

Disaster Plan Template
Mid- Size museum

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Preparing a Disaster Plan for your Mid-size institution

This outline will help institutions prepare a Disaster Plan for a museum with a staff of five to 15 staff members. Specific procedures should also be developed to follow up with the policy. It may be helpful to create simultaneously or update the Standard Facilities Report, as there is some helpful information that may assist in the development of the Disaster plan.

I. Introduction

This is the introduction to your plan. In this section you will:

- A. State the purpose of the plan
- B. Define the extent of the plan
- C. Define approval process, if any
- D. Develop schedules for updating the plan
- E. Define who is responsible for updating the plan

II. Planning and Preparation

A. Develop disaster planning team

1. Agree on a Team Leader
 - a. Can be appointed by Director
 - b. Does not have to be management, should be someone who will follow through and make sure planning continues
 - c. Team leader reports to Director
 - d. Develop a timeline for completing steps of disaster plan
 - e. Qualities
 - i. Ability to make on the spot decisions
 - ii. Knowledge of numerous departments and areas in museum
2. Appoint other members of the team
 - a. Have one representative from each area of the museum
 - b. Make sure that the team members have knowledge of several areas of the museum
 - c. Staff members may have job descriptions that cover more than one of the following areas:
 - i. Management
 - ii. Collections
 - iii. Custodial
 - iv. Education
 - v. Media
 - vi. Personnel
 - vii. Building
 - viii. Exhibitions

3. Develop individual responsibilities
 - a. Previous Disaster researcher
 - i. Researches and develops information about previous disasters in the area
 - ii. Researches what natural disasters are likely to occur in the area
 - iii. The institution can allocate most of its planning to the natural disaster, which is most likely to occur in your area
 - b. Response coordinator and trainer
 - i. Responsible for coordinating training and evacuation drills
 - Will this be a rotating position?
 - Will one person serve as the coordinator?
 - Will this be the same person who is in charge of Human Resources?
 - Will there be a back-up person?
 - Who will oversee the coordinator to ensure drills and training take place?
 - ii. Creates and maintains a schedule for staff training
 - Develops a log to track an employee's completed training
 - Will the museum use outside sources to complete training?
 - Red Cross
 - YMCA
 - Suggested training areas
 - CPR/ First Aid
 - Fire Extinguisher use
 - Local and regional museum organization disaster workshops, (VAM, SERA, SEMC, AAM)
 - iii. Develop general procedures for museum evacuation and executing practice drills
 - Assign responsibility to one staff member per floor and/or area of museum to ensure the area is cleared
 - Evaluate success/failure of executed drills
 - c. Staff Contact Coordinator
 - i. Responsible for developing and maintaining a list of ALL full-time and part-time paid staff as well as volunteers
 - ii. It may be helpful to organize the list by first name
 - iii. List should contain the following information
 - First and last name
 - Job Title
 - Work phone and extension
 - Work and home email
 - Home and/or cell phone
 - iv. The coordinator is responsible for keeping the list up-to-date
 - v. List should be reviewed quarterly or as staff changes
 - vi. A copy of this list should be kept off-site at the Coordinator's home
 - vii. It should be understood that this list is not for staff distribution and should not be used in **non-emergency** situations

B. Staff

1. Develop a chain of command
2. This is NOT a phone tree.
 - a. This is a chart that shows who is in command during emergency situations
 - b. May vary depending on emergency type
 - d. Make sure the response time of the person at the top is appropriate for the emergency

C. Contact Lists

1. Phone tree
 - a. Creates the ability to contact all staff members in a short amount of time
 - b. The importance should be stressed to staff members of maintaining the list and the responsibility of continuing the phone tree
 - c. During large-scale disasters, it may not be possible for everyone to be contacted, it is important that the caller continue down the list to the next person
 - d. A diagram of the phone tree should be drawn up and distributed to all on the list
 - e. The list should also be maintained for accuracy
 - f. People who are higher up on the chain of command should be higher up on the phone tree so as they are able to make decisions and disseminate the information more quickly
 - g. Do not forget to include Board Members or Volunteers
 - h. The phone tree should be tested annually or semi-annually
 - i. May be assigned as a responsibility of the Staff Contact Coordinator
 - j. Each entry should have person's name, home and cell phone numbers
2. Emergency services
 - a. Fire department
 - b. Police department
 - c. Emergency management agencies (such as American Red Cross and FEMA)
 - i. What other agencies and services does your community have in place?
 - ii. Who is in charge of these agencies?
 - iii. How does your museum fit into these plans?
 - d. Meet with representatives from local emergency services
 - e. Include information regarding what the city/town/county has prepared for its emergency plan into your museum's plan
 - f. Discuss approved security badges for your employees, so in an emergency they are aware of the proper identification for staff access
 - g. Consider installing a Knox box
 - h. Develop a list of emergency contact numbers besides 911
 - i. Maintain a list of people from emergency services and agencies that have visited your institution and are familiar with its policies and facility
 - ii. Name and phone number of head of in-house security or contract security company

3. Outside professionals
 - a. Maintain a list of conservation and preservation professionals in your immediate area as well as those within a few hours drive
 - b. A conservator for each major type or special collection
 - c. Local and regional organizations. Some national, regional, state, and local preservation/historical organizations (such as AAM, SEMC, VAM, and MEST)
 - d. State or other government run historical/preservation agencies that have had emergency training such as National Park Service and the State Library
 - e. Area museums and cultural institutions

4. Maintenance

Maintain a list of the company name, contact person, phone number, and account number for all maintenance companies

 - a. Security monitoring company
 - b. Plumber
 - c. Electrician
 - d. Carpenter
 - e. Legal advisor
 - f. Insurance policy for both building and art
 - g. Locksmith
 - h. Glazier
 - i. Exterminator
 - j. Debris removal company

5. Utilities

Maintain a list of the utility company name, phone number, emergency number if available, and account number

 - a. Gas company
 - b. Electric company
 - c. Water utility
 - d. Telephone company
 - e. Fire Suppression
 - f. Climate control systems

6. Emergency recovery services

It is important to know where the offices for emergency recovery services are located for your region or area. Maintain a list that has company name, contact (if any), number and emergency number as well as the address

 - a. FEMA
 - b. Red Cross
 - c. City/ County emergency management
 - d. Health department
 - e. Commercial freezing company
 - f. Salvage company
 - g. Fire/ flood clean up & restoration company (Servpro)

D. Prevention

1. It is best to investigate how to avoid a disaster, assess the risks, and predict what type of disasters may occur to museum
2. Fire prevention
 - a. Keep hallways clear, do not use for storage
 - b. Do you have cellulose nitrate film in your collections?
 - c. Have the guns, bullets, and other explosive materials been tested/checked by the proper authorities?
 - d. Do you have gasoline-powered tools stored in the building?
3. Hazardous chemicals
 - a. Are they stored in appropriate flammable storage metal cabinets that meet OSHA standards?
 - b. Are these chemicals used and disposed of properly and according to safety standards?
 - c. Are hazardous chemicals properly identified?
 - d. Do you have the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) for chemicals, cleaning agents and other hazardous materials on hand?
 - e. Consider contacting OSHA for a free consultation
4. Maintain preventative maintenance schedules on all building systems
 - a. HVAC
 - b. Elevators
 - c. Plumbing
5. Develop opening and closing procedures
These procedures would include looking for things out of the ordinary such as pooling of water, wet or damp conditions, unusual temperatures
6. Maintain up-to-date inventories of objects in galleries, which includes any/all loan objects. A quick review of these lists should be executed bi-weekly both for accuracy and also for missing/damaged objects.

E. Facilities information and maps

1. One or more architectural maps of the building (s) should highlight and show the locations of the following information and post as appropriate with copies also in Disaster Plan Notebook

- a. Evacuation routes
- b. Emergency shut offs for water, gas, and electricity
- c. Sprinkler
- d. Gaseous (Halon) Fire Extinguishing systems
- e. Smoke detector
- f. Fire hoses
- g. Fire alarm pull boxes
- h. Portable fire extinguishers
- i. Carbon Monoxide detector
- j. Climate control systems
- k. Hazardous materials
- l. Fire doors/ emergency exit doors
- m. Emergency lights
- n. Emergency supplies
- o. First aid materials
- p. Priority collections and materials

2. Old copies of architectural plans can be used (as long as they are accurate)

3. Computer aided design (CAD) floor or architectural plan

F. Fire Protection

It is important to review the museum's fire protection system (s) in place. Most of these questions are asked in the Standard Facilities report and can be found in section four.

1. Contact fire department or building department to find out what the fire rating is for the museum building.
2. Are there fire doors in the museum?
3. Is there a fire/smoke/alarm system in place in the museum?
4. Is there more than one system?
5. When were they installed?
6. How are they activated?
7. Are the alarm systems connected to an outside source?
8. Has the staff or guards been trained how to shut off sprinkler systems?

9. Where is emergency cut off located?
10. How close is the fire hydrant?
11. How close is the fire department from your institution?
12. When/ how often is the fire/smoke/alarm system inspected?
13. Who is in charge of arranging these inspections?
14. How often will the systems be tested?
15. Are there open flames or smoking allowed in or near building?
16. Does your building meet the fire code?
17. Are there portable fire extinguishers in the building?
18. Is there a fire hose or pull boxes in your building?

G. Security

Institutions have varying methods for the security of its collections. It should be documented and the information available to some members. Many of these questions can be found in the Standard Facility Report in section five.

1. Security personnel
 - a. Contract or staff?
 - i. Certified training
 - ii. Volunteer
 - iii. Paid staff
 - iv. Supervised by whom?
 - v. Are background checks performed?
 - b. Manned control center
 - i. 24 hour or 8 hour?
 - ii. Monitor cameras
 - iii. Do they use radios?
2. Alarm system monitoring
 - a. What types of detection equipment are used?
 - i. Magnetic contacts
 - ii. Sonic sensors
 - iii. Microwave motion detectors
 - iv. Passive infrared motion detectors

- v. Closed caption cameras
 - Do they record?
 - What types of media are used for recording?
 - Does the “tape” rewrite itself? If yes, how often?
 - Where is the recording device located?
 - b. List of people with the code information
 - c. Emergency password may be given to a larger number of people
 - d. What is the procedure when an alarm is sounded?
- 3. Collection area pass codes
 - a. List of staff with each area’s clearance
 - b. List may vary for different collection areas
- 4. Safe/ Vault
 - a. List of staff with combination
 - b. What is stored in it? Money? Valuables? Collections?
 - c. Is it fire proof?
- 5. Sign in / Sign out log sheets
 - a. Separate logs for staff, volunteers and visitors
 - b. Monitors who is in building at all times
 - c. Should be taken from building in case of an emergency
 - d. Are visitors given temporary badges while in museum?
- 6. Key distribution/ key holder list
 - a. A list of all staff members who have keys to the building
 - b. List should include home and cell phone numbers
 - c. Some local municipalities require copies of the list available to local Emergency Communications groups and local police
 - d. Is there a city code requiring responders live within a certain distance from the institution?
 - e. Does the alarm company have requirements as well?
 - f. Personnel on the list should be provided with the following information:
 - i. User codes for ALL alarm systems
 - ii. Combinations for access to ALL high security areas
 - iii. Additional training on your specific systems and how they operate, be sure to include any known problems with the systems

III. Disaster

A. Disaster types

1. Theft and vandalism
 - a. Staff should be knowledgeable of procedures
 - b. Incident forms should be readily available

2. Injury
 - a. First aid kits should be located throughout the institution and noted on floor plans
 - b. Consider having an automated external defibrillator (AED) on site
 - c. Staff members should be aware of all of these locations
 - d. Staff training for some injury types
 - e. Develop procedures for response
 - f. Documentation or forms for incidents

3. Natural disaster
 - a. Thunderstorms and lightning
 - b. Severe winter storm
 - c. Hurricane
 - d. Tornado
 - e. Flooding
 - f. Earthquake

4. Minor disasters
 - a. Water
 - Small leak
 - Broken pipe
 - Water main break
 - b. Fire
 - c. Gas leak
 - d. Power outage
 - e. Sewer system back up
 - f. Riot/civil disturbance
 - Gun shot
 - Bomb threat

5. Chemical Spill

B. Recovery

1. Be aware that insurance companies may require that everything be left “as is” until underwriters are able to visit and assess damage

2. Investigate whether or not your institution qualifies for government assistance

3. You may not be able to enter the building right away because of the type of damage. Be prepared to move forward in other areas of your plan.

4. Photo and/or video documentation is very important and should be done prior to any handling of the objects
5. Recovery response team
Consider having different teams that will be responsible for certain artifact materials such as paper, wood, metals, and textiles
 - a. Team leader
 - i. Responsible for assembling the team
 - ii. Survey damage and develop plan
 - iii. Assign work to team and monitor progress
 - iv. Make adjustments to plans as needed
 - v. Report progress to director or other person in charge
 - b. Coordinator/contact for supplies
 - i. Develop supply list
 - ii. Retrieve supplies
 - iii. Order/ maintain supplies
 - c. Collections recovery
 - i. Recovery instructions and methods
 - Clear and simple instructions
 - Recovery methods
 1. Air drying
 - Best used for damp books or documents
 - Should be dried in an environment that has a stable temperature and RH
 2. Freeze drying
 - Items should be dried within 48-72 hours
 - Frozen to avoid mold growth
 - Once an object is subjected to freezing, no additional damage occurs
 - Can use large freezing company or self defrosting freezer
 3. Dehumidification
 - Large commercial dehumidifiers are used to draw out moisture from the environment
 - ii. Arrange
 - Remove objects from affected area
 - Organize objects for transport
 - Evaluate damage
 - Sort objects according to treatment as needed
 - No treatment
 - Freeze
 - Air dry
 - Dehumidification
 - Send to conservator
 - Deaccession and/or Witness Destruction

iii. Organize

- Move items out of damaged area
- Set up work area
 - Air drying objects
 - Packing
 - Recording/ documentation
- Organize objects for specific treatment
- Contact freezing and/or drying companies

iv. Register

- Establish a record keeping system
- Track and record all information on objects
- Record accession number or object label
- Number broken parts of objects
- Photograph as necessary

v. Packing

- Items that are being transported for further treatment will need to be packed for the movement of the objects
- Pack in milk crates, cardboard boxes, or other box-like containers
- Packing list for box
 - One list inside the box
 - List(s) on exterior of box, on 2-4 sides
 - Copy for master list
- Coordinate transportation, if needed

vi. Return

- Clean and restore shelving and housing
- Return treated items to shelving

d. Work crew coordinator

- Contact and organize staff
- Contact and arrange for consultants
- Monitor work of outside vendors
- Arrange breaks and rest periods for workers
- Coordinate food and drink for staff

e. Volunteer coordinator

- Contact person for all volunteers
- Maintains log of all volunteers and their activity
- Arranged food, drink, and rest periods for staff
- Communicates with work crew coordinator regarding staff needs

f. Technology coordinator

- Data back ups and restoration
- Evaluate hardware and software
- Relocation of operations

- g. Building
 - Check building for further threatening conditions
 - Do not turn on electrical equipment
 - Check for gas leaks
 - Survey for loose or dangling power lines
 - Check sewage and water pipes
 - Examine walls, floors, and stairways for structural damage

- h. Security
 - Develop security procedures for the recovery site
 - Will temporary badges be handed out?
 - Will there be a temporary log?
 - Will there be badges for different security levels?
 - Or type of personnel? (staff versus volunteer)
 - Is there any staff NOT to be admitted to site?

- i. Public relations
 - Provides all information to the public
 - NEVER state the value of the damaged/missing object to the press, always use the phrase “irreplaceable artifacts”
 - Staff should be instructed to defer any comments to the appointed person
 - It is important that press releases be issued periodically to inform the public

- j. Documentation

Both written and photographic documentation are important

 - Collections
 - Building

C. Salvage priorities

1. Institution records
 - a. Payroll
 - b. Personnel
 - c. Institutional history

2. Collections
 - a. Different emergencies may require the removal of different objects
 - i. Who is approved for moving the objects?
 - ii. Collections staff only?
 - iii. Volunteers?
 - b. Gallery inventories containing a list of all objects
 - c. Gallery maps highlighting where specific objects are located
 - d. Collection priorities based on:
 - i. Research value
 - ii. Intrinsic value
 - iii. Monetary value
 - iv. Legal obligations

- v. Materials that are difficult to replace or one of a kind
- vi. Objects on loan (should be updated as exhibition and loans change)
- vii. Environmentally sensitive

D. Contingency plans

1. How will the museum continue to operate?
 - a. Staff
 - i. Which personnel will report?
 - ii. How will salaries be paid?
 - iii. Will your staff qualify for Disaster Unemployment Assistance?
 - iv. Will personal time be given for staff?
 - v. How soon should employees report to work after an emergency?
 - vi. Will staff members be given time to assist others affected by emergency?
 - vii. Will any type of counseling be provided to staff?
 - b. Museum
 - i. Will the museum be closed?
 - ii. How will scheduled events proceed?
 - iii. Will the museum be open during recovery/construction period?

E. Evacuation/emergency procedures

1. Clearing the building
 - a. Develop general procedures for museum evacuation
 - b. Assign one person per floor or area to make sure area is clear
 - c. Conduct emergency drills and make notes of areas needing improvement or next drill
2. Assembly area
 - Denote an area for staff, volunteers, and visitors to assemble away from the museum
3. Staff/visitor log
 - a. One person should be responsible for bringing this log book with them when he/she evacuates the building.
 - b. A “roll call” can be completed at the appointed assembly area

F. Command center/temporary space

1. Have two to three prearranged locations both on-site as well as off-site location
 - a. Command center location
 - b. Collection storage
2. Relocation/ temporary storage of collections
 - a. Is the environment acceptable?
 - b. Security of storage areas?

IV. Supplies

A. Supply checklist & suppliers

1. Check supplies periodically to make sure items have not expired
2. Maintain a predetermined supply level
3. Create maps of supply location(s) within building
4. Keep log or list of suppliers
 - a. Company name, number, and account number
 - b. List of common items with item number, size/type used

5. Supplies

Your supply list may vary depending on object type, disaster type, location and size

- a. Waxed or freezer paper
- b. Protective clothing aprons, gloves, rubber boots
- c. Plastic sheeting
- d. Lighting, fans, dehumidifiers, mops, wet/dry vacuum
- e. Portable lights
- f. Generators
- g. Scissors or utility knives
- h. Heavy duty tape
- i. Paper, pencils, clip board
- j. Buckets
- k. Large garbage cans
- l. Sponges
- m. Soft cloth, brushes
- n. Plastic garbage bags
- o. Paper towels
- p. Blotting paper
- q. Weights
- r. Screen racks
- s. Clothesline and clothespins
- t. Cotton gloves, nitrile gloves
- u. Extra fine steel wool
- v. Flashlights
- w. Batteries
- x. Fans
- y. Hair dryers
- z. Extension cords

B. Forms

1. Determine what forms are necessary for the institution
2. Include examples of forms as well as several copies in disaster plan notebook
3. Educate staff regarding the importance of using forms for documentation
4. Make forms easy to use and understand
5. Form Types
 - a. Incident report
 - b. Damage assessment form (could be the same as condition report)
 - i. For individual objects or a collection of objects?
 - ii. Include basic information such as accession number
 - iii. Also include the following:
 - Date of damage
 - Title of object (if any)
 - Artist or manufacturer
 - General condition of object
 - Develop scale for condition of object
 - Are there multiple pieces of the object?
 - Object materials
 - Type of damage
 - Treatment needed?
 - Develop conservation priority scale
 - c. Post-disaster form
 - d. Insurance claim
 - e. Sign-in/ Sign out sheets

V. Resources

AAM (American Association of Museums) Via the “Museum Resources” tab with the heading, The Information Center includes extensive information about Risk Management. www.aam-us.org

AASLH (American Association for State and Local History) There are several inexpensive technical bulletins regarding disaster planning. www.aaslh.org

AIC-CERT (American Institute for Conservation, Collections Emergency Response Team) Responds to the needs of cultural institutions during emergencies and disasters as part of AIC. There is a 24 hour, seven days a week hotline at 202-661-8068 that offers advice. www.conservation-us.org

American Red Cross has many great resources for individuals as well as companies. www.redcross.org

The Council of State Archivists has developed a “Framework for Emergency Preparedness” which contains instructions and assessments. There is also a link for a *Template for Pocket Response Plan for Collections*. www.statearchivists.org/prepare.

COSTEP (Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness) Brings together cultural resource institutions with emergency management agencies and first responders. It also helps states prepare for disasters and build alliances with federal, state, and local emergency management agencies. www.nedcc.org/services.disaster.costep.php

Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel This is an inexpensive handy tool to store in your office and affordable enough to have several copies throughout the institution. The wheel can be rotated to reveal information about protecting collections and records. One side outlines the “Action Steps” of the critical stages. The other side shows “Salvage Steps” for nine types of materials. This can be ordered through AAM and Heritage Preservation.

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) The information ranges from planning and preparing for a disaster to dealing with the aftermath. www.fema.gov

Heritage Emergency National Task Force Dedicated helping museums, libraries and individuals preserve objects that embody our history. <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/taskfer.htm>

Library of Congress Preservation web page information. There is extensive information regarding recovery from disasters. The publication link provides an annotated bibliography for recovery publications. <http://www.loc.gov/preserv/emergprep/prepare.html>

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) It will investigate potential hazards in the workplace, occupational safety and health management systems. They do not issue citations or penalties during consultations. <http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/consult.html>

National Park Service Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Response. Great procedures for handling objects with water damage or mold. <http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/primer/primintro.html>

Registrars Committee of AAM (RC-AAM) Several publications, reference materials and links regarding disaster planning including forms and policies. <http://www.rcaam.org/>

Virginia Department of Emergency Management There is a “business tool kit” that is worth investigating. There is also a toll free number 1-866-782-3470. www.vaemergency.com

VI. Bibliography

These are a few sources that were used for the development of this template. This is a very small sample of great publications that will be helpful in preparing a disaster plan.

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VII. Appendix

- A. Chain of Command Flow Chart Sample
- B. Phone tree Sample

