

Parish Disaster Response Plan



2026

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INTRODUCTION

Disasters may occur at any given time, and we must be prepared to respond to them. Thus, every parish needs to have thought through and planned for action so that people, property, and assets can be protected and parish operations resumed as soon as possible. The driving logic for disaster preparedness is it is **TOO LATE** to plan, prepare, and train for a disaster when the warning has been issued. It must be accomplished well in advance.

In the Diocese of Southern Virginia, the main disasters that we have to be concerned with include natural disasters and man-made incidents. During times of disaster, we may be in the affected area and need help ourselves. If not, we may be able to offer help to others. The Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia plans to be prepared to both receive help and offer help. This manual is to provide guidance to the Diocese and parishes in the development of their own policies and procedures for whatever situation may arise.

The purpose of a disaster response preparation guide is to assure the viability of the parish, its associated ministries, and its assets. The emphasis must be on pre-disaster planning and recovery. To do nothing is not a responsible action for the leadership of the church. These guidelines will be a living document and will be updated on a regular basis. Also included in this guide is a template that may be used for initiating a disaster response plan at your local parish.

I. PLANNING FACTORS

DEFINITION OF A DISASTER

A disaster is an emergency that causes the loss of life and property, and a disruption in which survivors cannot manage without spiritual, monetary, or physical assistance.

Disasters include natural and human-caused events such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, tidal wave, earthquake, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, volcanic eruption, building collapse, transportation accident, civil disorder, nuclear incident, terrorist attack, or the dangerous release of biological agents. A disaster creates hazardous conditions for vulnerable people and communities. Disasters can bring loss of life and injuries; the destruction of property including housing, hospitals, critical facilities, transportation capabilities and businesses; and civic disorder.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A DISASTER: “YEARS, NOT MONTHS”

The American Red Cross has provided a helpful understanding of the life cycle of a disaster. Placing a disaster in perspective, the Red Cross has deemed the life cycle as "Years, Not Months." The life cycle of a disaster has four phases: Rescue, Relief, Short-term Recovery, and Long-term Recovery. It must always be remembered that the recovery efforts will continue long after the media interest has stopped.

Rescue:

In the Rescue phase the primary task is to save lives and property. Essential personnel in this phase include emergency and law enforcement professionals, such as firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and those in the direct vicinity of the disaster who can provide immediate first aid and to call for help.

Relief:

The major task in the Relief phase is to create safe and sanitary conditions for survivors and emergency medical personnel so that they may alleviate the suffering in the direct aftermath of a disaster. Essential personnel in this phase include government and health care personnel, relief agencies, law enforcement divisions, and faith communities who provide clothing, shelter, health, and the necessary medical attention to survivors. For spiritual and pastoral assistance, trained disaster chaplains may be deployed.

Short-term Recovery:

The major tasks in the Short-term Recovery phase include the restoration of utilities and services, damage assessment, temporary repairs, feeding, re-establishment of communications, reinforcement of law and beginning the process of the replacement of damaged property. Short-term Recovery is also the time in which pastoral responses of the faith communities begin to assist in grief recovery and nurture.

Long-term Recovery:

The tasks in the Long-term Recovery phase include rebuilding lives and communities, grief counseling and grief recovery, dealing with the physical, emotional, and spiritual unmet needs, and re-imagining the future. This includes an evaluation of the disaster responses in order to develop possible strategies helpful for the mitigation of future disasters.

Government agencies, disaster response agencies, community social service organizations, and faith communities working together cooperatively and collaboratively will foster healing and the rebuilding of community. Re-imagining the future in this phase is an act of hope and courage.

Areas for planning and preparation include the following:

Organizational Preparations and Planning

Every Parish shall establish a Disaster Planning and Response Committee.

Recommended membership may include, but not limited to:

- Rector/Priest-in-Charge (PIC)

- Deacon

- Senior Warden/Junior Warden

- Individuals with special knowledge and expertise about the parish plant

Every member can and should expect designated tasks to accomplish when the Disaster Response Plan is activated. Contact information will be posted in the Church Office.

The Rector/PIC holds the main authority to activate the Plan. In his/her absence the Senior Warden has the authority to activate this plan.

Congregational Safety and Monitoring

Parish membership and participant rosters shall be kept current and accurate and include alternate points of contact for members. This information is necessary to allow us to “check on our own” in the event of a disaster.

A simple reporting system needs to be created for members to report their condition, location, and safety after the disaster occurs. This information will be developed and kept in the Church Office.

A list of parish members who have special skills that will be of assistance to protecting the church and responding in the event of a disaster will be developed and kept on file in the Church Office. However, the Church Property comes second to ensuring personal and family safety during a disaster, we can always rebuild.

A list of members with special needs that necessitate someone check on them in the aftermath of a disaster will be developed and maintained by the Rector and Senior Warden (or designee), and assistance provided in helping relocate them if necessary.

Financial and Administrative Items

Prepare and box up a travel kit containing the minimal supplies necessary to reestablish the Parish Office at another temporary location:

Computer storage media containing master copies of documents such as worship bulletins, newsletters, parish rosters, passwords; parish letterhead and envelopes; pens and pencils; stamps for church address and bank deposits; discretionary account, etc.

Computers should be backed up often with copies of the backup kept both on-site and off-site, **the best practice is to back up to the cloud.**

Financial records, to include pledge and payment records.

Copies of the following items will be kept via PDF file outside of the immediate area. The originals should be kept together in a safe location so that they can be gathered and moved quickly:

- Articles of Incorporation
- Standard Operating Procedures (or the Parish By-Laws)
- Insurance policies
- Minutes of Vestry and the Annual Meeting for the past two years
- Key files
- Parish Record Books and Service Attendance Books
- Parish Directory (current copy)
- Computer passwords, communication system passwords
- Emergency contact numbers
- Copies of key financial records

Most of the above records can be stored in the cloud. Just make sure that key personnel know how to access the cloud for this data, passwords, etc. after the emergency has passed.

Plant and Property

Whether your parish is located outside of a mandatory evacuation zone or not, flooding and wind damage may still occur to the Church Property. Therefore, annually a review will be conducted to ensure that buildings are properly insured. As part of this review, a complete inventory of the parish and its belongings need to be accomplished so that they may be replaced. A file of still photographs and video recordings of property, buildings, and valuable contents with several copies and kept off-site or in the cloud.

Draw and post a chart of the facilities to show hook-up and shut-off points for all utilities:

- Water connection and shut-off valves.
- Electricity service entrance and master fuse breaker box
- Telephone and computer connection service entrance.
- Natural gas service connection and master valve
- Security system control connection

An instruction sheet of directions to isolate buildings from external utilities will be developed and kept with this disaster plan.

Communications Issues

All parishioners should hold a telephone number where to report their status following a disaster and should know how to originate such a report. Wise planning includes an arranged alternate number out of the area to receive and tally the information if the Parish Office remains closed due to destruction, evacuation, or extended power outages.

The recording on the voice mail service directs parishioners where to call to report their situation following the storm/emergency and other news such as relocation of parish operations will be made. Voice Mail will be less vulnerable to failure than desktop answering machines.

Since the Parish website will most likely remain active, the information will be kept current, and updates will be posted. Immediately prior to the incident occurring reminders and local information will be posted. As soon as practical during the recovery phase, updates to safety, etc. will be posted. Careful coordination with the Diocese Office will be accomplished to ensure all appropriate information is provided.

II. HURRICANES

A hurricane is one of the most devastating forces on the planet. It can be compared to the same level of impact as a nuclear weapon. This is because of the sometime fast-moving nature of the hurricane and force/impact that it brings.

Fortunately, modern technology allows for an accurate tracking of these storms and can predict the path of it most times. This is not always true; therefore, we must remain prepared for all possibilities.

The primary damage from a hurricane comes from its extremely destructive winds. These winds can destroy a structure, turn debris into a deadly projectile, and cause storm surges along the coasts. Secondary danger will often come from tornadoes that can be formed on the outer edges of the hurricane.

We normally will hear hurricanes referred to by their category. This comes from the Saffir/Simpson Hurricane Scale.¹ Here is the scale:

Category	Winds	Surge	Damages
1	74-95 mph	4-5 ft	Minimal: Primarily trees, foliage, and unattached mobile homes. Small boats may be pulled from moorings.
2	96-110 mph	6-8 ft	Moderate: Some trees are blown over, damage to doors, windows, and roofs. Some evacuation of shoreline areas and low-lying islands.
3	111-130 mph	9-12 ft	Extensive: Large trees blown down, some structural damage to small buildings. Mobile homes destroyed, coastal flooding. Small structures near the coast most likely destroyed by wind and waves.
4	131-155 mph	13-18 ft	Extreme: Extensive damage to roofs on many small structures. Terrain 10 feet or less above sea level will be flooded. Escape routes will be cut off by rising water 3-5 hours before the storm center arrives. Massive coastal evacuation will be required.
5	156 or more mph	19 ft or higher	Catastrophic: Complete failure of roofs on residences and many commercial structures. Small buildings may be overturned or blown away. There will be massive evacuations of low ground within 5 to 10 miles of the coast.

Preparation must be accomplished in two distinct areas: prepare the structure/parish and evacuations. The guidelines in this manual shall be followed to prepare the parish for the storm. If evacuation is ordered by the local emergency organization, the parish will be prepared, and all personnel will evacuate as directed. No one should make the decision to stay and ride the storm out. Remember material items can always be replaced, **a life cannot.**

¹ Purcell, Paul, "Disaster Prep 101: The Ultimate Guide to Emergency Readiness," pg. 199.

III. TORNADOS

As with hurricanes, tornados can be a concern within the Diocese. They may occur in conjunction with both hurricanes and thunderstorms. Though less devastating as far as coverage areas and total property loss costs, tornadoes are more feared because of the immediate destruction that it brings and the little warning time.

Each year about a thousand tornadoes touch down in the US. Only a small percentage strike occupied buildings, but every year several people are killed or injured. The chances that a tornado will strike a building that you are in are very small, however, and you can greatly reduce the chance of injury by doing a few simple things.

The primary danger from tornadoes lies in their destructive winds, the suddenness with which they can appear, and their path. Hail and debris often accompany them.

We must remain aware of them. However, it must be remembered that usually no more than 15 minutes' warning will be given that a tornado is coming. Thus, we will often have to shelter in place. In the event a tornado occurs, ensure all parish members are inside and move them away from the windows. Deadbolt doors and all loose objects are secured as much as possible.

The most important thing to remember is that the size of the tornado is not necessarily an indication of its intensity. Sometime the larger ones can be the weak ones, and the smallest ones the most disastrous.

The Fujita Scale is the currently accepted scale for determining the strength and effect of a tornado. It is as follows.

The Fujita Scale

F-Scale Number	Wind Speed	Intensity Phase	Level of Damages
F0	40-72 mph	Gale Tornado	Some damage to chimneys; broken tree branches; pushes over shallow rooted trees; damage to sign boards.
F1	73-112 mph	Moderate Tornado	The lower limit is the beginning of hurricane wind speed; roofs damaged; mobile homes pushed off foundations or overturned; moving autos pushed off roads; attached garages may be destroyed.
F2	113-157 mph	Significant Tornado	Considerable damage. Roofs torn off frame houses; mobile homes demolished; boxcars pushed over; large trees snapped or uprooted; light object missiles generated.
F3	158-206 mph	Severe Tornado	Roofs and some walls torn off well-constructed houses; trains overturned; most trees uprooted.

F4	207-260 mph	Devastating Tornado	Well-constructed homes leveled; structures with weak foundations blown off some distance; cars thrown and large missiles generated.
F5	261-318 mph	Incredible Tornado	Strong frame houses lifted off foundations and carried considerable distances to disintegrate; automobiles sized missiles fly through the air in excess of 100 meters; trees debarked; steel reinforced concrete structures badly damaged.
F6	319-379 mph	Inconceivable Tornado	These winds are very unlikely. The small area of damage they might produce would probably not be recognizable along with the mess produced by F4 or F5 wind that would surround the F6 winds. Missiles such as cars and refrigerators would so serious secondary damage that could not be directly identified as F6 damage. If this level is ever achieved, evidence for it might only be found in some manner of ground swirl pattern, for it may never be identifiable through engineering studies.

WATCHES AND WARNINGS

When severe thunderstorms threaten, people should watch the sky and pay close attention to weather advisories. Indications that may indicate an approaching tornado may include:

- A greenish-black color to the sky.
- A strange quiet that occurs within or shortly after the thunderstorm.
- Clouds are moving very fast, especially in a rotating pattern or converging toward one area of the sky.
- A sound a little like a waterfall or rushing air at first but turning into a roar as it comes closer. The sound of a tornado has been likened to that of both railroad trains and jets.
- Debris dropping from the sky.
- An obvious "funnel-shaped" cloud that is rotating, or debris such as branches or leaves being pulled upwards, even if no funnel cloud is visible.

To alert the public of tornadoes, the National Weather Service (NWS) issues tornado watches and warnings. If you should be on church property when a watch or warning is issued:

- A tornado **watch** means that weather conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. Designated and usher or person(s) tasked to stay with the NWS alert system in order to communicate change from watch to warning to the worship leader and congregation.
- If a tornado **warning** is issued, it means a tornado has been sighted.
- **Warnings** are issued for individual counties and include the tornado's location and its direction and speed. If you are in or near its path, seek shelter immediately. All assembled

should move to the safe rooms. Consider having Senior Shepherds to assist people with mobility issues and make sure adults with children and youth know their safe room locations.

- **After the threat passes** everyone should meet again at the designated meeting spot/location. Make sure everyone is accounted for and that any injuries have been appropriately cared for/EMS is called.
 - If you and your congregation are affected by a tornado event, whether there are damages, injuries or not; call your designated diocesan Canon to let the Diocesan Office know what has happened.

IV. OTHER EMERGENCIES

Unexpected Disasters

TERRORIST ACTIVITY, BOMB THREATS, ACTIVE SHOOTER

Unfortunately, we live in an era where we do not know what various individuals may do. Included in this statement is the possibility of a bomb threat or other targeted activity (i.e., active shooter) that is designed to cause damage or destroy church property.

If a telephone threat is received, remain calm and gather as much specific information as the caller will give (what, when, where, and why), write it down for accuracy, and call the Police at once.

All personnel shall immediately leave the church building and will not re-enter until the facility has been cleared. It must be remembered that the primary danger from a bomb threat is an explosion. Among the effects created by the explosion are the concussion or shock wave and flying debris. All parishes shall have a designated point for all personnel to report to so that all personnel may be accounted for.

In the event of an active shooter move people out of the immediate sight of the shooter. **Run**/evacuate building if shooter is inside, **Hide** away from windows and lock doors or push furniture against the door to prevent entrance, **Fight** and defend yourself. When the police arrive follow their instructions.

EMERGENCIES DURING CHURCH SERVICES OR PARISH EVENTS

Remain calm, gather information, and call the Police, Fire Department, and Ambulance Squad as appropriate. The Priest/worship leader's first responsibility is to keep everyone calm. Often, pausing the service for prayer is a good way to keep the assembly focused and allow responders to do their work. As Leader of the Parish, the Priest's/worship leader's own reaction sets the level of calmness and good sense for all present.

Before such an emergency happens, it is a good idea to establish designated response team(s) within the congregation. This team may include ushers, a doctor or nurse within the congregation, or other person who is trained in CPR and to use an AED. These designated responders should be the people who (working together) attend to the sick person's needs, evaluate the situation, and call emergency personnel. The priest/worship leader's focus should remain on leading the congregation to remain calm, prayerful, and allow the responders' team to do the work they are trained to do.

It is important that, if your church has an AED, it remains in a place easily located for emergency use. Your local Red Cross is a great resource for annual CPR training and use of an AED.

CONTINUING PARISH OPERATIONS DURING A COMMUNITY HEALTH CRISIS

While continuing to operate the congregational program activities and scheduled worship services, the Diocese publishes this guidance for parishes and parishioners concerning the presence at the church campus and other public gatherings, steps they can take to prevent spread of infectious

disease, and other public health and safety guidance that may come from public officials and our Bishop.

Planning for continued worship and program activities involves a concern that visits to the church campus do not become a venue for spreading disease. This planning document anticipates action in four areas of parish life: worship, personnel absence, pastoral care, and parish buildings. If the Bishop issues directives that relate to public health and safety in the churches beyond this document, she/he will publish that information for parishes by electronic means and observe it throughout the Diocese.

PARISH SAFETY

The overall safety and security of our parishes is of great concern. We must remain alert to issues that could affect the safety of church property and our members.

It is highly recommended that every parish annually review and practice the safety protocols with the staff and congregation for natural disasters (a fire, hurricane/tornado) and for human-caused events (bomb threat, active shooter).

Designated safe locations should be known by all members of church staff and members. Set a post-event meeting location. Designate Shepherds for lambs (children) and seniors who will be responsible for caring for/assisting children and seniors to move quickly to safety.

HOW TO RESPOND TO ICE¹

Immigration Enforcement Issues for Churches

Guidance from the Diocesan Chancellor on how to interact with ICE should they come on the property for the purpose of apprehending immigrants or obtaining information about them.

Clergy and lay leaders are to observe the law and not interfere with ICE activities but may insist that ICE observe the boundaries as outlined by the Chancellor.

Please note in particular the information re “sanctuary/harboring.” Please let Canon Carla McCook know if ICE comes onto your property.

It is not illegal to feed or provide other humanitarian assistance to illegal immigrants. It may be a violation of law, however, to “harbor” or “transport” someone known to be in the country illegally.

ICE can freely enter a church’s public areas, meaning areas that the church allows the general public to enter, such as the church sanctuary, parish hall, or the public service areas of a church i.e. a food pantry. ICE can take photos and talk to people in those public areas.

ICE should not, however, create a disruption, such as by interrupting a worship service. If an ICE officer does so, then you should ask him or her to leave.

¹ ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) is the federal agency that enforces federal laws governing immigration. In most cases, ICE is the agency that investigates and arrests individuals suspected of breaking immigration laws. Other law enforcement agencies, however, may be involved. The term ICE is used in this document to refer generally to all law enforcement.

To enter private spaces, ICE needs to present a search warrant that is signed by a judge. You can insist on seeing the warrant.

Examples of private areas in a church include the rector's office, other administrative offices, church/day school classrooms, and other areas where the general public is not allowed. Where the designation of a space is unclear, consider posting a "Private" sign.

Never lie to ICE. You can be prosecuted for providing false information.

In general, you do not have to answer any questions from ICE. If ICE questions you, you should ask if you are free to go; if the answer is yes, you should walk away. If the answer is no, then ask to speak to your lawyer and remain silent until you have done so.

Unless there is a warrant or subpoena, you do not have to provide any information or records to ICE.

If ICE does present you with a warrant or subpoena, you should consult with your parish's attorney immediately and notify the Diocese.

You are generally free to photograph or film ICE activity on church grounds.

If ICE arrests/detains someone on church grounds or at a church event, you may observe from a reasonable distance but should not interfere with the actions of ICE agents. You may ask for the names of ICE agents. If agents are in plainclothes, you may ask to see credentials and make note of agents' names and badge numbers.

You also may ask ICE permission to obtain from a detained person the contact information of anyone who should be informed of the person's detention (e.g., a family member, friend or attorney). You also may ask where the person will be detained.

Harboring. There is no concept of "sanctuary" recognized under federal or Virginia law. You cannot hide someone on church grounds. An individual who hides someone sought by ICE could be charged with the crime of harboring.

Transporting. Do not transport an undocumented immigrant for the purpose of helping him/her to remain unlawfully in the United States. You could be charged with the crime of transporting if you move an undocumented immigrant from one place to another, knowing that the immigrant is present in the U.S. unlawfully (or in reckless disregard of that fact), if the activity helps the immigrant remain unlawfully in the U.S.

It is generally fine, however, to give an undocumented immigrant a ride to a church service, doctor's appointment, lawyer's office, or on other errands if the purpose is not to further his or her remaining in the United States illegally.

ATTACHMENT 1: PARISH DISASTER RESPONSE COMMITTEE AND IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Individual's Name	Telephone Number	Remarks
		Rector/Priest-in-Charge
		Deacon
		Senior Warden
		Junior Warden
		Parish Disaster Response Team Member
City Police Department		Non-Emergency Telephone Number
County Sheriff Department		Non-Emergency Telephone Number
Hospital		General Information
Utility Company		Account Numbers
City Emergency		City Management Office
County Operations Center		County Emergency and Information
<i>Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia - Contacts</i>		
Ms. Susan Allen, Program & Benefits Administrator	757-213-3391 office sallen@diosova.org	Church Insurance and Policy Numbers
Rev. Dr. Carla McCook, Canon to the Ordinary	757-213-3390 office cmccook@diosova.org	Diocese Disaster Preparedness Coordinator
Ms. Patsy Martin	757-213-3388 office pmartin@diosova.org	Disaster Public Information Coordinator
The Rt. Rev. Susan Haynes, Bishop	757-213-3381 office bishop@diosova.org	Convocation Deans Diocesan Contact Person
Canon Lynn Farlin, Canon for Formation	757-213-3377 office lfarlin@diosova.org	Convocations 1, 2, 3 Diocesan Contact
Rev. Canon Willis Foster, Canon for Diversity & Transformation	wfoster@diosova.org	Convocations 4 & 5 Diocesan Contact
Rev. Canon Dr. Jeunee Godsey, Canon for Congregational Vitality	jgodsey@diosova.org	Convocations 6 & 7 Diocesan Contact

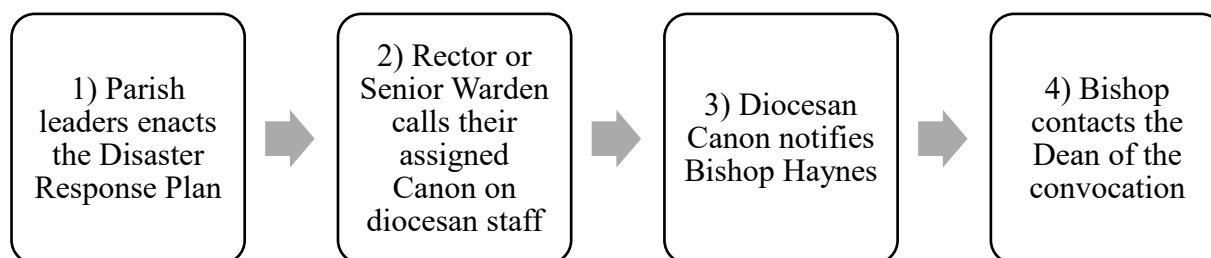
Rev. Dr. Carla McCook, Canon to the Ordinary	757-213-3390 office cmccook@diosova.org	Convocations 8 & 9 Diocesan Contact
Very Rev. Bob Coniglio	robertconiglio@me.com	Convocation 1 Dean
Very Rev. Ashley Urquidi	mother.ashley@allsaintsvb.org	Convocation 2 Dean
Very Rev. Noah Van Niel	noah.vanniel@christandstlukes.org	Convocation 3 Dean
Very Rev. Grant Stokes	grant@trinity-portsmouth.org	Convocation 4 Dean
Very Rev. Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly	jandrewsweckerly@hickoryneck.org	Convocation 5 Dean
Very Rev. Sam Sheridan	samuelsrsheridan@gmail.com	Convocation 6 Dean
Very Rev. Gini DiStanislao	gini@manakin.org	Convocation 7 Dean
Very Rev. Nancy E. Meck	rector@johnsmemorial.org	Convocation 8 Dean
Very Rev. Dr. Susan A. Grimm	susaninmidlo@yahoo.com	Convocation 9 Dean

Notes:

The Rector/Priest in Charge will initiate the Parish Disaster Response Plan. In the event this individual is not available, the Senior Warden will be authorized to initiate the Parish Disaster Response Plan. Once all congregational members have been contacted to ensure their safety, then the Rector or Senior Warden calls the assigned diocesan Canon. (see flow chart below).

The Diocesan Office will be contacted immediately when a Parish enacts its Disaster Response Plan.

A disaster occurs - communications' flow chart:



ATTACHMENT 2: ITEMS FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION BOX

Note: This list is not all inclusive, and each individual parish Rector/Priest in Charge may choose to add or subtract items.

Packed	Item	Number to Pack
	Lectionary (current year)	1
	Bibles and Book of Common Prayer	Dependent
	Vestments.	1 set
	Church service record book	1
	Archived set of Church Records to include baptism, marriage, etc.	
	Insurance Records and copy of last inventory – both actual and backup	
	Home Communion Set (to include host and wine)	
	Laptop computer and printer	1
	Financial Records to include copies of bills, account numbers, check book and backup	
	Pledge cards for current year	
	Church Roster (to include a list of parish members who have special needs and will need additional assistance before, during, and after the event)	
	Computer backup of each computer in the administrative spaces	

ATTACHMENT 3: RECOMMENDED PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR HURRICANES

Purpose: To provide a basic checklist that may be used to help prepare the parish in the event of a hurricane. The principles that are associated with this list also pertain to other events if there is time.

Reminder: At all times, the safety of “life and limb” is foremost. Though everyone wants to save material, it must be remembered that material things can be replaced. Under no circumstances should parish clergy or members remain at the parish if the order has been given to evacuate. The directions from Emergency Management personnel and law enforcement shall be followed.

Recommended items to be accomplished:

<i>Done</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
	<i>AT 72 HOUR POINT</i>	
	Declare and activate plan	Rector/Senior Warden
	Notify Parish Disaster Committee	Rector/Senior Warden
	Notify parish members that an evacuation is underway	As assigned
	Check on special needs parishioners to determine assistance that they may need	Rector/Senior Warden
	Verify actions to be completed	Rector/Senior Warden
	<i>AT 48 HOUR POINT</i>	
	Back up all computers – make more than one copy of items	Office staff
	Send a copy of express mail to a safe off-site location that is out of area	Office staff
	Bring all possible outside equipment into buildings	Volunteers
	Take pictures of all exterior and interior buildings/structures/signage, etc.	Volunteers
	Wrap altar, pews, etc. in plastic	Senior Warden/Volunteers
	Put up necessary shutters and/or window barriers.	Designated individuals
	Ensure all items are up off the floor	Designated individuals
	Check on special needs parishioners to determine what additional assistance they may need. Ensure that progress is being made to help ensure that these individuals are moved to a safe location.	Rector/Senior Warden
	Coordinate with local emergency management personnel to determine if	Rector/Senior Warden

	evacuation is going to be ordered.	
	Ensure Church Website is updated with information concerning the upcoming event.	Webmaster
	<i>AT 24 HOURS</i>	
	Rector or Senior Warden makes the final decision concerning evacuation from the area. This information is based on direction from the local emergency management personnel	Rector/Senior Warden
	Communicate the decision to the Diocesan Office	Rector/Senior Warden
	Do a final walk through to ensure all preparations in the buildings have been completed	Rector/Senior Warden
	Notify leaders of event cancellations	As directed
	Place special notices on telephone voicemail and website concerning procedures to be followed.	Office Staff & Webmaster as directed by Rector
	Set thermostats on refrigerators and freezers as cold as possible.	Volunteer
	<i>AT 18 HOURS</i>	
	If evacuating, pack essential and valuable items in the designated containers and place in car.	Rector/Senior Warden
	Do a final check on any remaining special needs parishioners.	As designated
	Disconnect all utilities and thoroughly shut down the buildings.	As designated.
	Depart area as directed by the local emergency management personnel.	ALL
	Inform Diocesan Office of evacuation	Rector/Senior Warden

ATTACHMENT 4: RECOVERY PLAN PROCEDURES

This will be done as soon as it is safe to return. The Local Emergency Management Office and personnel will direct this. Safety is a must during this time period. It is also understood that the establishment of services may be delayed due to personal recovery efforts. The Diocese Office may make the determination to have clergy from areas non-affected by the event come to assist with the re-establishment of basic services and all affected clergy to concentrate on their personal recovery efforts.

During the recovery period, the bishop or her/his designated representative will make all public statements concerning the Diocese response to the disaster.

It must be remembered that parish members may experience post-traumatic stress symptoms due to damage to their homes and their place of worship. Clergy must be prepared to deal with this and make the appropriate referrals to mental health professionals for assistance.

DONE	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL
	Re-establish communication as soon as possible.	Rector/All
	Contact the Diocesan Office through your assigned Diocesan Canon.	Rector/Office staff
	Contact local emergency management points of contact to determine the next steps with regards to governmental direction with disaster.	Senior Warden
	Conduct an inspection of the property to determine the extent of damage and take photos of all damages.	Rector/Senior Warden
	Begin contacting parishioners, with special emphasis on special needs individuals.	All
	Contact insurance carriers, utility companies, and governmental agencies as needed.	Rector/Senior Warden
	Re-establish minimum operations, as capable	Rector

ATTACHMENT 5: SAMPLE PARISH DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

Sample Parish Disaster Response Plan

St. N.N. Episcopal
Church, *City*, VA

Parish Disaster
Preparation And
Response
Guidelines

Date

Natural disasters may occur at any time, thus the need to have a well-developed plan of action in place that allows the response to a disaster so that its members, church property, and assets can be protected and parish services resumed as soon as practical.

Some disasters can be anticipated and preparations made, especially for disasters related to destructive weather, and these guidelines are primarily written to accommodate the threat of hurricanes and the vulnerability of hurricane (tornado/storm) damage. However, these same preparations will also assist in response to situations which give no warning: terrorism, toxic substances, regional disease outbreaks, fire, and flood damage. ***The driving logic is that it is too late to plan and train when the disaster warning has been issued.***

The guidelines contained in this operating manual have been approved by the Vestry and shall be used to prepare for such events.

Rector/Priest-in-Charge

Copy to: The Rev. Canon Dr. Carla McCook
Diocese Disaster Preparedness Coordinator

**We request that this document be emailed to Canon McCook (canontotheordinary@diosova.org) as a PDF document, by August 1, 2026, and renewed every other year following.*

ATTACHMENT 6: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SURVEY FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

(This should be kept on file in the Parish Office for easy reference.
Scanning these documents and saving to the Cloud is best practice.)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Names of all members of your household: _____

Your home address: _____

Your home phone and mobile phone numbers and email: _____

(home) _____ (mobile) _____

Name and contact information for your next of kin /emergency contact person:

Do you have special medical needs? Yes ___ No ___

Are you registered with the County Shelter System? Yes ___ No ___

Do you need assistance in determining your eligibility or applying for a shelter where appropriate medical care would be provided? Yes ___ No ___

Do you need transportation to a shelter? Yes ___ No ___

Are you in a mandatory evacuation area? Yes ___ No ___

Would you evacuate if not mandatory? Yes ___ No ___

Do you have a place to evacuate to, if not going to a shelter? Yes ___ No ___

If you evacuate, do you have pets that need to be provided for? Yes ___ No ___

If you go to a shelter, are you prepared to be self-sufficient? (i.e., sleeping bags, food, water, etc.) Yes ___ No ___

If evacuating, would you be able to get the necessary documentation to take with you? (i.e. passport, bank account numbers, insurance policies, names and dosage for prescription medications) Yes ___ No ___

Concerning your home, do you need help putting up your shutters?	Yes ___ No ___
Would you need help bringing in outdoor furniture before a storm?	Yes ___ No ___
During the storm would you be able to house another parishioner who needed to evacuate their home?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have family nearby to assist you before/during/after the storm?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have a car?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have a generator?	Yes ___ No ___
If you have a generator, is it connected to your house panel?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you know how to, and are you physically able to operate your generator?	Yes ___ No ___
If you stay at home, do you have adequate supplies? (i.e., batteries, food, water, gas, flashlights, etc.)? [Recommendation is 5-7 days' worth]	Yes ___ No ___
Are you aware of distribution center locations for ice, water, food, etc.?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have a way to prepare your meals?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you take medications that need to be refrigerated?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have an adequate supply of medicine on hand?	Yes ___ No ___
If you do not need assistance before or after the storm, are you willing to be called upon to help others?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you have a cell phone that we can communicate with you after the storm?	Yes ___ No ___
If you had yard debris, would you need help clearing it?	Yes ___ No ___
If you had damage to your home, would you need help with minor emergency repairs?	Yes ___ No ___
If you live in a multi-story complex, will your elevators be operable during a power outage?	Yes ___ No ___

Other comments or suggestions you want us to know?

ATTACHMENT 7: IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

County Emergency Support Functions-15 (ESF-15) Coordinators and Emergency Operations Centers (EOC)

<i>County</i>	<i>ESF-15</i>	<i>EOC</i>
<u>Accomack</u>	757-789-3610	757-787-0923
<u>Amelia</u>	804-561-8048	804-561-8048
<u>Appomattox</u>	434-352-2637	434-352-2637
<u>Brunswick</u>	434-848-3020	434-848-3020
<u>Buckingham</u>	434-969-4242	434-969-4242
<u>Charlotte</u>	434-542-5141	434-542-5141
<u>Chesterfield</u>	804-748-1556	804-748-1556
<u>Dinwiddie</u>	804-469-5388	804-469-5388
<u>Greensville</u>	434-348-4205	434-348-4205
<u>Halifax</u>	434-476-3300	434-476-3300
<u>Henry</u>	276-632-1197	276-632-1197
<u>Isle of Wight</u>		
<u>James City</u>	757-220-0626	757-220-0626
<u>Lunenburg</u>		
<u>Mecklenburg</u>	434-738-6191	434-738-6191
<u>Nansemond</u>	757-514-4536	757-514-4536
<u>Northampton</u>	757-678-0442	757-678-0486
<u>Norfolk</u>	757-441-5610	757-441-5610
<u>Nottoway</u>	434-645-8696	434-645-8696
<u>Pittsylvania</u>	434-432-7700	434-432-7700
<u>Powhatan</u>	804-598-5677	804-598-5656
<u>Prince Edward</u>	434-392-8837	434-392-8837
<u>Prince George</u>	804-733-2659	804-733-8607
<u>Princess Anne</u>	757-385-1077	757-385-1077
<u>Southampton</u>	757-742-6760	757-742-6760
<u>Surry</u>	757-294-5292	757-294-5292
<u>Sussex</u>	434-246-8224	434-246-8224
<u>York</u>	757-890-3600	757-890-3600

ATTACHMENT 8: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accident: An unexpected or undesirable event, especially one causing injury to a small number of individuals and/or modest damage to physical structures.

Activation: The implementation of business continuity capabilities, procedures, activities, and plans in response to an emergency or disaster declaration

Active Shooter: An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.

AED: Automated External Defibrillator. A portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses the life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias of ventricular fibrillation and ventricular tachycardia (pulse less or rapid heartbeat) in a patient, and is able to treat them through defibrillation, the application of electrical therapy which stops the arrhythmia, allowing the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm.

After Action Reports: Reports that summarize and analyze performance in both exercises and actual events.

Alert: Advisory that a hazard is approaching but is less imminent than implied by a warning message.

Alternate Site: An alternate operating location to be used by church functions when the primary facilities are inaccessible.

American Red Cross: The American Red Cross serves as the primary support agency to DHS for coordinating mass care support with other non-government organizations during disaster relief and CM operations. Support may include shelter, feeding, emergency first aid, disaster welfare information, bulk distribution, supportive counseling, blood, and blood products.

Assembly Area: The designated area at which church members and visitors assemble when evacuated from their building/site.

Authority: A right or obligation to act on behalf of an organization.

Capabilities: Capabilities are defined as providing the means to accomplish a mission or function and achieve desired outcomes by performing critical tasks.

Continuity of Operations: An uninterrupted ability to provide services and support, while maintaining organizational viability, before, during, and after an event.

Crisis: Short period of extreme danger, acute emergency.

Critical Records: Records or documents that, if damaged or destroyed, would cause considerable inconvenience, and/or require replacement or recreation at considerable expense.

Disaster: Catastrophic events that (a) interfere severely with everyday life, disrupt communities, and often cause extensive loss of life and property, (b) overtax local resources, and (c) create problems that continue far longer than those that arise from the normal vicissitudes of life.

Drill: A standardized technique or procedure that prepares individuals to execute critical collective tasks.

Emergency: An unexpected event which places life and/or property in danger.

Evacuation: The movement of people from a site and/or building to a safe place (assembly area).

Exercise: A planned, staged implementation of the critical incident plan to evaluate processes that work and identify those needing improvement.

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency.

First Aid: The immediate but temporary care given on site to the victims of an accident or sudden illness until competent services or a physician can be obtained.

First Responder: Local police, fire, and emergency medical personnel who first arrive on the scene of an incident and take action to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs.

Hazard: A natural, technological, or social phenomenon that poses a threat to people and their surroundings (in terms of both the natural and the built environment).

Hazardous Material: A substance (gas, liquid, or solid) capable of creating harm to people, the environment, and property.

Hot Wash: Informal debriefing held immediately after an exercise. It is an opportunity for important evaluative and procedural (i.e., safety-related) issues to be recorded while they are fresh in the participants' minds.

ICS: Incident Command System. A standardized organizational structure used to command, control, and coordinate the use of resources and personnel that have responded to the scene of an emergency.

Incident: An occurrence, either human-caused or by natural phenomena, which requires action by emergency service personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources.

Inherent Risk: A risk that is impossible to be managed or transferred away.

Mitigate: Any action to contain, reduce, or eliminate vulnerabilities to a hazard.

Preparedness: Activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve readiness capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from natural or man-made incidents.

Prevent: Actions taken to avoid an incident or to intervene or stop an incident from occurring.

Probability: The likelihood that an event will occur.

Protect: Actions or measures taken to cover or shield from exposure, injury, or destruction.

Public Awareness: The process of informing the community as to the nature of the hazard and actions needed to save lives and property prior to and in the event of disaster.

Recovery: The implementation of prioritized actions required to return an organization's processes and support functions to operational stability following an interruption or disaster and assist individuals in returning to a stable mental health condition.

Resilience: The ability of social units (e.g., organizations, communities) to mitigate hazards, contain the effects of disasters when they occur, and carry out recovery activities in ways that minimize disruption of services and mitigate the effects of future disasters.

Respond: Response operations are those taken in advance of and upon the onset of an incident to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs.

Risk: A measure of the probability of damage to life, property, and/or the environment, which could occur if a hazard manifests itself, including the anticipated severity of consequences to people. It is a combination of credible threat, vulnerability, and consequences.

Risk Management: The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from probable hazards and making decisions that balance risk cost with individual liberties.

Safety: The control of recognized hazards to achieve an acceptable level of risk.

Security: Act of monitoring and reducing the risk of human induced events that adversely affect people or property (intrusion of unauthorized personnel, theft, sabotage, assault, etc.), to some acceptable level.

Shelter-in-Place: Taking emergency refuge within the nearest designated safe area until notification or determination that the situation has been resolved.

Situation Awareness: The process of evaluating the severity and consequences of an incident and communicating the results.

Tabletop Exercise (TTX): An activity that involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting.

Terrorism: Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.

Threat: The presence of a hazard and an exposure pathway. It may be natural or man-made.

Vulnerability: 1) undefended against, open to attack, disease, and hazards 2) degree of potential loss of people and goods from a damaging phenomenon.

Warning: The National Weather Service issues a warning to let people know that a severe weather event is already occurring or is imminent. People should take immediate safety action.

Watch: The National Weather Service issues a watch to let people know that conditions are right for a potential disaster to occur. It does not mean that an event will necessarily occur.