

Disaster Plan Template
Small museum

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Preparing a Disaster Plan for a Small institution

This outline will help institutions prepare a Disaster Plan for the museum with a staff of one to five. Specific procedures should also be developed to follow up with the policy.

I. Introduction

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
 - 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

Consult with representatives that understand the different roles in the museum

 - i. Management
 - ii. Collections
 - iii. Custodial
 - iv. Education
 - v. Media
 - vi. Personnel
 - vii. Building
 - viii. Exhibitions
3. Divide responsibilities
 - a. Previous Disaster researcher
 - i. Researches previous disasters in the area
 - ii. Also researches what natural disasters could occur in the immediate area
 - iii. The institution can allocate most of its planning to the natural disaster, which is most likely to occur in the area.

- b. Response coordinator and trainer
- i. Responsible for coordinating training
 - Will this be a rotating position?
 - Will one person serve as the coordinator?
 - Will there be a back-up person?
 - Who will oversee the coordinator to ensure training occurs?
 - 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. 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 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 is not be used in **non-emergency** situations

B. Staff

1. Develop a chain of command
2. This is NOT a phone tree
 - a. It is a chart that shows who is in command during emergency situations
 - b. May vary depending on emergency type
 - c. This may be different than the current reporting hierarchy

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 they are able to make decisions and disseminate the information more quickly.
 - g. Include Board Members and volunteers
 - h. The phone tree should be tested annually or semi-annually
2. Emergency services
 - a. Fire dept
 - b. Police dept
 - 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?
 - iii. How does your museum fit into these plans?
 - d. Meet with representatives from the local emergency services departments
 - 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
 - g. Consider installing a Knox box on the exterior of the building
 - 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 number of head of in-house security or contract security company

3. Outside professionals
 - a. Conservation and preservation professionals in your immediate area as well as those within a few hours drive
 - b. A conservator for each major object type or special collection
 - c. National, regional, state, and local preservation and/or historical organizations (such as AAM, AIC, SEMC, VAM)
 - d. State or other government run historical/preservation agencies that have had emergency training. (such as National Park Service, 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

Know where the offices for emergency recovery services are located in your region

 - a. FEMA
 - b. Red Cross
 - c. City/county emergency management
 - d. Health department
 - e. Salvage company
 - f. 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 the 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 to meet OSHA standards?
 - b. Are these chemicals used and disposed of 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
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 the 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

1. Contact fire 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. The methods should be documented and the information available to some staff members

1. Trained security personnel on staff
2. Contract security personnel
3. Closed captioned cameras
 - a. Do they record?
 - b. What type of media is used for recording?
 - c. Does the "tape" rewrite itself? If yes, how often?
 - d. Where is the recording device located?
4. Alarm system monitored by outside company
 - a. List of people with the code information
 - b. Emergency password may be given to a larger number of people
5. Collection area pass codes
 - a. List of staff with each area's clearance
 - b. List may vary for different collection areas
6. Safe/ Vault
 - a. List of staff with combination
 - b. What is stored in it? Money? Valuables? Collections?
 - c. Is it fireproof?

7. 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 volunteers or visitors given temporary badges while in the museum?

8. Key distribution/ key holder list
 - a. A list of all staff members who have keys to the building
 - b. List should include name, home and cell phone numbers
 - c. Some municipalities require the list be made available to local Emergency Communications groups and local police
 - d. Are there city codes that responders live within a certain distance to the institution?
 - e. 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. Comprehensive training on your specific systems and how they operate

III. Disaster

A. Disaster Types

1. Theft and vandalism
2. Injury
 - a. First aid kits should be located throughout the institution
 - b. Staff training for some injury types
 - c. Develop procedures for response

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

4. Minor disasters
 - a. Water
 - i. Small leak
 - ii. Broken pipe or water main break
 - b. Fire
 - c. Gas leak
 - d. Power outage
 - e. Sewer system back-up
 - f. Riot/civil disturbance
 - i. Gun shot
 - ii. 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. 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
3. Photo and /or video documentation should be done prior to any object handling

Recovery response team

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
 - Air drying
 - Freeze drying
 - Dehumidification

ii. Organize

- Set up work area
- Remove objects from affected area
- Sort objects according to treatment as needed
 - No treatment
 - Freeze
 - Send to conservator
 - Deaccession
 - Witness Destruction

iii. Register

- Establish a record keeping system
- Track and record all information from objects
- Photograph as necessary
- Number broken parts of objects

iv. Packing

- Items that are being transported for treatment will be packed
- Items can be packed in milk crates, cardboard boxes, or other box like containers
- Packing lists for box
 - Inside and outside the box
 - Copy for master list
- Coordinates transportation, if needed

- v. 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
 - Tracks and monitors volunteer assistance
- e. Technology coordinator
 - Data back ups and restoration
 - Evaluate hardware and software
 - Relocation of operations
- f. Building
 - Check building for further threatening conditions
- g. Security
 - Develop security procedures for the recovery site
 - Is there anyone NOT to be admitted?
- h. Public relations
 - If there is not a public relations staff member, the institution should select one staff member to have this responsibility
 - Provides 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
- i. Documentation
 - Both written and photographic documentation are important

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 maps highlighting where specific objects are located

- c. Collection priorities based on:
 - i. Research value
 - ii. Intrinsic value
 - iii. Monetary value
 - iv. Legal obligations
 - v. Objects on loan (may need to be updated as exhibition and loans change)
 - vi. Environmentally sensitive

D. Contingency plans

1. How will the museum continue to operate?
2. Which personnel will report?
3. How will salaries be paid?
4. How will scheduled events proceed?

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 note of areas needing improvement
2. Denote an assembly area for staff, volunteers, and visitors away from the museum
3. Staff/visitor log
 - a. One person should be responsible for bringing this log book with him/her when they evacuate the building.
 - b. A "roll call" can be completed and all staff and visitors can be accounted for at the appointed assembly area

F. Command center/temporary space

1. Have several 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 pre-determined 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 and location.

- 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
- 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
- u. Extra fine steel wool
- v. Flashlights
- w. Batteries
- x. Fans
- y. Hair dryers
- z. Extension cords

B. Forms

1. Incident report
2. Damage assessment form
3. Post disaster form
4. Insurance claim
5. 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*. The web site is 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 An inexpensive handy tool to store in your office and affordable enough to have several 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 to helping museums, libraries and individuals preserve objects. <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 for free. They do not issue citations or penalties during consultations. <http://www.osha.gov/dosp/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.

Canadian Conservation Institute. *Emergency Preparedness for Cultural Institutions: Identifying and Reducing Hazards*, 14/2

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Hutchins, Jane K. and Barbara O. Roberts, ed. *First Aid for Art: Essential Salvage Techniques*. Lennox, MA: Hard Press Editions, 2006.

Lord, Allyn, Carolyn Reno, and Marie Demeroukas. *Steal this handbook! A Template for Creating a Museum's Emergency Preparedness Plan*. South Eastern Registrars Association, 2001.

Wellheiser, Johanna and Jude Scott. *An Ounce of Prevention*. Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2002.

VII. Appendix

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

