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### Faith Based Community

- Contact other pastors in your area and alert them of your disaster plan and discuss how you might work with them in case of a disaster.

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### Community Coordination and Support

- Contact and get acquainted with your local Red Cross, Director of Emergency Services, and the County Emergency Management director. Don't wait to get to know them when a disaster hits. Other points of contact: The mayor's office, fire, police and rescue services, health care systems, and local schools.
- Work with church trustees to identify what the church can offer to the community in the event of a disaster. Make local officials aware if your church can be a shelter, a feeding center, or a command center. (Contact the local unit of the American Red Cross for assistance).
- Become familiar with other agencies' disaster plans.

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Contact **Oklahoma Volunteers In Mission** for information on all of these programs and more.

### Disaster Response and Domestic Missions

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# Developing a Local Church Disaster Plan

Prior to a disaster, you and your congregation should prepare a response plan that addresses specifically how you will respond to a disaster event in your community.





## Developing a Local Church Disaster Plan

This list is not intended to cover every contingency—you will need to tailor it to meet the specific needs and talents of your congregation.

### Back-up all important data

(computer files and hard copies)

These copies should be kept in a secure location not located on church grounds.

Items to include, but not be limited to:

- Financial records and insurance policies
- Property records; deeds, plats, architectural plans, etc. for all church property. Be sure to include a complete inventory: both a written and a narrated video of all church property
- Membership records including names, attendance, phone numbers, and membership status of all persons. Also include list of small groups and auxiliary organizations such as boy scouts, girl scouts, etc.
- Church historical records: copies of photos, books, historical records, pamphlets and other artifacts

### Establish alternate meeting sites for:

- ◆ Worship
- ◆ Small groups and Sunday school
- ◆ Auxiliary Groups
- ◆ Day School/Mothers Day Out
- ◆ Any group that meets in the church

And consider in this process offering alternate meeting arrangements to others who may have such a need.

### Review Insurance coverage.

- Make sure that your church property and all other real estate property is appraised and covered.

*Special Note:* replacement cost insurance is the only kind of policy that will come close to covering your loss in case of a disaster. If your present insurance company will not issue replacement cost insurance, contact your district superintendent for the name of a company who will.

- Check policies closely for riders, exclusions, coverages, and binders.
- Check for liability issues that are disaster-related.

### Membership Needs:

- Identify and appoint a disaster team leader from your congregation. People with experience in emergency management or who have had military training are good candidates. Whoever you pick needs to have time (someone who is retired) and also needs to be a good planner and organizer. Do not use staff, if at all possible.
- Identify vulnerable populations within the church and community. Have a way of contacting and caring for shut-ins and others who cannot meet their own needs. Have a plan in place to contact these people as soon as possible after the disaster. This requires a list of names, phone numbers and directions to the addresses, where required.
- Train persons to provide initial pastoral care to those who are hurting spiritually and emotionally (OKVIM Care Team members and Stephen ministers are excellent prospects for this).
- Identify and provide training for teams with special jobs to do during and after a disaster; existing small groups can be the source for these teams. Training is available through the OKVIM Conference Disaster Response ministry.
  - Chain saw teams (certified only)
  - Survey team
  - Communications team
  - Medical Response team
  - Hospitality team (shelter and mass feeding)
- Recruit persons for congregational calling trees.
- Prepare a disaster brochure for church members with key instructions and information. FEMA, Red Cross and UMCOR all have brochures that can be good models.

### Miscellaneous:

- Consider opening accounts with local hardware, grocery and supply stores in advance. Get to know the managers and key people.
- Have a fully supplied and current industrial first aid kit available. All staff should receive Red Cross First Aid and CPR Training and auto defibrillator training.
- Evaluate all present emergency signs. Fire evacuation plans, tornado and heavy thunderstorm evacuation instructions for each classroom and gathering area within the building should be posted in that area.
- Have ready “emergency food and personal needs” supplies, which includes canned food, bottled water, diapers, formula, feminine napkins, garbage bags, etc.
- Have a disaster contingency fund (\$5,000 for larger churches) on-hand to begin immediate relief efforts. Funds spent in disaster response may be reimbursed by Conference Disaster Response committee or UMCOR.
- Have a supply of tarps, tools and fasteners on hand at all times. (10 large tarps for large churches, at minimum) Check them annually for rips, mildew, etc.
- Have available to the pastor and lay leader a list of the following persons with office and home phone numbers:
  - Church disaster response team leader
  - Resident bishop
  - CCOM director
  - District superintendent
  - Conference disaster response coordinator
  - Local fire, EMS, Red Cross, hospital, etc.
  - The emergency disaster call list