



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**Faith-Based Organization
Planning Guide**



Continuity of Operations: Issues That Should Be Addressed By Your Organization

1. Plan for the impact of a disaster on your organization.

- Form a preparedness committee; assign key staff with the authority to develop, maintain, and act upon a disaster preparedness and response plan.
- Identify functions essential to accomplishing the mission of your organization and clearly document so resources can be pulled from non-essential functions in an emergency.
- Determine the potential impact of a disaster on outside resources that your organization depends on to deliver its services. (e.g., facilities, supplies, infrastructure etc.)
- Identify the technology needs related to large-scale disasters (i.e. purchase of laptops/VPN access).

2. Communicate with, and educate staff, congregants, and persons in the communities you serve.

- Consider your organization's unique contribution to addressing rumors, misinformation and fear.
- Find up-to-date, reliable disaster preparedness information and make this information available to your organization and others.
- Distribute materials and disseminate basic information about disaster preparedness.
- Provide information via newsletters, e-mails, posters, phone messages, websites etc.
- Encourage preparedness training opportunities through the Collier Red Cross and Collier Emergency Management.
- Work with the health department and encourage yearly influenza vaccinations and provide public health messages for your congregation.

3. Plan for the impact of a disaster on your organization, staff, congregants and the communities you serve:

- Develop a continuity of operations plan (COOP) to assist your decision making during a crisis.
- Prioritize your organization's essential functions, identify clear delegations of authority, and three deep leadership for management lines of succession.
- Identify functions that can be suspended while staff is reassigned to more critical roles.
- Plan on staff/volunteer absences during a disaster by making task checklists for jobs so individuals can perform new duties easily.
- Identify staff / volunteers that can be cross trained to fill critical function roles.
- Identify confidential/sensitive material locations including room, cabinet and key number.

4. Set up policies to follow during a flu or other disease outbreak.

- Set up policies for staff leave for personal illness or care of sick family members.
- Establish policy whereas staff and members stay home if they are symptomatic for influenza.
- Determine if working from home is an option for your employees.
- Follow CDC travel recommendations during an outbreak.
- Set up procedures for activating your organization's response plan when an outbreak is declared by authorities and act accordingly.
- Evaluate aspects of your services and determine if they could promote the spread of disease. (e.g., communion, hand shaking)
- Determine which aspects of your services will be suspended and to what extent.
- Determine if services can be held outside or broadcasted to decrease the risk of transmission.

5. Allocate resources to protect your staff, congregants and persons in the communities that you serve during a pandemic.

- Determine the amount of supplies needed to promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette and identify how they will be obtained.
- Make alcohol hand gel and disinfectant wipes available and accessible.
- Consider focusing your organization's efforts during a disaster to providing services that are most needed during the emergency (e.g. mental/spiritual health or social services).

If you have questions about the contents of your existing disaster plan or the development of a continuity of operations plan (COOP) call the preparedness office DOH-Collier at 252-2631 or contact: Jefferson.Welle@flhealth.gov

Free

Meet with your insurance provider to review current coverage.

Create procedures to quickly evacuate or shelter-in-place. Practice the plans. Talk to your staff and congregants about your organization's disaster plans.

Two-way communication is central, before, during and after a disaster.

Create an emergency contact list including employee/congregants emergency contact information. Identify those individuals within your congregation with special needs.

Create a list of critical business contractors and others whom you will use in an emergency.

Know what kinds of emergencies might affect your organization both internally and externally. Decide in advance what you will do if your building is unusable.

Create a list of inventory and equipment, including computer hardware, software and peripherals, for insurance purposes.

Talk to utility service providers about potential alternatives and identify back-up options.

Promote family and individual preparedness among your congregation.

Include emergency preparedness planning information during service. Disseminate information to congregants in newsletters, e mails, or other internal communications tools.

Minimal \$\$

Buy fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.

Decide which emergency supplies the congregation can feasibly provide, if any, and talk to your flock about what supplies individuals might want to consider keeping in a personal and portable supply kit.

Set up a telephone call tree, password-protected page on the congregation's Web site, e-mail alert or call-in voice recording to communicate with employees and residents in an emergency.

Provide first aid and CPR training to key staff and parishioners.

Consider the purchase of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Use and keep up-to-date computer anti-virus software and firewalls.

Elevate valuable inventory and electric machinery off the floor in case of flooding.

If applicable, make sure your building's HVAC system is working properly and is well-maintained.

Backup your records and critical data. Keep a copy off-site.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

