

## Crisis Management and Emergency Response

A crisis is considered any unstable or crucial time or event that disrupts and changes normal church or school operations. A crisis may also be considered a state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending. The level of the crisis may vary. A significant crisis can disrupt church or school operations, occur without warning and set off a chain of events that is news worthy. Other crises can simply create internal operational problems which disrupt church or school. Below are some examples of specific crises:

**Natural** – Flood, Hurricane, Tornado, Ice/Snowstorm, Earthquake

**Man-Made** – Fire, Explosion, Nuclear/Chemical

**Intentional** – Terrorism/Sabotage, Bombing, Riot/Civil Disturbance

### Be Prepared – Develop a Plan

Being unprepared can be devastating to an organization, create major confusion and miscommunication, result into major loss of assets and long-term church or school interruptions, and create life threatening injuries. Not only can such a tragedy affect your church, it can also have long lasting effects on families and the community. Although a crisis is oftentimes non-preventable, an organization's impact may be reduced through the implementation of a Crisis Management and Emergency Response Plan.

Elements of the emergency and disaster plan should be customized to specifically address your organization's operations. The plan should identify tasks that should be implemented before, during and after the event; this would include communications, emergency evacuation procedures, meeting place for evacuees, and emergency response procedures.

### Key program elements should include:

1. Plan Coordinator should be appointed along with a team made up of key personnel to handle all crisis situations and be the point of contact for the church community and staff.
2. Complete a risk assessment identifying all potential risks and exposures. Emphasis should be placed on preparation for those hazards with the greatest potential and consequences.
3. Develop, in conjunction with local authorities, an emergency evacuation and response procedure.
4. Develop the emergency plan into written procedures. The emergency plan must highlight emergency response activities, personnel responsibilities and duties prior to, during and after the event.
5. Develop an emergency communication notification system.
6. Develop procedures for after-hours and bad weather.
7. Establish an emergency center where personnel can assemble and manage the crisis according to plan.
8. Once the written plan is developed, implementation and training should be immediate.
9. Ensure the emergency plan is tested and that it works. Complete emergency drills, audit and revise as necessary.

In the event of a loss or crises, contact Heffernan Insurance Brokers immediately at 800-234-6787. Secure and identify all damaged areas and make temporary repairs where necessary to prevent further damage and/or injury. Contact inspectors, suppliers and contractors for potential service

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