

West Ohio Conference Disaster planning

This document is to serve as a guide for the West Ohio Conference, all districts, local churches, and clergy – to plan for, respond to and recover from a disastrous event within the boundaries of the conference.

The Five Phases of a Disaster

-Readiness No active disaster occurring or requiring response in this phase. This is the time to develop a disaster plan, train and equip teams, taking precautions for potential events such as evacuation. Networking and exercising with all response agencies should be completed during this phase.

-Rescue In this phase, Public First Responders are working toward the preservation of life and property, and completing other emergency response activities. Led by trained emergency groups, state and local emergency management, fire departments, and law enforcement groups to secure the site. The Conference Disaster Response Teams will not be active during this phase.

-Relief This phase is activated when the disaster site has been secured and all rescue operations are over. This phase includes crisis intervention, emergency assistance, shelter and housing, food and clothing distribution, temporary repairs, securing valuables, protecting property from additional damage, debris removal, putting tarps on roofs, spiritual and emotional care, and helping with short-term solutions. Duration can be up to 10 times the Rescue Phase.

-Recovery This phase begins when significant clean-up progress had been made and survivors have begun to formulate their recovery plans. It is led by long term recovery organization or possibly by a coalition developed by a group such as UMCOR or VOAD. The focus is on repairs and rebuilding for long-term solutions. Duration can be 10 times the Relief Phase

-Review This phase is the evaluation phase. This is where growth and learning is encouraged from the disaster experience. Reviews should be done after each phase. Each phase will have different responders who will witness specific needs that required documenting to facilitate growth and learning. A team should be assigned to conduct hot washes after each phase and record all comments from responders as they complete a phase and become ready to move to the next phase. The information from all phases must be compiled into an After Action Report and a Process Improvement Plan with specific dates for completing these improvements. The Improvement Plan should be review every thirty days until completed.

I. EVERYONE regardless of your role or position

a. Readiness

- i. Develop your own Family's disaster plan – practice it and review it annually.
 1. Create an emergency kit (check Red Cross for suggested list and procedures)
- ii. Become familiar with your own local church disaster plan.
- iii. Become familiar with the Conference Disaster Response Plan.
- iv. Determine your primary and secondary rally points in the event of an evacuation.
Communicate this information to all of your family members.
- v. Provide security for important documents and electronic files.
- vi. Determine how will you communicate with others and have contact names and numbers available.
- vii. When a disaster is imminent:
 1. If you need to evacuate, inform someone of where you are going and how to communicate with you.
 2. If safe, assist in mitigation of damage.

b. Rescue

- i. Let the trained emergency personnel do their job

c. Relief

- i. Assess damage to personal home and family members.
- ii. Assist in safely securing property from further damage as you are able.
- iii. Take pictures of damaged property before undertaking any repairs, and prior to attaching tarps or cleaning up debris or mold. Do not undertake repairs until after the insurance inspection.
- iv. Ask for help as needed / register for disaster relief and recovery programs.

II. LOCAL PASTOR/CLERGY

a. Readiness

- i. Talk with your congregation about disaster preparedness
- ii. Become familiar with the district and conference disaster plans
- iii. Work with congregation and local church disaster response coordinator to develop local church disaster response plan
- iv. Identify someone who is capable of safely securing church property to prevent further damage.

1. Include in the plan both the protection of people and property. Consider how you can offer ministry before, during and after a disaster.
 2. Identify and develop a part of your plan to care for all professing and constituent members of the congregation with special attention to the most vulnerable individuals and families.
 3. Determine how to best secure the church buildings and parsonage to mitigate damage.
- v. Communicate with the District Coordinator; inform him/her of the scope of your plans and the availability of your church to help in a disaster that might occur outside of your local community.
 - vi. Receive disaster readiness and response training and encourage your congregation to do the same.
 - vii. Be sure you have personal insurance information with you.
 - viii. When a disaster is imminent:
 1. If you have to evacuate, inform your District Superintendent and a local church leader, that you are evacuating, where you are going, and how to communicate with you during and immediately after the evacuation.
 2. If safe, assist in mitigation of damage.
- b. Rescue
- i. Let the trained emergency personnel do their job.
 - ii. As possible, communicate with the membership.
 - iii. If you are not properly trained, it may not be safe to offer assistance to others at this point. Your safety and that of your family comes first.
- c. Relief
- i. Assess damage to personal home and family members. If you have suffered loss or injury, listen and use outside judgment. Notify the fact of being affected to Chair of SPRC, Chair of Trustees, and District Superintendent as soon as possible.
 - ii. AS soon as possible, conduct an initial on-site assessment of church buildings and property with Chair of Trustees and communicate damage with District Disaster Response Coordinator and District Superintendent.
 - iii. Assess the needs of the community. If members of your congregation are able and prepared to help in ministry under the leadership of trained volunteers, safely begin. For assistance contact your District Disaster Response Coordinator
1. Within the community concentrate on BASIC need-food, shelter, cleaning-out homes of debris or mud, securing homes from further damage (e.g. tarping structures) (FYI- This maybe a health risk is not conducted properly. It can also lead to masking hidden damage)

2. Be the pastoral presence in the community that you are called to be. However do not proselytize, (For more information, see the National VOAD Emotional and Spiritual Care Points of Consensus at www.nvoad.org)

d. Recovery

- i. Engage with the local community's long term recovery group.
- ii. Keep the District Superintendent and the District Disaster Response Coordinator informed of the recovery effort.
- iii. Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible.
- iv. Provide directional assistance for volunteer teams.
- v. Consider ways the local church can support the recovery effort.
- vi. Plan for church and ecumenical opportunities to celebrate milestones in recovery

e. Review

- i. Gather with the leadership of the congregation-thank them for their ministry and asses the local church's plan and response post-disaster.

III. LOCAL CHURCH

a. Readiness

- i. Develop a local church disaster response plan, review it annually.
- ii. Encourage families to develop a personal disaster plan
- iii. Board of Trustees should annually review insurance coverage, provide a safe repository of valuable records, and inventory church property and contents.
- iv. Consider if and how your church buildings and property will be used before, during, and after a disaster. Preplanning and pre-agreements can save such time, financial resources, and insurance liabilities. The Conference Disaster Response Committee is available to be a resource for you.
- v. Develop a means of communication with all members and constituents of the congregation
- vi. Decide if your local church is willing to be a shelter. If so, have your facility pre-approved as a shelter by the Red Cross.
- vii. When a disaster is imminent:
 1. Board of Trustees should make sure that ALL church owned buildings and properties have been secured so as to assist in mitigation of damage.
 2. Communicate with the membership-if they are evacuating, where are they going and how will the church be able to communicate with them.

b. Rescue

- i. Let the trained emergency personnel do their job.
- ii. Do not open as a shelter without prior approval and or direction by the

Red Cross

c. Relief

- i. As soon as possible conduct an initial on-site assessment of church buildings and property with at least the pastor and Chair of Trustees present. Communicate damage with District Disaster Response Coordinator and District Superintendent.
- ii. Communicate with the congregation membership, assess their needs, and provide assistance as you are able.
- iii. Assess the needs of the community. If your congregation is able to help in ministry safely begin-if you need assistance contact your District Coordinator. Within the community concentrate on BASIC needs-food, shelter, drying of homes.
- iv. Take pictures of damaged property before undertaking any repairs and prior to attaching tarps or cleaning up debris or mold. The church should not undertake repairs until after the insurance inspection.
- v. Keep detailed records of disaster response and disaster funds received and spent

d. Recovery

- i. Engage with the long-term recovery group; identify resources that the local church may be able to provide, or to acquire through connectional ministries.
- ii. Keep the District Superintendent and District Disaster Response Coordinator informed of the recovery effort.
- iii. Resume church ministries.
- iv. Keep detailed records of disaster response and disaster funds received and spent.
- vi. Provide facility assistance / hospitality for work teams as resources allow and as approved by the congregation.
- vi. Participate in local community recovery closeout process.

e. Review

- i. Share lessons learned/best practices with District Superintendent and District Coordinator
- ii. Review Your Local Church plan, and revise as necessary.

IV. DISTRICT DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATOR

a. Readiness

- i. The District DRC is the communication liaison between the District Office, local church disaster coordinator and the specific disaster response ministry.
- ii. Make your presence known among the local churches and let the local churches know how to communicate with you.

- iii. Develop with the District Superintendent a district disaster response plan-with attention to communication.
 - i. Attend meetings of the Conference Disaster Response Team
 - ii. Attend trainings and encourage others to do the same; suggest disaster training opportunities and venues for training in the district.
 - iii. When a disaster is imminent:
 - 1. If you have to evacuate, inform your District Superintendent and the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator that you are evacuating, where you are going, and how to communicate with you during and immediately after the evacuation.
 - 2. If safe, assist in mitigation of damage.
- b. Rescue
- i. Let the trained emergency personnel do their job.
- c. Relief
- i. Assess damage to personal home and family members. If you have suffered loss or injury, listen and use outside resources. Notify the fact that you are affected to your District Superintendent and the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
 - ii. Take pictures of damaged property before undertaking any repairs and prior to attaching tarps or cleaning up debris or mold. Do not undertake repairs until after the insurance inspection.
 - iii. Communicate with pastors/local churches in affected areas in your district. Assist with initial assessments as requested.
 - iv. Communicate with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator of needs and of damage to church-owned buildings and properties within your district.
 - v. If your district is not affected, your district may be called upon to assist with the districts that have been impacted.
 - vi. Communicate with the Conference Early Response Team Coordinator to help in the deployment of early Response Teams as needed and requested.
- d. Recovery
- i. When an affected area transitions into long term recovery, the focus of the district disaster response coordinator may shift toward review, planning and preparation.
 - ii. Participate in the closeout process as requested.
 - iii. Communicate remaining unmet needs with the Conference DRC
- e. Review
- i. Be intentional about communicating thanks to those who have provided aid to your district
 - ii. Review the district disaster readiness and response plan, and amend as needed.
 - iv. Participate in the review of the Conference Disaster Response Plan.

V. DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

a. Readiness

- i. Be trained by UMCOR regarding Conference disaster response ministries.
- ii. Prepare communication procedures between clergy, Local Church Disaster Response Coordinators and District Office.
- iii. Communicate the work of the Conference Disaster Response Committee to the local laity and clergy.
- iv. Appoint a District Disaster Response Coordinator in consultation with the Conference Disaster Response Team. Please take into consideration the time investment necessary in disaster readiness and disaster response. The role may be filled by laity or clergy.

v. When a disaster is imminent:

1. If you have to evacuate, inform the Dean of the Cabinet and the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator that you are evacuating, where you are going, and how to communicate with you during and immediately following the evacuation.
2. If safe, assist in mitigation of damage.

b. Rescue

- i. Be safe, don't be a hero! Let the emergency personnel do their job.

c. Relief

- i. Assess damage to personal home and family members. If you have suffered loss or injury, listen and use outside resources. Notify the fact of being affected to the Dean of Cabinet and Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
- ii. If the parsonage has suffered damage, take pictures of damaged property before undertaking any repairs and prior to attaching tarps or cleaning up debris. Do not undertake repairs until after the insurance inspection. Notify your liaison to the Conference Board of Trustees of damage sustained.
- iii. Contact pastors in affected areas to assess physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the clergy, clergy families and congregations.
- iv. As soon as safe and physically possible visit the affected areas with the Bishop.
- v. If a pastor has been directly affected by the disaster, a Supply Pastor may be appointed immediately for one or two months.
- vi. Visit affected areas as often as possible with and without the Bishop.
- vii. If pastor/s are likely to be overwhelmed by church and community duties during the disaster response, appoint a temporary Assisting Pastor to provide an extra pair of hands.
- viii. Watch for "burn-out" on all levels within the conference
- ix. Encourage unaffected churches to share resources
- x. Use the authority of your office to ask people to do certain tasks

d. Recovery

- i. Communicate local needs to conference.
- ii. Encourage local churches to volunteer.
- iii. Communicate with the Disaster Recovery any unmet needs that arise or areas that may need additional resources or assistance.
- iv. Periodically assess well-being of pastors in affected areas. Consider pulpit supply or other forms of support as needed.
- v. Support and or assist in celebrating milestones in recovery.

e. Review

- i. Be intentional about communicating thanks to those who provided aid to your district
- ii. Participate in the closeout evaluation from the Disaster in the District.
- iii. Participate in post-disaster evaluation and the need for possible plan revision.

VIII. RESIDENT BISHOP

a. Readiness

- i. Have cabinet trained by UMCOR at least every four years.
- ii. Support the ministry of Disaster Response and encourage District Superintendents to support this ministry as well.
- iii. Appoint a Conference Disaster Response Coordinator that will serve at least four years.
- iv. Appoint the Conference staff person that will serve on the Disaster Response Committee.
- v. Include the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator on the Cabinet and other leadership meetings throughout the year for interaction and education.
- vi. Inform whoever acts on your behalf that when the Bishop is out of the office, the person in charge has a responsibility to implement the response plan when disaster strikes, including contacting has a responsibility to implement the response plan when disaster strikes, including contacting UMCOR for assistance. (Only the Bishop or designee can make this request).
- vii. When a disaster is imminent:
 - 1. If you have to evacuate, inform the Dean of the Cabinet and/or the /Conference Disaster Response Coordinator that you are evacuating, where you are going, and how to communicate with you during the evacuation.
 - 2. If safe, assist in mitigation of damage

b. Rescue

- i. Be safe, don't be a hero! Let the emergency personnel do their job.

c. Relief

- i. Assess damage to personal home and family members. If you have suffered loss or injury, listen to and use outside judgment. Notify the fact of being a affected to the Dean of Cabinet and Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
- ii. In conjunction with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, request assistance from UMCOR, as needed.
- iii. As soon as safe and possible visit the affected areas with the local District Superintendent and the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
- iv. Remember you are the spiritual leader of the conference, lead the conference through the disaster spiritually.
- v. Be in communication with all the District Superintendents and Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
- vi. Appointments: As needed temporary appointments/changes in appointment might be needed. As needed, immediately appoint a Supply Pastor for any clergy who have and are suffering loss of injury as a result of the disaster. Appoint temporary Assisting Pastors, when needed to any charges which have been impacted. If the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator is a pastor, you may need to appoint a Supply Pastor for at least one month to relieve the pastor of local church duties. Appoint a

temporary Assisting District Superintendent to those regions that are hardest hit, especially if there is significant church property damage. If you have suffered loss or injury, see that you too, have an assistant who can share your load.

vii. Consider a conference-wide financial appeal and implement as soon as possible. There is roughly a two-week window for this.

viii. Remember that it cannot be business as usual!

d. Recovery

i. Understand that the recovery ministry is long lasting and still continuing. Your support of this ministry is very important.

ii. Plan for a service of praise and memorial a year from the date of the disaster.

e. Review

i. Publicly acknowledge workers and work done.

ii. Participate in post-action evaluation and Plan revision.

iii. Have all involved leaders meet for reports and evaluation.