

Steps for Developing a Plan for your Church

- Appoint a Disaster Response Coordinator and a Disaster Response Committee for the congregation to coordinate and oversee preparedness efforts, communications and response to an emergency or disaster.
- Formulate plans for evacuation in case of emergency or disaster. There should be a plan for evacuating the church during the week and on a main worship day when member traffic is high.
- Inspect the church and any additional buildings. Are exits, clearly marked? Do the smoke detectors have fresh working batteries? Are the fire extinguishers up-to-date? Is your alarm company's name and phone number posted by the phone? Is the emergency contact information for after-hours emergencies up-to-date with local police and fire departments?
- Check that your insurance policy meets the minimum requirements of your house of worship by your mortgage holder. Are the art and musical instruments covered? Books? Alter?
- Identify vulnerable church members. The members may be aged, living alone, living in mobile homes or apartments, have health issues or limited mobility. When warnings of a potential disaster or immediately following an emergency, have a designated person call or contact these members to ensure that they are safe.
- A communications network is essential. There should be a continually updated list of all congregation members' phone numbers (home, office and mobile, radio call sign). A copy of the contact list should be kept in the house of worship office, with the Disaster Response Coordinator and religious leader(s).
- Designate one remote phone number where an emergency message can be recorded and make sure all parishioners know that number and understand its function.

