



# Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Family

"In caring for people LCMS congregations are active in emergency response and management in their communities."

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## Disaster Response is a Ministry

*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

*1 John 3:17-20*

Disaster response is a Ministry opportunity. Lutherans reaching out to people in their time of need makes a strong statement about who we are. In 2001 the American Red Cross reported 255 disasters in Texas, affecting 4837 households. In May of 2003 the United States had 200 tornadoes touch down in one week.

The Unprepared Church will miss a valuable opportunity to minister while attempting to react to a disaster in their community. By planning before a disaster's occurrence and coordinating with local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), Interfaith Organizations and local government, a church can be prepared to fully minister in times of crisis.

When a disaster hits many people turn to the Church for help and comfort. An important part of disaster response is meeting the spiritual needs of your Church and your community. The Church ministers to people through God's word and prayer. It is important to resume services as soon as possible. It may even be a good ideal to schedule special prayer services.

Have contingency plans in case your facilities are damaged. Identify possible sites to hold a worship service such as a school or community center. Plan how you will publicize where and when services will be held.

Have Elders or other laymen prepared to step in and lead services in case your pastor is effected by the disaster and unable to lead services.

Ministry is an act of serving. By serving those whose lives have been disrupted by disaster, we are demonstrating Christian love in the manner Jesus illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

*"The mission of the Texas District is to strengthen congregations to reach the lost, disciple the saved and care for people - locally and globally."*

How better to accomplish this goal than to reach out to survivors of disaster.

*"In caring for people Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Texas District congregations are active in emergency response and management in their communities."*

## Identifying Potential Disasters

A disaster is an occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption, fire, explosion, building collapse, act of terrorism, or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

## Developing a Family Disaster Plan

### 1. Gathering Information

Find out what types of disasters occur in your area. Learn your community's warning signals and evacuation plans. This information can be gathered from the National Weather Service, The Office of Emergency Management, and non-profit organizations like the American Red Cross and Salvation Army.

### 2. Create a Plan with your Family

Discuss the information you have gathered. Pick two places to meet: A place outside your home for an emergency like a fire, and a place outside your neighborhood in case you can not return home. Pick a friend or relative who lives out of your area as your "Family Check In Contact" in case the family gets separated. Discuss plans for your family in case you are ordered to evacuate the area. Gather emergency numbers. Include numbers for the poison control center, law enforcement, the fire department and your church. Find out where to cut off your utilities. Know how to cover windows and air vents to seal a room. Know how to safely exit your home.



*Caution: Remaining in a sealed room for a prolonged period of time may cause asphyxiation.*

### 3. Implement Your Plan

Post emergency telephone numbers by the phone. Install smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in your home if you don't already have them. Inspect your home for hazards that can be corrected. Have your family learn basic safety measures such as First Aid, CPR, how to turn off water, gas and electricity coming into the house, and how to

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use a fire extinguisher. Teach your children how and when to call 911 or your emergency local services. Keep enough supplies in your home to survive at least three days. Assemble a disaster kit with items you may need if you have to evacuate.

### **4. Practice your plan**

Ask questions to make sure family members remember meeting places, phone numbers and safety rules. Conduct drills. Check Smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year. Test and charge fire extinguishers according to manufacturers instructions. Replace stored water and food every six months. Conduct fire, emergency evacuation and other drills.

## **Putting Together a Family Disaster Kit**

When a disaster strikes, There is often no time to collect the items you need to get by. That is why you should put together a family disaster kit. Items you may need in your disaster kit will vary in different areas, however you will want to include the following:

1. A 3 day supply of nonperishable food and water (1 gallon per day per person).
2. A change of clothing and footwear per person.
3. One blanket or sleeping bag per person.
4. A First Aid Kit including prescription medicines in original containers.
5. Emergency Tools
6. A battery powered radio with extra batteries
7. A flashlight with extra batteries.
8. An extra set of car keys.
9. A credit card or cash.

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10. Special items needed for infant, elderly or disabled members of your family.
11. A Roll of Duct Tape.
12. Plastic Sheeting
13. Sanitation Supplies
14. Rubber Gloves

## Appendix A: Identification of Potential Disasters

A key to preparing for disasters in your area is to be able to identify the types of disasters that have or could occur in your area. The following check list is provided to give you a starting point in identifying and planning for potential disasters.

### Natural Disasters

- Flood
- Hurricane
- Tornado
- Earthquake
- Extreme Heat
- Wild Fire
- Thunder Storm/lightning

### Human Caused Disasters

- Hazardous Material
- Railroad Accident
- Highway and Trucking accidents
- House and Building Fires
- Radiological Accident
- Nuclear Power Plant Emergency
- Terrorism

## Appendix B: Emergency Phone List

Police ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Fire ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Poison Control ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Church ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's Phone # ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
American Red Cross ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctor ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Other ..... \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Evacuation Check List

- ❑ Always following instruction from emergency management officials.
- ❑ Collect survival kit, family members, pets as quickly as possible
- ❑ Each person pack one bag with clothing, toiletries, personal items and prescriptions (in original containers)for one week
- ❑ Plan an evacuation route and destination
- ❑ Notify your emergency contacts of your planned route and destination.
- ❑ Wear sturdy clothing and take additional clothing depending on weather/season
- ❑ Secure your home
  - unplug appliances
  - close and lock doors and windows
  - If freezing conditions are expected during your absence:
    - turn off main water valve
    - drain faucets
    - turn off inside valves for external faucets and open outside faucets to drain
  - engage alarm system
- ❑ Leave early enough to minimize congestion or delay
- ❑ Keep to main routes that are regularly traveled. Short cuts and back roads may become dangerous, flooded, or blocked and are not as regularly patrolled if you experience mechanical difficulty or other emergency.
- ❑ Notify emergency contacts of your arrival at destination and points of contact there.
- ❑ Keep emergency contacts updated about your condition, location, and contact information.
- ❑ Maintain radio watch to determine when it is safe to return to your home.
- ❑ Upon return to your home, inspect external doors and windows to determine if security is intact. Call police if you see intentional damage or suspect intruders have entered your home.