

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Church leaders have the responsibility to plan and organize so they can help individuals and families under their care. Church leaders should understand that civil authorities have priority in directing efforts to respond to emergencies. When civil authorities assign public agencies to respond to emergencies, Church members should act under the direction of such agencies. Members acting as citizens should do all they can to help their neighbors and government leaders to protect life and property and to maintain safety and order until normal conditions can be restored. The readily available manpower and leadership of Church units can be vital assets to their communities in times of need.

Although this plan will serve as a general outline, supplemental plans may be formulated for specific types of emergencies most likely to occur in our area, including: severe weather, wildfire, earthquake, tsunami, utility failure, flood, air plane crash, train accident, chemical spill, radiation release, civil disturbance, bomb threat, and terrorism. *[Consider adding other area-specific emergencies to this list.] Supplemental Plans for specific emergencies can be found in Appendix M.*

This Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is intended to be reviewed and updated annually.

## **II. PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES**

The primary responsibility to prepare for and respond to emergencies rests with individual members and families. Church leaders should encourage members to set aside an extended supply of food, clothing and, where possible, fuel. The Church has prepared materials and facilities for members and families to help meet their individual preparedness goals.

In furtherance of individual and other emergency preparedness goals, the Emergency Preparedness Committee has scheduled the following preparedness training activities for the coming year:

- *[Enter your preparedness training activities here. Some samples follow:]*
- Weekly amateur radio training nets
- Annual disaster readiness drill
- Amateur radio training and license testing opportunities
- first-aid and CPR training
- Monthly pre-packed food purchasing program
- Red Cross Shelter

Before a disaster strikes is also the time to develop working relationships with local government, public safety officials and other civil authorities, as well as community organizations and volunteer groups that we may cooperate with during an emergency. We are developing ongoing relationships with these organizations:

- *[Enter your organization list here. Some samples follow:]*

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- local city RACES (civil amateur radio volunteers) group
- local food kitchen
- other faith-based organizations

*Contact information for these organizations can be found in Appendix J.*

The Emergency Preparedness Committee should, with the help of the Clerk and input from the Bishopric and Council, prepare a method to contact members in the event of a disaster. Typically, this means dividing the members into smaller “zones”, with “zone captains” assigned who can check on members in their zone. In many cases, the zone captain will be someone who lives in the zone. (It is helpful if this individual has an amateur radio license.) In others, it may be a Council member assigned to check on a particular zone and report back. Zone boundaries and membership lists should be updated at least annually. During the annual zone review, zone captains should be reassigned and/or retrained as to their responsibility.

Our church uses a [Select the method you use: zone captains, Council members, other] structure to contact individual zones. We have a program to review our zone listings [Select one: annually, semi-annually, other] to make sure they are up-to-date.

*Contact and zone information for church members can be found in Appendix F.  
Maps of each zone boundary for the church can be found in Appendix H.*

### **III. WARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) is comprised of the following leaders and members, with typical number of people in parenthesis:

- [Add your ERT members here. Some suggestions follow:]
- Bishopric (3)
- Executive Secretary (1)
- Clerk and Assistants (3)
- Relief Society Presidency (5)
- Emergency Preparedness Chairman and Committee
- Communications Specialist and Assistants

*Contact information for local ERT members can be found in Appendix E.*

### **IV. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

The Emergency Response Team should report to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to activate the Emergency Response Plan. The alternate location for the Emergency Operations Center is necessary due to the possibility that the primary location may be damaged or otherwise not available.

- Primary Location:

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*[Add your primary location here. This is probably a Church building, but could be a member's home, or another building owned by a member.]*

- Alternate Location:  
*[Add your alternate location here.]*

## **V. COMMUNICATIONS**

The church should develop multiple methods of communication that utilize varied technologies. We have created communications systems that include:

- *[Add the communications methods you have developed here. Some suggestions follow:]*
- Telephone trees or pyramids
- Texting (SMS)
- Email
- Social media services (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Other Internet services (VOIP, Skype, instant messaging services, etc.)
- Radio networks (including FRS, GMRS, and amateur radio operators)
- Personal contact via foot, bicycle, etc.

*Details regarding these communications methods can be found in Appendix C.*

In a disaster, normal means of communications, including landline telephone systems, the Internet, and mobile phones, may not be available. Amateur radio can provide a reliable method when other channels are inoperable. We are promoting amateur radio licensing in our ward by:

- *[Add methods you are using to promote amateur radio activities in your ward. Some suggestions follow:]*
- Weekly amateur radio practice nets.
- Annual radio licensing classes.
- Calling a church Communications Specialist.
- Annual church disaster readiness drill utilizing radio operators to transmit data.

The Church has organized the Emergency Response Communications (ERC) system, which is an amateur radio communications network, as an alternative means of communication. The ERC provides a means of reporting critical information necessary to provide members and their families needed emergency assistance in times of local, regional or national disaster. The ERC network is staffed by licensed amateur radio operators at each level of the network.

In an actual emergency, when other communications systems are no longer operational, the ERC is activated. Each ERC Communicator, after securing the immediate welfare of his/her family, checks into the ERC net as specified by net operating procedures. If necessary, the Communicator reports to the Emergency Operations Center. All emergency messages from

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the Bishop are then given a priority and entered into a standard message format and transmitted to the next higher level in the network. Depending on the severity of the emergency and the priority of the messages, the messages flow through the network to the appropriate level where the needed emergency response is determined and the necessary action taken.

*Details regarding our ERC program can be found in Appendix C.*

## **VI. EMERGENCY RESPONSE KIT**

The church is to maintain an Emergency Response Kit at the primary meeting location for the Emergency Operations Center. The Executive Secretary, Clerk, Emergency Preparedness Committee Chairman, or other person the Bishop may designate, should periodically inspect the kit and replace out of date documents. The following items are contained in the Emergency Response Kit:

- *[Add items for your emergency response kit here. Some suggestions follow:]*
- Three ring binder containing: Emergency Response Plan (including all Appendices, which contain critical response information);
- Assorted office supplies (note pads, pens, tape, push pins, pencil sharpener, pencils, marking pens clip boards, 5x7 index cards);
- Flashlight;
- Portable AM/FM radio;
- Sealed package of batteries for flashlight and radio, and;
- First aid/trauma kit.

## **VII. RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an emergency which causes injury, loss of life, or significant property damage within the church boundaries, a member of the Bishopric, or other priesthood leader, may activate the Emergency Response Plan.

In an emergency, Emergency Response Team members should first see to the needs of their own family and property prior to reporting to the Emergency Operations Center. Once assembled, the immediate goal of the Emergency Response Team is to gather the following information for the Bishop:

- The location and condition of any full-time missionaries (*contact information in Appendix G*);
- The condition and welfare of all members and response to their temporal and spiritual needs (*contact information in Appendix F*);
- The condition of members' homes;
- The condition of Church-owned property;
- Needs that cannot be met locally;
- The church's ability to provide service to others.
- *[Add other data to collect here. The items above are the minimum required.]*

*Forms to organize the data above can be found in Appendix I.*

As information from the church is received by the Emergency Operations Center, the Emergency Response Team will begin to formulate a response to the emergency. In addition, the Emergency Response Team will prepare a report containing the following information for the regional church leadership within the first few hours of an emergency:

- Name, title, and unit of the reporting officer;
- How the presiding officer can be reached;
- Description, location, and magnitude of the emergency;
- Numbers of members injured, missing, or dead;
- Location and extent of damage done to Church and/or member property;
- Account for full-time missionaries;
- Actions being taken to help those in distress;
- Needed assistance that is unavailable locally;
- The church's ability to provide service to others.
- *[Add other data to collect here. The items above are the minimum required.]*

*Forms to organize the data above can be found in Appendix I.*

*Church leadership contact information can be found in Appendix E.*

The Emergency Response Team should be prepared to coordinate relief efforts such as, but not limited, to the following:

- *[Add activities that the ERT may need to consider to assist your members during the response period. Some suggestions follow:]*
- Request supplemental equipment, food, clothing, and services
- Develop mass feeding plans;
- Coordinate temporary housing and clothing needs;
- Respond to the emotional trauma that members may suffer during a disaster;
- Help to locate and reunite family members who have become separated;
- Schedule worship services;
- Coordinate recreational events and service opportunities;
- Develop policies on the use of a Church building as a shelter and/or temporary morgue;
- Coordinate care for children whose parents are injured, missing, dead, or engaged in relief response efforts;
- Establish guidelines on sanitation facilities, waste disposal and water purification;
- Arrange for laundry facilities;
- Designate a public affairs spokesperson to answer all questions from the media;
- Review and approve all news releases to be given by the designated spokesperson, and;
- Give appropriate recognition to civil authorities and relief agencies.

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*[Enter the latest revision date here]*

*A checklist outlining general actions to take prior to a disaster can be found in Appendix A.  
A checklist outlining general actions to take after a disaster can be found in Appendix B.  
Checklists outlining specific actions for specific disaster scenarios can be found in Appendix M.*

## **VIII. USE OF CHURCH BUILDINGS**

Following a disaster, the use of a Church meetinghouse as a community emergency shelter is occasionally needed. Permission to use a meetinghouse is granted by the Stake President, after consulting with a member of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency. Following approval, the priesthood leader should contact his Church Physical Facilities Representative (PFR). Buildings may be used as emergency shelters, first-aid stations, mass feeding locations or recreational centers. Word of Wisdom standards should be observed in the building and on surrounding Church property. The chapel and offices are not to be used except for Church purposes. Cooking equipment and heaters that are not part of the meetinghouse furnishings may not be used in the building. Pets, other than service animals, are not allowed in the building. A priesthood holder is to be present any time the building is being used as a shelter.

*Guidelines for use of meetinghouses as emergency shelters can be found in Appendix D.*

## **IX. DIRECTORY OF APPENDICES**

### ***A. QUICK GUIDE - If Danger is Approaching***

[This is a quick reference checklist of what you can do immediately if a disaster is imminent.]

### ***B. QUICK GUIDE - If a Disaster Has Occurred***

[This is a quick reference checklist of immediate actions that you can take to respond and recover from a disaster.]

### ***C. Guidelines for Emergency Communications***

[Does your church have any specific operational guidelines for emergency communications? What are your communications methods? In what priority order are they to be used? Be specific: landline phone numbers, mobile phone numbers, telephone conferencing systems, email addresses, Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, or other social media account names, and FRS, GMRS, or amateur radio frequency band plans. Be sure to include a list of ERC members, with contact information and call signs. Consult your Emergency Communications Specialist for assistance.]

### ***D. Guidelines for Use of Meetinghouses as Emergency Shelters***

[In addition to the guidelines from Church Headquarters or the Red Cross, does your church have specific guidelines with regards to using meetinghouses as emergency shelters?]

### ***E. Church Emergency Contacts (“ICE” In-Case-of-Emergency Contact List)***

[This is a quick reference of local, regional, and national Church contacts to use in the event of emergency.]

### ***F. Church Member Directories, Zones, Special Needs, Resources, and Other Lists***

[This is a list of all church members, with addresses and other contact information. This list should be sorted several ways: by name, by street address, and by “zone”. You may want to include specific sub-

lists for other groups, like the elderly, those with special needs, or members with specific equipment or skills that would be valuable in an emergency]

**G. Missionary Directory**

[This is a list of missionaries serving in the ward. Since missionaries are typically transient in nature, the list might not contain names, but only show apartment addresses and phone numbers. Consult your Church Mission Leader, local Mission President or Mission Office Secretary for assistance.]

**H. Church Maps**

[This section should contain maps of the church as a whole, as well as maps of individual area boundaries. Maps showing each of the church's individual "zones" should also be included. If they can be produced, additional maps showing member households, possible shelter locations, evacuation routes, fire stations, hospitals, or other locations that may be needed in an emergency situation may be desirable. ]

**I. Church Data Collection Forms/Reports**

[This section should contain copies of standardized reporting forms that the church will use in the collection of the condition of members, homes, missionaries, and church facilities.]

**J. Public Safety and Community Organization Contacts**

[This section should contain contact information for local government, public safety, community, and volunteer organizations that may be able to provide assistance in an emergency. If possible, these organizations could also be contacted regarding service opportunities after the disaster.]

**K. Church Policies Regarding Emergency Response**

[This section should contain statements of official Church policy that deal specifically with Emergency Preparation or Response.]

**L. Emergency Response Guidelines for Public Affairs**

[Does your church, area, or region have any specific guidelines on how Public Affairs should handle emergency response?]

**Action Plans for Specific Disaster Scenarios**

[Are there specific disaster scenarios in your area that might be better handled with specific plans? Consider these situations, create specific, detailed plans, and put them here.]

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## Appendix A - QUICK GUIDE - If Danger is Approaching

(This checklist is intended to serve as a quick reference to help guide your immediate action in an imminent disaster situation. This guide alone is not intended to serve as, or replace, an organized church Emergency Response Plan.)

- 1. Assess the Situation: Determine the nature of the threat, the level of risk to your members and property, and the projected impact areas. Your sources of information may include:**
    - a. Visual observations (storm tracks, smoke direction, water levels, etc.)
    - b. Community alert systems (sirens, AlertOC, web sites, Twitter feeds, etc.)
    - c. Smartphone emergency notification apps (CodeRed, FirstAlert, FirstCall, etc.)
    - d. Local media outlets (cable, TV, radio, web sites)
    - e. Local government or emergency service information hotlines or web sites
    - f. Social networks (Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, etc.)
    - g. Radio networks (amateur radio, FRS, GMRS, radio scanners, National Weather Service)
  
  - 2. Activate Your Emergency Notification Systems: Activate any church emergency notification tools that you have put in place.**
    - a. Telephone trees, texting (SMS) groups, social networks, (Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, etc.), amateur radio nets, personal contact via foot, bicycle, etc. See *Section V. and Appendix C.*
    - b. Activate the Emergency Operations Center if necessary and time allows. Being able to share information quickly is important. See *Section IV.*
  
  - 3. Organize your Emergency Response Team: Establish immediate roles and assignments based on who you have available. The team will change as more members or leadership becomes available. See *Section III.***
  
  - 4. Warn your Members: Get emergency warnings to your members as quickly and effectively as possible. See *Section V. and Appendix C.***
    - a. Use all available methods of communications to reach as many members as practical.
    - b. Provide precise information and directions, for example, to take shelter or to prepare for evacuation in a specific direction/location.
    - c. Provide specific emergency communications direction for reporting status of members and emergency needs during the next 24-72 hours.
  
  - 5. Protect Yourself: Remember to protect yourselves and your team members first - you cannot help others if you are a victim.**
  
  - 6. If Time Permits: Communicate your status and planned actions to higher authorities by whatever communications channels are available. See *Section VII. and Appendix E.***
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## Appendix B - QUICK GUIDE - If a Disaster Has Occurred

(This checklist is intended to serve as a quick reference to help guide your immediate action after a disaster has occurred. This guide alone is not intended to serve as, or replace, an organized Ward Emergency Response Plan.)

- 1. Activate Your Emergency Notification Systems: Activate any church emergency notification tools that you have in place. See Section V. and Appendix C.**
    - a. Telephone trees, texting (SMS) groups, social networks, (Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, etc.), amateur radio nets, personal contact via foot, bicycle, etc.
    - b. The area EOC team can help support church disaster responses.
  
  - 2. Activate your Emergency Response Team (ERT): Organize your Emergency Response Team. See Section III.**
    - a. Start with a Command lead, a Communications lead, a Safety lead, and a Public Affairs lead.
    - b. You can expand the ERT as more resources become available, for example, by adding add a Response lead, Social Media lead, Sheltering lead, or Security lead.
  
  - 3. Establish an Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The EOC will be the center of your emergency response and recovery efforts. See Section IV.**
    - a. It should be located in a safe facility in a safe geographical area.
    - b. It should be in an accessible location, considering disaster imposed restrictions.
    - c. It is helpful to have multiple emergency communications modes.
    - d. Relocate the EOC if the planned location is, or becomes, unsafe.
  
  - 4. Assess the Situation: Determine the nature of the disaster, the level of impact to your community, and the areas impacted. Your sources of information may include:**
    - a. Visual observations (storm tracks, smoke direction, water levels, etc.)
    - b. Community alert systems (sirens, AlertOC, web sites, Twitter feeds, etc.)
    - c. Smartphone emergency notification apps (CodeRed, FirstAlert, FirstCall, etc.)
    - d. Local media outlets (cable, TV, radio, web sites)
    - e. Local government or emergency service information hotlines or web sites
    - f. Social networks (Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, etc.)
    - g. Radio networks (amateur radio, FRS, GMRS, radio scanners, National Weather Service)
  
  - 5. Establish Emergency Communications. See Section V. and Appendix C.**
    - a. Establish functional communications (multiple modes)
    - b. Establish “one-to-many” communications mechanisms
      - i. Telephone trees or pyramids
      - ii. Group texting (SMS)
      - iii. Social networks (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
      - iv. Conference call tools (with specific reoccurring scheduled calls)
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- v. Emergency Response Communications (ERC) radio network
  - c. Stay informed (monitor news, local government, safety organizations, and community organizations as information sources)
- 6. Verify Status/Damage: Determine the impacts of the disaster (injuries or damage) to your members and property. See Section VII.**
- a. Confirm the status of all assigned missionaries (injuries, deaths, missing, evacuations and destinations)
  - b. Confirm the status of the members (injuries, deaths, missing, family members who have become separated, evacuations and destinations)
  - c. Confirm property damaged or destroyed, both Church facilities and members' homes
  - d. Identify any injured non-members being assisted or sheltered by members
- 7. Determine Immediate Needs: Needs requiring immediate attention. See Section VII.**
- a. Medical (injured, disabled, elderly, special medications)
  - b. Psychological trauma (shock, depression, PTSD, etc.)
  - c. Evacuation to safe locations or those in need of immediate sheltering
  - d. Family reunification assistance
  - e. Securing homes and Church buildings (security first, with boarding up and cleaning up to come later)
- 8. Identify Other Needs: Not immediately life threatening. See Section VII.**
- a. Emergency communications (phones or radio links needed)
  - b. Long-term housing needs (destroyed/unsafe housing, power/water outages)
  - c. Subsistence needs (food, water, clothing)
  - d. Transportation needs (evacuation, transport to shelter, reunification)
  - e. Local government or emergency management requests for assistance being met by members
- 9. Establish a Safe and Secure Operating Environment:**
- a. Stay informed on disaster conditions; they may change over time or there may be domino disaster effects
  - b. Assign clear safety and security responsibilities to response team members
- 10. Report Status/Activities: Communicate your status and planned actions through priesthood lines. See Section V. and Appendix E.**
- a. Use phone, text, and/or email; consider scheduled conference calling if available (avoid passing personal information via "open" or public communications channels).
  - b. Regularly update status (up-chain to Stake Presidency, down-chain to other Ward leaders, and with local emergency management contacts).
- 11. Remember! Protect Yourself at All Times!: Remember to protect yourselves and your field team members at all times.**
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- a. Ensure “personal protective equipment” is available to, and used by, everyone involved (breathing protection, eye protection, gloves, safe footwear).
- b. Consider the physical security of members and facilities in your response.

[Following the suggestions in the “**Directory of Appendices**”, continue inserting other specific information here for Appendices C-K. See *Section IX.*]

**C. Guidelines for Emergency Communications**

**D. Guidelines for Use of Meetinghouses as Emergency Shelters**

**E. Church Emergency Contacts (“ICE” In-Case-of-Emergency Contact List)**

**F. Ward Member Directories, Zones, Special Needs, Resources, and Other Lists**

**G. Missionary Directory**

**H. Church Maps**

**I. Data Collection Forms/Reports**

**J. Public Safety and Community Organization Contacts**

**K. Church Policies Regarding Emergency Response**

**L. Emergency Response Guidelines for Public Affairs**

**M. Action Plans for Specific Disaster Scenarios**