planning is knowing the community.

1 Know the Community

As you progress in producing a community map, there are three major areas where members of various communities can assist your effort.

Hazards

Members of the community know the natural, technological, and man-made hazards that exist in their community.

Population

As a geographic community can include many social communities, it is important to engage the members of the community to get a picture of what populations are represented. Planners need to know where these populations are located and what needs they may have.

Capabililties

Social communities bring a host of capabilities that can be used to respond to a disaster (e.g., volunteers to run/staff shelters, licensed healthcare practitioners), while corporations can provide material support and are a community in and of themselves.

2 Identify the Communities to Engage

Working with existing groups is the most efficient way to link into a community as they have established relationships, networks and communication channels.

- Existing community-based programs are worth connecting with because trusted relationships have already been established between these offices and the community and further initiatives can capitalize on this goodwill.
- The community assessment process will identify existing programs and contacts.
- Being familiar with current events and programs in the community will help identify barriers and opportunities for engagement.

3 Partner with Community Leaders to Develop an Engagement Program

Engagement is about building trusted relationships.

- Community leaders need to trust that planners will support the work of the community and not dictate solutions for their issues. If communities don't trust that this will happen, they may choose to disengage.
- Working with leaders in the community to establish the type and level of engagement is critical.
- Leaders may be people who have an official position within the community or simply the "doers" in the community that have the ability to create the momentum needed for engagement activities. The best person to establish a partnership with will only be identified after getting to know the community well.

Finally, it is critical to include civic leaders, members of the public, and representatives of community-based organizations in the planning process. They may serve as an important resource for validating assumptions about public needs, capabilities, and reactions. Because many planning assumptions and response activities will directly impact the public at large, involving the whole community during the planning phase is essential.

Step 2: Understand the Situation

Effective risk management depends on a consistent comparison of the hazards a church faces. This is typically performed through a threat/hazard identification and risk assessment process that collects information about threats and hazards and assigns values to risk for the purposes of determining priorities, developing or comparing courses of action, and informing decision making.

Identify Threats and Hazards

The planning team should start the problem-solving process by conducting research and analysis on the churches threats and hazards. Considering the potential risks a church may face brings specificity to the planning process.

The first step of research focuses on gathering information about the churches framework, potential risks, resource base, demographics, and geographic characteristics that could affect emergency operations. Understanding past storm history and response activity is necessary and valuable information to collect. Local authorities and partnering agencies will be able to assist with these details.

One resource the church can use to determine available resources is the checklist located in Appendix One. This will allow churches to determine what assets are available or needed. Individual church members should complete the interest and skills survey located in Appendix Two. The next step of the threat identification process is to organize the information collected into a format that is usable by the planning team.

Assess Risk

The assessment helps a planning team decide what hazards or threats merit special attention, what actions must be planned for and what resources are likely to be needed.

Hazard and threat analysis requires that the planning team knows risks that have occurred or could occur in the community. The process should begin with a list of the risks that concern planners, developed from research conducted earlier in the planning process. A list of concerns might be:

Natural Hazards	Technological Hazards	Human-Caused Hazards
• Avalanche • Disease outbreak • Drought • Earthquake • Epidemic • Flood • Hurricane • Landslide • Tornado • Tsunami • Volcanic eruption • Wildfire • Winter storm	• Airplane crash • Dam/levee failure • HAZMAT release • Power failure • Radiological release • Train derailment • Urban conflagration	• Civil disturbance • Cyber events • Terrorist acts • Sabotage • School violence

The outcomes of the analysis process help planners determine goals and objectives (Step 3) and select the supporting planning concept they will use when developing the plan (Step4).

Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives

Determine Operational Priorities

Operational priorities specify what the responding church is to accomplish to achieve a desired end-state for the operation. The pastor may communicate desired end-states for the operations addressed in the plans. By using information from the risk profile developed as part of the analysis process, the planning team engages the pastor to establish how the threat would evolve in the church and what defines a successful outcome for responders, disaster survivors and the community.

The planning team should start with a possible threat and imagine the incident's development from prevention and protections efforts, through initial warning to its impact on the church and its generation of specific consequences, (e.g., collapsed buildings, loss of critical services or infrastructure, death, injury, displacement). These scenarios should be realistic and created on the basis of the churches risk data. During this process of building an incident scenario, the planning team identifies the requirements that determine actions and resources.

Once the requirements are identified, the planning team restates them as priorities and affirms those priorities with the pastor.

Set Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives must be carefully crafted to ensure they support accomplishing the plan mission and operational priorities. They must also clearly indicate the desired result or end-state they are designed to yield. This approach enables unity of effort and consistency of purpose among the multiple groups and activities involved in executing the plan. As goals and objectives are set, planners may identify more requirements that will feed into the development of courses of action as well as the capability estimate.

Step 4: Plan Development

Develop and Analyze Courses of Action

This step is a process of generating, comparing, and selecting possible solutions for achieving the goals and objectives identified in Step 3. The planning team should consider the requirements, goals, and objectives to develop several response alternatives. At least two options should always be considered.

This process will help the planning team identify tasks that occur immediately at the incident initiation, tasks that are more mid-incident focused, and tasks that affect long-term operations.

Course of action development follows these steps:

- Establish the timeline
- Depict the scenario
- Identify and depict decision points
- Identify and depict operations tasks
- Select courses of action

Identify Resources

Once courses of action are selected, the planning team identifies resources needed to accomplish tasks without regard to resource availability. The object is to identify the resources needed to make the operation work. Once the planning team identifies all the requirements, they begin matching available resources to requirements. Whenever possible, the planning team should match resources with other needs so that multiple demands for the same or similar resource can be identified and conflicts resolved. This step provides the planning team an opportunity to identify resource shortfalls. The church should account for unsolvable resource shortfalls so they are not just “assumed away.” The capability estimate process is critical to this effort.

A capability estimate is the planning team’s assessment of a churches ability to take a course of action. Capability estimates help the planning team decide if pursuing a particular course of action is realistic and supportable. They help planners better project and understand what might take place during an operation. Simply stated, the capability estimate represents the capabilities and resource types needed to complete a set of courses of action. The resulting capability estimate will feed into the resource section of the plan.

The information provided in a capability estimate should be able to answer most questions about a churches ability to support a given course of action. Capability estimates should be prepared for personnel, administration and finance, operations, logistics, communications, equipment and facilities. Each capability estimate compares the courses of action being considered for a particular operation. They make recommendations as to which course of action best supports the operation. They should also identify the criteria used to evaluate each area; and the issues, differences and risks associated with a course of action.

Identify Information and Intelligence Needs

Another outcome from course of action development is a "list" of the information and intelligence needs for each of the response participants. The planning team should identify the information and intelligence they will need and their deadline(s) for receiving it to drive decisions and trigger critical actions.

When developing courses of action, the process should be periodically "frozen" so the planning team can:

- Identify progress made toward the end-state, including goals and objectives met and new needs or demands
- Identify "single point failures" (i.e., tasks that, if not completed, would cause the operation to fall apart)
- Check for omissions or gaps
- Check for inconsistencies in organizational relationships
- Check for mismatches between the churches plan and plans for other organizations with which they are interacting.

Step 5: Plan Preparation, Review and Approval

Write the Plan

This step turns the results of course of action development into an Emergency Operation Plan. The planning team develops a rough draft of the basic plan. The recorded results from Step 4 provide an outline for the rough draft with necessary tables, charts and other graphics being added as needed. The planning team prepares and circulates a final draft to obtain the comments of the church staff and members that have responsibilities for implementing the plan.

Following these simple rules for writing plans and procedures will help ensure that readers and users understand their content:

- Keep the language simple and clear
- Avoid using jargon and minimize the use of acronyms
- Use short sentences and the active voice
- Provide enough detail to convey an easily understood plan that is actionable
- Format the plan and present its contents so that its readers can quickly find solutions and options
- Ensure accessibility by developing tools and documents so they can be easily converted to alternate formats

Review the Plan

Planners should check the written plan for its conformity to applicable regulatory requirements and the standards of Federal or state agencies, as appropriate, and for its usefulness in practice.

Commonly used criteria can help decision makers determine the effectiveness and efficiency of plans. These measures include:

- Adequacy
- Feasibility
- Acceptability
- Completeness
- Compliance

When using these five criteria, planners should ask the following questions:

- Did an action, a process, a decision or the operational timing identified in the plan make the situation worse or better?
- Were new alternate courses of action identified?
- What aspects of the action, process, decision, or operational timing make it something to avoid or remove from the plan?
- What specific changes to plans and procedures, personnel, organizational structures, leadership or management processes, facilities or equipment can improve operational performance?

Additionally, when reviewing the plan, a church does not have to provide all of the resources needed to meet a capability requirement established during the planning effort. However, the plan should explain where the church will obtain the resources to support those required capabilities.

Approve and Disseminate the Plan

Once the plan has been validated, the planning team should present the plan to the appropriate church officials and obtain approval for the plan. It is also important to establish the authority required for changes and modifications to the plan. Once approved, the planning team should arrange to distribute the plan.

Step 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

Training

After developing a plan, it must be shared and training should take place for all personnel involved so they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the tasks identified in the plan.

Exercise the Plan

Evaluating the effectiveness of plans involves a combination of training events, exercises and real-world incidents to determine whether the goals, objectives, decisions, actions and timing outlined in the plan led to a successful response. The church needs to be aware of lessons and practices from other communities.

A remedial action process can help a planning team identify, illuminate, and correct problems with the churches Emergency Operation Plan. This process captures information from exercises, post-disaster critiques, self-assessments, audits, or lessons-learned processes that may indicate that deficiencies exist. Members of the planning team should reconvene to discuss the problem and to consider and assign responsibility for generating remedies. Remedial actions may also involve providing refresher training for a church's personnel.

As appropriate, significant issues and problems identified through a remedial action process and/or the annual review should provide the information needed to allow the planning team to make the necessary revisions to the plan.

Review, Revise, and Maintain the Plan

This step closes the loop in the planning process. It focuses on adding the information gained by exercising the plan to the research collected in Step 2 and starting the planning cycle over again. Remember, planning is a continuous process that does not stop when the plan is published. Plans should evolve as lessons are learned, new information and insights are obtained, and priorities are updated.

Planning teams should establish a process for reviewing and revising the plan. Many accomplish their reviews on an annual basis. Teams should also consider reviewing and updating the plan after the following events:

- A major incident

- A change in operational resources
- A formal update of standards
- Each activation
- Major exercises
- A change in the churches demographics
- A change in the acceptability of various risks
- The enactment of new or amended laws or ordinances

Appendix One

Church Potential for Disaster Response

The following may be used in a disaster response in or near our community.

A. **Church Facilities**

___ classrooms
___ clothes bank
___ dining room
___ dumpster
___ fellowship hall
___ food bank
___ gymnasium
___ kitchen
___ nursery
___ outside electric hookup
___ outside swage
___ outside water hookup
___ rest rooms
___ showers
___ storage building
___ vacant building
___ other ____________

B. **Equipment**

___ air compressor
___ chainsaws, etc.
___ generator
___ high volume pump
___ oxygen tank
___ portable stoves
___ sanitation equipment and supplies
___ submersible pump
___ other ____________

C. **Vehicles**

___ 4x4's
___ aircraft
___ ATV
___ boats
___ buses
___ campers
___ tractor-trailer
___ trailers
___ trucks
___ van
___ other____________

D. **Tools and Supplies**

___ wheelchair
___ brooms
___ cots
___ crutches
___ electric cords
___ first-aid kit
___ garden hose
___ hand tools
___ mops
___ power tools
___ shop vacuum
___ shovels
___ other ______________

Appendix Two

Church Member Disaster Relief Interest and Skills Survey

Name____
Street Address______________________________ Home Phone___________________
City/State/Zip______________________________ Work Phone______________________
E-mail______________________________Cell Phone ____________________________
Church______________________________ Phone _______________________________
Address____

Would you be interested in assisting with a disaster relief project by our church:

____ In this community ____ In this county ____ In this state
____ In the USA ____ Internationally

How much lead-time would you need to get ready to participate in a project?
____

Interest/Experience/Training

Check the types of disaster ministries that interest you. Place two checks by areas where you are experienced.

__1. Advisory/advocacy
__2. Bulk distribution
__3. Casework
__4. Chainsaw crew/tree removal
__5. Child care
__6. Cleanup crew
__7. Communications (Ham Radios)
__8. Counseling
__9. Crisis closet
__10. Damage assessment
__11. Elder care (or handicapped)
__12. Employment assistance
__13. Evacuation of persons
__14. Feeding
__15. Interpreter: Language____________
__16. Legal aid
__17. Literacy
__18. Medical emergency team
__19. Mud-outs
__20. Reconstruction team
__21. Repair (emergency)
__22. Salvage
__23. Sanitation
__24. Security
__25. Shelter management or care
__26. Transportation
__27. Other_________________

Check if you have training in the following:

__ Involving Southern Baptists in Disaster Relief
__ State disaster relief manual
__ Hands-on training with unit
__ Temporary emergency child care
__ Crisis counseling
__ American Red Cross
__ Introduction to Disaster Services
__ Mass Feeding
__ Advanced first aid and CPR
__ Other
__ Other disaster relief training

Appendix Three

Church Opportunities and Action

A church can assist with mitigation, preparation, warning, rescue and evacuation. It can also provide facilities, volunteers, and supplies to assist with emergency feeding, shelter, child care, or other functions. Church facilities can be used as an information center for disaster survivors and also provide pastoral counseling or crisis intervention.

Other ministry opportunities for churches are to:

- Identify volunteers (in the church or in the community) who can give advice regarding insurance, repair contracts, and applications for loans or grants.
- Locate qualified people to care for children, the elderly, and sick or disabled people who need special facilities, diets, transportation, and/or recreation.
- Identify members who can provide temporary housing for disaster survivors.
- Identify bilingual interpreters to assist those who speak another language or have literacy limitations.
- Provide companionship to people who have been displaced and are unfamiliar with their new surroundings, community services, and stores.
- Participate in ministries such as receiving, sorting, and distributing clothing, bedding, bulk food, clean-up, and household supplies.
- Provide assistance with food, housing, communication, and other needs of out-of-town volunteers who come to help with the disaster response.
- Cooperate with other agencies during disasters.
- Have a voice in the rebuilding/relocation process and make sure disaster survivors are treated the same in regard to physical, social, and spiritual recovery.
- Begin a transportation bank by developing a database of cars, vans, pickups, dump trucks, boats, planes, ATV’s, etc. which might be available during a disaster.
- Organize clean-up, salvage, security or repair crews, as well as help disaster survivors clean their homes and furniture, install temporary roofing or board up windows and doors or remove household contents for safe storage.