

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Serving people in our local communities at times of greatest need
Because God so loved the world ...

From time to time situations of crisis arise when the Church is called to serve the local community. For various reasons, often not least of all our existing structures, local churches have wished they could participate in responses to local emergencies, but either could not, or at best were less effective and slower in that response than they would like. Too often this can also be due to simply being unprepared, creating the need to improvise a response in less than ideal circumstances.

The following is provided as guidance to local churches in emergency preparedness, the first step in enabling the people of God to respond when disaster strikes close to home.

- Meet with members of your local congregation and like-minded members of other local churches, and determine what type of response your people are most capable of providing in response to a variety of local emergencies: incidents potentially involving a lot of local casualties in a school bus accident, an over-turned hay ride, a shooting incident at a local school, alternatively a lot of locally displaced people, who may have lost their homes due to a major flood, ice storm or fire.
- Make contact with and meet with your local municipal, district or regional Emergency Measures Organization to discuss with them the types of help you could provide, what needs they anticipate and what plans they already have in place. Get to know the other people who would be activated and responding to any local emergency. Ensure they and you know what types of help could be most effective and how you would establish contact and organize your response in the event it were needed.
- Write down your response plan, detailing what you would intend to do, where and how. Ensure you have a detailed and accurate call-out activation plan linked with your local Emergency Measures Organization to ensure you know how you are going to call out the people necessary to make your response work. Consider how this is going to work given that your people are also potentially involved in being part of the disaster: possible casualties in your own congregation, loss of electrical power, downed phone lines, blocked roads, loss of your own building or having members of your church work with members of a different denomination out of another church building, for example. Make sure your local Emergency Measures Organization, other involved local churches and the Diocesan Office

have copies of your written plan and know how to contact and support you if needed.

- Practice your plan and develop a means for keeping in touch with your local Emergency Measures Organization so you can adapt the plan as things change in your area over time. Ensure you have someone responsible for reviewing your plan and keeping your contact information up to date as people and phone numbers and other circumstances change.

Diocesan Council Mission Outreach Team
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