

EMERGENCY OR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

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The purpose of an Emergency or Disaster Preparedness Plan is to prevent or reduce harm to people, buildings, and collections in the event of catastrophic events. The plan should include the **evacuation** of people and possibly collections, the **stabilization** of the building and its environment, and **remedial care** of collections. First, you should involve a variety of staff and, if necessary, consultants, in the development of your plan. Determine what types of disasters may occur, and then develop scenarios of mock disasters. Some events have equal probability for every institution, while others are specific to geographic location. Work out your response, detailing all steps and personnel you envision will be involved for each type of emergency, and repeat this exercise for each probable disaster. This plan should be tailored to an institution's size, physical facility, and personnel.

DISASTER CONSIDERATIONS

The following three items are considered paramount for museums and cultural institutions and should be incorporated into your facility's Disaster Preparedness Plan:

- People are more important than objects.
- Loan objects are priorities for evacuation.
- After a disaster, it is better to do nothing than to treat objects yourself. Obtain professional advice first.

DISASTER CHECKLIST

The following checklist is based in part on the book, "Planning for Emergencies: A Guide for Museums," by T. Solley, J. Williams, and L. Baden, published by the American Association of Museums, 1987. The following items should be addressed and incorporated into any disaster preparedness plan:

- What is the chain of command?
- Who is in charge of development of a plan?
- Who is in charge of implementation?
- Who is the Duty Officer?
- Who will call the police; evacuate public and staff, etc.? If that person is not there, who is the backup?
- Do you have an organizational chart and/or functional chart?

WHAT TYPE OF DISASTER IS POSSIBLE? HOW WOULD YOU DETECT A DISASTER?

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tornado? | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects? | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical spill? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire? | <input type="checkbox"/> Bomb threat? | <input type="checkbox"/> Flood? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke? | <input type="checkbox"/> Water leak? | <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy loss? | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy cutback? | <input type="checkbox"/> Power failure? |
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WHERE DO YOU KEEP A LIST OF EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS? HAS EACH BEEN CONTACTED ABOUT YOUR PLANS?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department? | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals? | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbers? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician? | <input type="checkbox"/> Police? | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeland Security? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineers? | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Laboratories? | <input type="checkbox"/> Who knows CPR? |
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DEVELOP A PRIORITY LIST FOR OBJECTS TO BE SAVED.

- Where will they be relocated?
 - Who has access to these areas?
 - Do you have a computerized collection management system?
 - If so do you retain a computerized back-up collection records off site?
 - If not computerized, do you have a duplicate set of records, photographs, etc.?
 - If so, are they available within 24 hour notice?
 - Do your floor plans show emergency exits and evacuations routes?
 - Where do you keep emergency supplies and equipment?
 - Do you have a written emergency manual?
 - If so, has every member of the staff read it?
 - When was the last time the staff was trained in emergency measures?
 - Is your insurance up to date?
 - Does all staff know how to handle objects in the event of an emergency?
 - How will you maintain security during a disaster?
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INFORM AND EDUCATE YOUR STAFF

- Where copies of emergency manual are kept
 - Duty roster and assignment, backup, chain of command
 - Where telephone numbers are kept
 - Location of exit routes for evacuation
 - Fire extinguishers and their uses
 - Location of utility shut off valves
 - Location of First Aid supplies
 - CPR training
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PERFORM TESTS TO ENSURE PREPAREDNESS

- ❖ Designate emergency preparedness week to review, update and test plan.
 - ❖ Appoint someone to keep the duty roster updated.
 - ❖ Test alarms, sprinklers as recommended by manufacturers, and make sure they are maintained.
 - ❖ Inventory emergency supplies and reorder and replace as necessary.
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In conclusion, an effective Disaster Plan outlines prevention, preparedness, and response and recovery activities. Additional information on the contents of a Disaster Plan can be accessed through <http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/> and/or <http://dPlan.org>.