

CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING

SECTION ONE Profiling the Parish

Hint: It is recommended that the committee contact key parish personnel before working on this section. Critical people to include are the building manager, parish secretary, and Deacon or other person in charge of the parish social services and outreach programs.

Before the disaster planning committee can begin planning for the possibility of a future disaster, a careful examination of the current state of the parish - including its buildings and other property, physical contents, and parish activities – should be performed. Elements of this examination should include: (a) a thorough check of all parish property, buildings, and physical contents; (b) the creation of a log of activities occurring daily in the parish; (c) the updating and maintenance of parish staff listings; (d) the creation of a “phone tree”; (e) the identification of parishioners who are most vulnerable to disaster; and (f) a determination of the possible hazards the parish may be susceptible to because of its location and structure.

Analyze the Parish Facility

Inventory All Equipment

While examining the parish facility, it is important to document all physical contents. The documentation should be written, videotaped, or photographed. It is recommended to generate the inventory in at least two different mediums. Move room by room and list appliances, equipment, furniture and archival records (including but not limited to baptismal certificates and marriage certificates). List all equipment including computers, printers, telephones, fax machines, answering machines, lawn equipment, kitchen equipment, activity equipment, as well as blankets, batteries, flashlights, or other disaster-related materials. Include all furniture from the parish offices, rectory, and sanctuary.

Isolation Switches and Cut-off Valves

In the event of an emergency, it may become necessary to shut down water, power, or gas lines before fire or other officials arrive at the site. Knowing the location of these connections and how to operate each of them may save lives and diminish the risks of property damage. Valves and switches should be color coded according to general standards:

- Water - **Blue**
- Electrical - **Red**
- Gas - **Green**

Understanding the HVAC System

It is important to pay special attention to the ventilation systems (air, heat, fans, etc.) that may transmit toxic emissions in the event of a fire or hazardous materials spill. Every system has some means of shutdown. It is important to note those rooms that are equipped with the capability to shut off outside airflow and designate them as “safe rooms”.

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Documenting Parish Activity

It is important to create a master schedule of activities keyed to their specific rooms, buildings, or areas in order to have a better command of all the activities occurring at the parish. Create a master schedule of parish activities and check it regularly (i.e. semi-annually, annually), updating as needed. It is equally as important to know the age groups of parishioners involved in activities, as well as noting where the activities are located. Safely evacuating a group of young children will require much more supervision and planning than moving a similarly sized group of adults. After creating a master schedule, use it to determine if more staff is needed for events and to answer the following questions: How does the parish know that the buildings are empty at the close of all activities? Is there a checklist procedure that is followed every night?

EXAMINE OR CREATE A CHECKLIST PROCEDURE TO MAKE SURE BUILDINGS ARE EMPTY AT CLOSING. MAKE CHANGES AS NECESSARY.

What about social service activities? Are they concentrated in a single location? Is there a Saint Vincent de Paul food pantry, thrift store or social services office? Do not forget to list these places on a list of activities.

It is also important to focus on the capacity of buildings. List the capacity of any buildings used to gather large numbers of people. *(Include, but do not limit to, the gymnasium, auditorium, sanctuary, parish dining hall, etc.).*

Parish Staff/ Communication

It is important to keep a list of current parish staff up-to-date and accessible in the event of a disaster. If there is not one already available, create an organizational chart of parish staff. Be sure to include volunteers who may be in charge of various programs as part of the chart since they are an integral part of parish activities.

Using the organizational chart, assign each staff member the names of two or three other staff members that they are responsible for calling in the event of an emergency. Make sure that each staff member has access at all times to an employee roster as well as a copy of the phone tree. A call from the pastor or disaster coordinator initiates the phone-calling process. Instructions should be precise and limited to simple and straightforward information.

Note: It is important that details such as offsite meeting areas are established prior to activating the phone tree. Do not waste valuable time and energy debating where to meet if the parish is inaccessible when a disaster is imminent.

Parish Schools

Parish schools will follow the guidelines as set forth in the Diocesan Disaster Plan. Every parish school principal has also been issued the “Guidelines for Emergency Disaster for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux Catholic Schools” located in their “Crisis Management Manual”.

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Volunteers

Volunteers are a key component during disaster preparedness and relief activities. They might assist in clean up after a disaster or check on elderly parishioners who may need assistance. Use the following section as a guide to determine which parishioners may offer assistance before, during, and after times of disaster. Doing this before a disaster allows for the parish to coordinate spontaneous volunteers after a disaster event. Each year, the Matthew 25 Volunteer Coordinator should profile the parish to identify and gather a pool of volunteers who could aid in time of disaster.

IDENTIFY THE TYPES OF VOLUNTEER TEAMS YOUR PARISH WILL SUPPORT:

Emergency Response Teams: (Shelter assistance, Cooks, Relief Kit Distribution, Evacuation Assistance, Child Care, Emergency Housing)

On-going Relief Teams: (Spiritual Support, Clean Up, Service Referral, Legal Assistance)

Long-term Recovery Teams: (Construction Teams)

SOME SUGGESTED VOLUNTEER TEAMS (with an emphasis on bilingual communication):

General Purpose Teams

Evacuation/Shelter Assistants
Cooks and Food Distributors
Child Care
Emergency Housing (Identify homes for victims and volunteers)
Clean-up
Home Visitors for At-risk Parishioners
Spiritual Support

Professional Teams

Counselors
Construction
Medical
Legal
Caseworkers

Vulnerable Parishioners

Many parishioners have no one except the Church to turn to in times of disaster. Before a disaster strikes, it is important to determine who these vulnerable people are so the parish can establish outreach programs targeted towards helping them.

Identify those who receive Communion at home and in nearby nursing facilities. Social concerns offices and parish volunteers may also know which persons have medical disabilities that result in their reliance on electricity for homebound medical treatments – *special needs individuals are particularly vulnerable during times of disaster when electrical service can fail for an extended period of time.*

The parish also may be able to identify neighborhoods that are high risk by utilizing information obtained from social service programs in the community. *Are there neighborhoods that routinely flood? What about persons who do not speak English?* Make sure these people are identified.

A form that the parish can use to identify parishioners with special needs can be found on page II - 4 and in the Appendix - Forms section at the back of this manual.

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SPECIAL NEEDS PARISHIONERS IDENTIFICATION FORM

Church Parish: _____ *Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux*

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

List names and ages of additional members in household: _____

Do you only speak a foreign language? No Yes Language: _____

Residence Type: Single Family Mobile Home Apt. __Floor

Name of Residential Complex: _____

Medical Disability: _____

Are You: Legally Blind Deaf Mute Aphasic Are you homebound? Yes No

Do you use a wheelchair? Always Most of the Time Sometimes

Do you use a walker/cane? Always Most of the Time Sometimes

Do you require a special diet? No Yes Type: _____

Special Medical Needs (Ex: severe cardiac, diabetic on insulin)

Do you rely on electricity for home medical treatments? Yes No

Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

(**NOT** living with you)

Do you have any pet(s)? Yes No If Yes, what type of pet(s) do you have and how many of each?

(**Note:** Pets are **NOT** allowed in shelters unless they are service animals. Make evacuation shelter arrangements for for your pet(s) **BEFORE** a disaster strikes.) Is your pet a Service Animal? Yes

Do you have transportation in an emergency? Yes No Maybe

Would you need transportation in an emergency? Yes No Maybe

If yes, what type? Standard Vehicle Wheelchair access Ambulance

Additional Comments: _____

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SECTION TWO Protecting Church Property

Hint: Be sure a member of the building or parish staff is present during this stage of planning.

This section focuses on how to minimize damage to the church property by keeping up with routine maintenance as well as maintenance during storms. Additionally, this section includes a list of basic emergency supplies that the parish should keep on hand in case of a disaster.

Routine Maintenance

Routine, preventative maintenance can help to minimize greater damage to a parish facility during a disaster. Many insurance claims are denied because maintenance issues are allowed to go unresolved that, in effect, create a “pre-existing condition.” It is imperative that the building and grounds be routinely checked for maintenance issues and that problems are fixed as soon as they are realized. A leaky pipe may cause major mold problems down the road. Likewise, an unchecked fire extinguisher could malfunction, resulting in a larger fire that causes significant damage. As part of the diocesan disaster preparedness and response plan, routine maintenance is a mandatory requirement. Please assign a member of the committee, a member of the building committee, and/or a parish staff member the task of completing the maintenance checklists (Form II-B) on an annual basis.

Storing and Protecting Parish Records

Inactive records should be stored in filing cabinets or in boxes (on shelves if possible). Do not loosely pile documents on a shelf as this increases the risk of fire or other potential loss. These records should be stored in clean, well lit and ventilated areas that are free from pests. The storage area should contain fire extinguishers and, if possible, have a fire-suppression system. Smoking, eating, and drinking should be prohibited in the area. Access to storage areas should be tightly controlled. The sacramental records books and marriage packets should be stored in a fireproof cabinet. Only the pastor and his assistants, deacons (if any), and the sacramental records secretary should have access to the records. No other person, including other parish staff or parishioners, should have access to any of the sacramental books, even to view his/her own record.

Record Retention and Destruction Policy

All parish records have a prescribed retention period. At the end of the required retention period, non-permanent records should be shredded to ensure confidentiality. The pastor or business manager should authorize the destruction of the records. The parish or organization must keep a log of all records destroyed, noting the type of records, dates of records, and the date of destruction (for example, “cancelled checks, FY 1992-1993”).

Records should never be laminated. The lamination process is irreversible and highly destructive.

If archival records become damaged due to a disaster, call the diocesan archives office immediately.

The table on page II - 6 provides a schedule of how long records should be kept (a copy of this table can also be found in the Appendix - Forms section at the back of this manual).

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Type of Record	Length of Retention
Audit Reports	Permanent
Bank Statements, Cancelled Checks	Current Fiscal Year and 5 Previous Fiscal Years
Collection Envelopes	Current Calendar Year and 2 Previous Calendar Years
Construction Records (Contracts, correspondence, Specifications, Drawings, etc.)	Permanent
Contribution Records	Current Calendar Year and 5 Previous Calendar Years
Correspondence Files (Letters and Memos to and from Pastor and Staff Members)	Permanent
Deeds, Decree of Election, Blueprints	Permanent
General Ledger	Permanent
Marriage Packets	80 Years from the Date of Marriage
Minutes of Councils, Organizations, and Groups	Permanent
Paid Bills and Receipts	Current Fiscal Year and 5 Previous Years*
Parish Bulletins	Permanent
Parish Census	Permanent
Personnel Files	10 Years after Termination of Employee
Receptionist Logs/ Visitor Sign-in Sheets	Current Calendar Year and 3 Previous Calendar Years
Sacramental Registers (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Burials)	Permanent
State and Federal Tax-Related Documents	Current Calendar Year and 5 Previous Calendar Years
Tax Exemption Records (Certificates and Correspondence)	Permanent
Telephone Message Books/Pads	Current Calendar Year
Time Cards/Sheets	Current Calendar Year and 3 Previous Calendar Years

* Bill and receipts for capital expenditures should be kept for the life of the equipment.

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Beyond Routine Maintenance

Thunderstorms bringing high winds, hail, lightning, and heavy rain are a common occurrence most of the year in most parts of Louisiana. Although these storms are not as powerful as a hurricane or tropical storm, they still can cause significant damage. If such a storm is forecasted, use the following simple routine maintenance checklist to save the parish from sustaining additional unnecessary damage. (Maintenance checklist is also found in the Appendix section at the back of this manual – Form II-B.) *Hours of preparation can save days of cleanup and restoration.*

Shutting off Utilities

Depending upon the type of disaster, those responsible for preparing the facility for a disaster will need to know what utility lines should be turned off to prevent damage. Please use the following table to help determine when to shut down the following facility utilities. *Note that it is generally not considered necessary to shut off connections during storm conditions.* Under such conditions as a hurricane or tornado, it more likely that electrical power will fail over a wide area. Water and gas lines that are generally buried are not as vulnerable unless a building is damaged.

Type of Switch	Color Coding	Conditions Necessary for Shut-off
Water	Blue	• Severe Flooding • Severe Freezing
Electrical	Red	• Fire • Severe Flooding • Brownout • Shorting Connections • Flickering • Equipment Failures
Gas	Green	• Smell of Gas • Fire • Severe Flooding

Routine Maintenance Checklist

- Check roof and foundation of building annually. If roof is leaking, or foundation has problems, schedule for repair.
- Monitor use of candles and open flames. Assign someone to be in charge of knowing when these will be used.
- Test smoke detectors annually. If the alarms are battery operated, replace batteries.
- Inspect HVAC equipment annually. If HVAC needs maintenance, schedule for repair.
- Have an electrician inspect the wiring, power connection, and circuit boxes annually.
- Inspect water heaters annually.
- Provide backups and surge protection for all power sources.
- Clean out gutters and drains annually.
- Maintain grounds and fences.
- Trim all trees away from the rooflines annually.
- Check the security of canopies and covered walks on a regular basis.
- Check emergency supplies. Exchange food and water supplies every 6 months.
- Ensure vehicles have updated preventative maintenance.
- Ensure jumper cables are on hand.

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Beyond Routine Maintenance Checklist

- Close blinds and curtains to minimize damage from broken windows.
- If possible, position computers and other electronic equipment away from windows.
- File and secure all papers, books, and archival materials.
- Cover computers and furniture with heavy plastic to prevent wind and rain damage from broken windows. Elevate computer towers off floor if computers are located on ground floor.
- If high winds are anticipated, board vulnerable windows.
- If high winds are anticipated, remove outside furniture and store inside.
- If high winds are anticipated, remove satellite rooftop dishes.
- Check the integrity of storage sheds; close and lock the doors.
- Check the security of all doors.
- Check attic spaces and windows for leaking after every storm.
- Contact the diocese if the parish facility has sustained damage as a result of the storm. (See page III-1 “Reporting Property Damage”)

Emergency Supplies

It is important that a parish have adequate disaster supplies on hand before the threat of a storm occurs. The parish does not want to be involved in a pre-storm rush for flashlights, batteries, and food supplies in the event of a potential disaster. Even though a parish facility may not function as a shelter, an unexpected storm or a hazardous material incident could strand staff, students, and visitors at the parish for an extended period of time. The list below can be found on page II-9 and in the forms section (Form II-C) at the back of this manual.

Food

Make sure that enough food is on site to feed each staff member, student, and parish visitor. Canned foods are the easiest to stock due to their extended shelf life and easy storage. Be aware that they must be rotated out at least once annually. It is recommended that the supply be exchanged every 6 months and either eaten by the parish or donated to a food shelter.

Stock ready-to-eat canned meat, fruits, and vegetables. Also stock canned or dried juice mixes, powdered or canned milk, and high-energy foods (peanut butter, jelly, crackers, unsalted nuts, trail mixes, cereals, and rice). Do not forget comfort foods such as cookies, hard candies, instant coffee, and tea bags. Be sure to add a manual can opener, cooking and eating utensils, and basic food seasoning (salt, pepper, sugar, etc.).

Water

Plan to store enough water to supply each staff member, student, or parish visitor for 3 days. The standard recommendation is one gallon per person per day; this will provide adequate supplies for drinking, cooking, and washing. Date the water containers and replace them every 6 months. If there are not enough adequate water supplies, water may be purified by boiling for 5 – 10 minutes or by adding drops of unscented household bleach containing 5.25% hypochlorite. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends 16 drops of bleach per one gallon of water. Purification tablets or a filter system designed for backpackers also works well.

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Emergency Supplies Check List

Equipment for Facility Preparation and Clean-up

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of disaster plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Work gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic garbage bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Masks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sealable plastic bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Duct tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Small dehumidifiers/portable fans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/ extra flashlight batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet Vac |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic sheeting/ tarps | <input type="checkbox"/> Extension cords/50', 3 wire grounded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-way radios/extra batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Portable incandescent lamps/extra bulbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plywood (for boarding windows) | <input type="checkbox"/> Power saws/hand saws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ladders | <input type="checkbox"/> Shovels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer and nails | <input type="checkbox"/> Crowbar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mops | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelbarrow/cart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buckets ¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> Jumper cables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Cameras (standard, digital, or video) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant/cleaning compounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Battery operated radio/weather radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach (at least 3 gallons) | <input type="checkbox"/> Portable gas/electric stove |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice chests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof document/safety box |

Disaster Supplies for Persons Onsite

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/ sleeping bags | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun screen | <input type="checkbox"/> CPR kits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned goods ² | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper goods, plates, cups, plastic utensils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water ³ | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent |

¹ Be sure to have at least six 3-5 gallon buckets that can be used both to fill with water for flushing toilets and then for necessary cleaning.

² Be sure that the food is non-perishable and packaged or canned. Identify storage date and replace every 6 months.

³ Drinking water should be stored at the rate of one gallon of water per person per day. Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify storage date and replace every 6 months.

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SECTION THREE

Developing a Family Disaster Plan

The family is the domestic church and is integral to the life of the parish. As such, families should be as prepared as the parish to face a disaster. Parish staff live in two worlds, one with their employer (the parish) and the other with their families at home. If a disaster was to strike and the parish staff and parishioners' families were not prepared, the parish community would be unable to adequately respond to the broader community.

Three forms, found in the Appendix section, can assist with family preparedness. **(1) Form II-D** "Family Disaster Supply Kit" (see page II-14); **(2) Form II-E** "BISCO Family Emergency Plan" (distribute to family and friends to identify specifics and contact information); **(3) Form II-F** "Your Family Prepared for Disaster" (a family readiness guide produced by Catholic Charities USA that will prompt families to begin thinking about preparing themselves for disaster).

We encourage parish staff to distribute these materials to all families within the parish. The parish disaster committee could then host informal meetings with parishioners to review elements of a family disaster plan. The more involved and knowledgeable parishioners are in the preparation for a disaster, the better their ability to respond to such a disaster will be, resulting in less loss of life and property damage. Parishes are also encouraged to distribute the TRAC Storm Safe LA Handbook.

Preparing your Family for a Disaster

Unfortunately, disasters are familiar to many Louisianans. In the past few years, the Gulf Coast region has been impacted by the worst hurricanes and flooding in history, experienced damaging hail storms and tornadoes, seen space shuttle debris rain down across the state, undergone massive fires in factories and plants, and become aware of the threat of terrorism to the community as it grieved with a nation on September 11, 2001.

Having experienced these disasters, we have learned that we can take some simple steps to protect our families and ensure the safety of our children, while at the same time making it easier to recover if and when we have to go through a future disaster. This family readiness guide is designed to help you and your family be prepared for future disasters.

Find Out What Can Happen To Your Family

From experience, we all know that the Gulf Coast region is susceptible to natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Depending on where you live, however, could put you at an even greater risk for a disaster. Parishioners whose houses are located in floodplains are more concerned with flooding than those who live safely outside the floodplain. Take these steps to find out what could happen to your family:

- Contact your Local Emergency Management Office or your local American Red Cross Chapter to find out which disasters could affect you specifically.
- Determine what types of disasters are likely to happen near you and how to prepare for each.
- Identify what your community's warning sirens sound like and what to do if you hear them.

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Create a Family Emergency Plan

Use the following guidelines to teach children about disaster and to make them feel as if they are helping in disaster planning.

- Tell children that a disaster is something that could hurt people or cause damage.
- Explain that “sometimes nature provides too much of a good thing”, like fire, rain, and wind.
- Explain how important it is to make a Family Disaster Plan.
- Tell children there are many people who can help them in a disaster.
- Have a common plan in case family members are separated:
 - Choose a place to go outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot go home.
 - Choose someone out-of-town to be your family contact.
- Fill out the local emergency phone numbers and child identification cards.
- Keep emergency phone numbers by each phone.
- Teach children:
 - How to call for help (emergency numbers).
 - When to call each emergency number.
 - How to dial long distance.
 - How to memorize the names and numbers of local and out-of-state emergency contacts.
- Show everyone how and when to turn off the utilities.
 - Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main.
 - Keep a wrench near gas and water shut-off valves.
- Remember: if you turn off the gas, you will need a professional to turn it back on again.
- Do a home hazard hunt for items that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.
- Plan home escape routes – two from each room.
- Find safe places in your home for each type of disaster.
- Designate “rally points” where you and your family can meet if a disaster happens when you are all away from home.
- Have all adults take a Red Cross First Aid and CPR Class.

If you are told to evacuate, please take the following steps:

- In Louisiana, you may be asked to evacuate through a mandatory evacuation order issued by the local emergency management office. If the emergency management office recommends evacuating, take their advice and do so immediately. It could save your life.
- Listen to the radio, TV, or a NOAA weather radio for instructions from local officials. They will provide instructions on evacuation routes and shelter openings.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity if told to do so.
- Leave a note telling when you left and where you are going.
- Call your family contact to tell them where you are going.
- Make sure you have all of your disaster supplies (see checklist)
- Secure doors and garage doors from the inside.
- Fill up your car with gasoline.
- Use evacuation routes recommended by officials.

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Hurricanes and Evacuation

You will have more time to prepare for evacuation in the event of a hurricane than during a hazardous materials spill. However, it will take more time to prepare your home and your family for this type of evacuation. Here are some steps to take before evacuating.

- If you live in a mobile home, **LEAVE**.
- If it is recommended you evacuate, take the advice and **LEAVE**.
- Cover windows, skylights, and sliding doors with shutters/boards.
- Wrap up irreplaceable items (family photos, videos, etc.) in plastic and pack them so you can take them if you evacuate.
- Take your family records and documents. If your home is damaged in a disaster, you will have to prove home ownership to the American Red Cross and FEMA.
- Move furniture away from windows and cover with plastic.
- Move lawn furniture inside with other loose outdoor items.
- Remove TV and cable antennas and turbines from the roof.
- Secure dumpsters and land-docked boats by filling them with water.
- Leave as early as possible – being stuck on an evacuation route as a hurricane strikes is not only scary but also dangerous.
- Remember any special dietary needs of your family.
- For the elderly or disabled, take all medications, walkers, wheelchairs, extra oxygen or other special health care needs.
- Arrange for pets' safety. **DO NOT** leave pets tied up outside.
- Take bedding and essential clothing.
- Bring enough food/water/medicine to last for 3 days.

If you decide to stay at home during a disaster, do the following:

- Only stay at home if you have **NOT** been ordered to leave.
- Prepare your home as if you were evacuating (see Hurricanes and Evacuation Checklist).
- Stay in a large center room with few or no windows.
- If flooding occurs, move to higher floors. It is recommended that you bring non-perishable food item, bottled water, and an axe/hatchet with you.
- Keep all windows and doors closed tightly.
- Monitor radio for news and weather reports continuously.
- Turn off any propane tanks. Unplug all unnecessary appliances.
- Fill bathtub and large containers with water for sanitary purposes.
- Use flashlights instead of candles. Cook with canned heat; **DO NOT USE** charcoal or pressurized gas inside!
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- If you are in a multiple-story building and away from the water, go to the first or second floor and take refuge in the halls or interior rooms.
- Stay inside until “all clear” is announced. If seeking shelter during a hurricane, do not leave your home when the eye of the storm passes – eye wall winds, the strongest of the storm, can start back up with very little notice.
- Be alert for and ready to seek shelter from tornadoes, which can happen during a hurricane or a severe thunderstorm.

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Create a Family Disaster Supply Kit

Use kit if evacuating or staying put in a disaster!

When preparing for a disaster, use the “15 minute rule”. This rule states that any essential things you need to evacuate or prepare for a disaster should take you 15 minutes or less to get together. To make sure that items are readily accessible: (a) assemble the supplies in easy-to-carry containers like backpacks and duffle bags, (b) have important papers already packed in waterproof containers, and (c) have plastic sheeting easily available if needed. Use this checklist to prepare your family disaster supplies kit (a copy of this list also is found in the forms section (Form II-D) at the end of this manual).

Household Items

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Duct tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered flashlights | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof matches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash or travelers checks and change | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic storage containers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic food seasoning (salt/pepper) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper, pencils and pens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum foil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic sheeting/tarps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic tool kit (adjustable wrench, screwdrivers, hammer, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Map to follow evacuation routes/ find shelters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher (small ABC type) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum 3-day supply of nonperishable, packaged or canned food (e.g. canned or dried juice mixes, powdered or canned milk, peanut butter, jelly, crackers, unsalted nuts, trail mixes, cereals, rice, cookies, hard candies, instant coffee, tea bags) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum 3-day supply of bottled drinking water – one gallon of water per person per day. Don't forget water for pets. Store water in sealed unbreakable containers. Replace every 6 months. | |

Family Documents (stored in a water proof container):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat and work gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Bond/stock issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy shoes or work boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Wills/ living trusts | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets and sleeping bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance policies | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent and sun screen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passports/ visas | <input type="checkbox"/> Ownership documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Backup disks of computer information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain gear | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermal underwear | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records/ vaccination histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing & bedding (for each family member) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopies of all cards carried in wallet | <input type="checkbox"/> Irreplaceable photographs/ videotapes/ family heirlooms | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inventory of personal property for filing insurance claims. List everything and include receipts of big ticket items. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Videotape or photos of home(s)' contents to supplement your written inventory of your home. | | |

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Sanitation Supplies

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper, towelettes | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic garbage bags with ties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soap, liquid detergent | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bucket with tight lid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene items | <input type="checkbox"/> Unscented household bleach |

Baby Needs

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable diapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Bottles | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formula | <input type="checkbox"/> Powdered milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Changes of clothing |

Adult/Elderly Needs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walkers/ wheelchairs/canes | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't forget these odds and ends... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denture needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment – Books, Toys, and Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of prescription glasses/ contacts. | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of car keys. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra months' supply of prescription medicine refills (Store in easily accessible bag in medicine cabinet, rotate pills as prescription is refilled). | |

Storing Your Kit

Choose a cool, dark location in which to store your kit (i.e. a closet or “safety corner” in the garage). If you live in an apartment or have limited space, be innovative. Other possible storage locations include under stairways or in a large box or plastic tub that can be covered with a tablecloth and used as an end table.

Layer and Monitor Your Supplies

Layer supplies and keep them together in a container such as a plastic garbage can with wheels. Check the items every 6 months for expiration dates, changes in your children's clothing sizes and weather requirements. A good way to remember to inspect your kit is to do it when you set your clocks back and change your smoke detector batteries.

Use What You Already Have

Use what you already have and prepare as if you are going camping for 3 days in the mountains with no facilities. If you are a camper, you have a head start: camping supplies, tent, camp stove, and water jugs can double as emergency supplies.

Tips for Storing and Using Water

Purify water by boiling it for 5 –10 minutes or by adding drops of unscented household bleach containing 5.25% hypochlorite. FEMA recommends using 16 drops of bleach per one (1) gallon of water. Purification tablets or a filter system designed for backpackers also work well. Store water in plastic three-liter soda bottles instead of plastic milk-type jugs. Milk jugs will break down over time, while soda bottles last considerably longer. Consider freezing water so it will last until needed. Frozen water also can be used for non-emergency situations like camping, fishing, hunting, etc. However, don't forget to replace the water jugs when you get home.

CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING

Practice and Maintain Your Plan

Without practice and maintenance, your family risks forgetting its disaster plan, and your disaster supplies will expire or be ruined. Use this schedule to remember to practice and maintain your plan.

Every Month

Test your smoke alarms.

Every 6 Months

Go over family disaster plan and do escape drills. Quiz children. Replace stored food and water. Make sure to rotate clothing according to the season.

Every Year

Wash blanket/clothing supplies. Replace batteries in smoke alarms.

CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING

SECTION FOUR

Deciding Whether to Evacuate and When to Leave

Hurricane Watch – Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the watch, usually within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning – Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the Warning, usually within 24 hours.

Louisiana Phased Evacuation – **During a threat of a hurricane, a phased evacuation will be based on geographic location and time in which winds are forecasted to reach the affected areas.**

Phase I – 50 hours before the onset of tropical storm winds – evacuation will include areas south of the Intracoastal Waterway with no levee protection that are vulnerable to Category 1 and 2 storms. This includes South Terrebonne, South Lafourche and Grand Isle.

Phase II – 40 hours before the onset of tropical storm winds – evacuation will include areas south of the Mississippi River which are levee protected but remain vulnerable to Category 2 or higher storms. This includes Houma, Thibodaux and Morgan City areas.

Pre-Disaster Procedure

- I. All Diocesan churches/schools/offices implement appropriate pre-disaster planning steps set up by your individual location plan and the Diocesan Disaster Plan, as it pertains to your location.
- II. Make appropriate emergency contact calls (to your pastor, principal, supervisor or the Bishop as appropriate) to provide information on your whereabouts in the event you evacuate. Ensure accurate information regarding host dioceses, telephone numbers, etc.
- III. Follow the advice of local civil authorities and the Louisiana State Police regarding evacuation.
 - a. **Mandatory Evacuation** – If a mandatory evacuation is ordered, all personnel should leave the affected area, the parish/school/institution should close and all religious services and other activities should stop until the disaster is over.
 - b. **Voluntary Phased Evacuation** – During a threat of a hurricane, a phased evacuation will be based on geographic location and time in which tropical storm winds are forecasted to reach the affected areas. All Diocesan personnel should leave the affected area if you perceive a danger to life. *Only you can make this decision.*

Diocesan Disaster Leave Policy

- I. If a Diocesan employee chooses to leave because they perceive a danger and a mandatory evacuation has not been called and Diocesan offices remain open, permission will be granted to leave; however, any time taken under such circumstances is considered vacation time.
- II. If a Diocesan employee chooses to remain out of the area after a disaster and parishes/schools/institutions have re-opened, any time away from the job is considered vacation time.
- III. When parishes/schools/institutions close, vacation time will not be charged.

If you have questions or need additional information about evacuation plans or evacuation routes please refer to the Louisiana State Police at 1-800-469-4828 or www.lsp.org/lcadeg.html.

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