

# CONGREGATIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

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**Name of Church**

Note: Listing of acronyms is found at end of this document

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk of Session \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC) \_\_\_\_\_

CDRC phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

## **PREPARATORY PHASE**

1. Alert is issued by NOAA, Department of Homeland Security, or state/local EMA.
2. Advise Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator to initiate telephone tree for elder notification.
3. Elders notify members of their respective undershepherd groups of the developing situation, status of local shelters, and plans for disaster mitigation.
4. Special attention given to shut-ins and elderly who may need assistance.
5. Elders report completion of their calls to CDRC, noting special needs.
6. Church Staff backs up computer files, financial data, rolls, etc. and stores electronic and hard copies in a secure location, preferably off campus.

\_\_\_ CDRC notified Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Elders notified Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Reports received from Elders Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Electronics and Hard Copies of Data Secured Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

## **EMERGENCY PHASE**

Everyone remains in place, sheltered against the event. Use of NOAA radio encouraged to remain safe until the "all clear" is given.

## **INVENTORY PHASE**

1. Elders see to the safety of their families and property first.
2. Elders contact those on their undershepherd list. If phone service is out, individual visitation should be attempted with respect for public safety and National Guard lines. Information should be given to CDRC.

3. Within 24 hours of the incident, the Session holds a Called Meeting at the church or other location if the church is not usable. During this meeting, the following items should be addressed by the CDRC.
  - a. Status of members and their needs to the extent that it can be known.
  - b. Status of church facilities and discussion of possible use for the benefit of the community.
  - c. Status of local shelters, both primary and secondary.
  - d. If the church is a shelter, status of coordination with ARC, Salvation Army or other relief agencies.
  - e. Schedule a time for congregational gathering and worship.

\_\_\_ Called Meeting of Session Scheduled                              Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ CDRC Reports Shared

    \_\_\_ Status of members and needs                              Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

    \_\_\_ Status of facilities    Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

    \_\_\_ Discussion of availability to community

    \_\_\_ Coordination with relief agencies

        \_\_\_ American Red Cross

        \_\_\_ Salvation Army

        \_\_\_ Local VOAD

        \_\_\_ Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Gathering and Worship of Congregation Scheduled    Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_

**RELIEF PHASE**

1. Within 24 hours of the Called Session Meeting, the CDRC, Pastor and/or Clerk contact the Presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator and give a full report of the impact on the church, its members and community.
2. PDRC assimilates information from all churches impacted within the Presbytery and, in conjunction with the Presbytery Executive or his/her delegate, provides information as to injuries, damage, needs etc. to the Presbytery-at-large.
3. PDRC and/or Presbytery Executive notify Presbyterian Disaster Assistance of injuries, damage, needs etc. (PDA #888.728.7228 x5840)
4. CDRC and PDRC assist in the formation of a local VOAD, if one is not already formed and arrange for volunteers, resources, and funding to aid in relief and recovery.
5. During this phase, it is imperative that members with special needs (elderly, shut-ins, chronically ill, families with young children, the poor, etc. are closely supported.)

\_\_\_ Presbytery Office or PDRC notified and report give    Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Information received as to the status of Presbytery.    Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Local VOAD formed, if not already in place                      Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Special-needs members identified and supported. Plans made for on-going support.

## RECOVERY PHASE

Each recovery phase is unique to the incident and the community involved. Most often there is not a clear delineation between the Relief and Recovery phases, rather organizations and events take shape in response to the realities present. As infrastructure is being restored, homes and businesses re-built, each congregation can discover its own, unique ministry within the community. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Serve as a childcare center for families affected by the disaster. Have someone familiar with childhood trauma and stress available to consult or assist with caregiving.
- ❖ Make facilities available for community meetings. Churches often serve as community activity centers. Hospitality has historically been one of the callings of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Consider offering fellowship halls, education buildings and even sanctuaries as shelter facilities for volunteers. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army and other relief agencies have shelter guidelines for victims. Become familiar with these insofar as possible. Volunteers usually need only a place to sleep, eat and bathe.
- ❖ Warehouse space can often be established in church facilities. Have someone with a knowledge of materials management available to supervise or consult on the reception, cataloging and distribution of materials. Establish early on the type of materials which will be accepted. Beware of an influx of unusable items. This is often termed the Second Disaster.
- ❖ Serve as a clearinghouse for information about people, needs, opportunities, etc. This can be as simple as setting up and maintaining a community bulletin board or as complex as working with USPS to establish a temporary mail center.
- ❖ In all cases, keep the PDRC and the Presbytery informed of what the church is doing. As a connectional church, we celebrate and struggle together.

### **ACRONYM LISTING**

CDRC	Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator
EMA	Emergency Management Administration
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PDA	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
PDRC	Presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator
VOAD	Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disasters

From PDA materials