CHAPTER II
Preparedness—Planning for People, Parish and Plant

The information in this chapter will assist the reader with the following activities:

1. Creating an accurate “profile” of the parish by:
   - Becoming familiar with the blueprints of the parish property.
   - Taking inventory of the physical contents of the parish.
   - Documenting daily parish activity.
   - Creating and updating accurate staff rosters to develop a “calling tree.”
   - Identifying parishioners who may need assistance during a disaster.
   - Identifying which types of disasters may affect the parish.

2. Protecting church property by:
   - Following routine checklists to address maintenance issues.
   - Following the “Beyond Routine” maintenance checklist during severe storms.
   - Storing and protecting parish records.
   - Taking inventory of and protecting hardware and software.
   - Collecting emergency supplies.

3. Helping parishioners prepare for disasters by providing educational materials that will aid in the assistance of a family disaster plan.
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 a 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 beginning 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. A “Room Survey” form (Form 2-A) can be found below and in the Forms section at the back of this manual.

Analyze the Parish Facility

Begin by locating blueprints or drawings made of the facility. A copy of the blueprints should be located at the parish. These drawings will show the boundaries of the property and layout of all the buildings including internal rooms and corridors. An example of a parish blueprint is found in figure 1. If you have difficulty locating these documents, contact the Diocesan Construction Department at (713) 659-5461 extension 456.

Once the committee locates the drawings, make several copies of the blueprints. Mark and number all rooms and building exits. Using a copy of this blueprint along with the attached room survey, move from room-to-room, taking an inventory of all equipment,
furniture, and data, and noting emergency-related items (i.e. exits, smoke detectors, windows, etc.).

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.

Note: A detailed inventory on computer and electronics will be taken as part of the Business Recovery Plan in Section Two.
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”.
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS- PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

Room¹ Survey

Room: _______________________________________________________________________

Where is the nearest emergency exit for this room? _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Is there an outside door to this room? If so, is it kept locked during work hours?

____________________________________________________________________________

Examine the windows. Could the windows provide an emergency exit if possible?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Is there fire suppression equipment in this room? If yes, check the equipment for current inspection tags. Note the equipment’s location on the plans. If the equipment needs an inspection, keep a list to arrange for inspection after the walkthrough. If not, locate the nearest equipment.

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Where is the nearest fire alarm to this room? _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Where is the nearest exit and route posting to this room? Is the posting current and clearly labeled? _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

¹ Make copies of this form for each room, including the hallways.
Could this room be labeled as a “safe room” based on the ability to shut off all outside airflow?

List the contents of this room:

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

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Electronics Equipment: (List number of items in each room. A detailed inventory should be taken later).

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Furniture

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Other Items (Include Archival² Records)

Answer the following questions based on the walk-through and inventory of the facility.

EXAMINE THE EXITS AND EXIT ROUTES. ARE ALL THE EXIT ROUTES MARKED ON THE DRAWINGS? IF NOT, MARK THEM NOW.

ARE THE ROOM LOCATIONS EXACTLY AS MARKED?

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY MODIFICATIONS TO THE FACILITY THAT ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THE PLANS?

² Archival records include audit reports, bank statements, collection envelopes, construction records, contribution records, correspondence files, deeds and blueprints, log of destroyed records, general ledger, marriage packets, minutes of meetings, paid bills and receipts, parish bulletins, parish census information, personnel files, receptionist logs, sacramental registers (first communion, confirmation, marriage, and burials) state and federal tax-related documents, tax exemption records, telephone message books and pads, and time cards and time sheets.
HAS LANDSCAPING CHANGED ANY OF THE EXITS TO THE BUILDINGS? ARE THERE ANY NEW PLAYING FIELDS THAT DO NOT APPEAR ON THE DRAWINGS?

NOTE THE DOORS ON THE DRAWINGS. ARE ANY OF THE DOORS KEPT LOCKED DURING THE DAY?

IS THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM CONNECTED TO THE MAIN WATER SUPPLY?

HOW WILL SHUTTING DOWN THE WATER SYSTEM IMPACT THE SPRINKLERS?

IS THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM LOCAL ONLY, OR CONNECTED TO A FIRE COMPANY OR ALARM COMPANY?

IS THERE AN INDEPENDENT POWER SOURCE FOR THE ALARM SYSTEM SO THAT SHUTTING DOWN THE POWER WILL NOT SHUT DOWN THE ALARMS?
IS THERE AN INDEPENDENT POWER SOURCE FOR TELEPHONE AND INTERCOM SYSTEMS?

HOW WILL SHUTTING DOWN THE CENTRAL POWER IMPACT COMMUNICATIONS? DETERMINE ALTERNATIVES FOR OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATING IF NECESSARY.

IF THE COMMITTEE HAS ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BUILDING PLANS, NOTE THEM HERE AND CALL THE RISK MANAGEMENT OFFICE AT (713) 659-5461 EXTENSION 225.
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. A sample form is provided below and in the Forms section (Form 2-B) at the back of this manual. 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 forethought 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 conference 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 AMOUNTS OF PEOPLE. (Include, but do not limit to the gymnasium, auditorium, sanctuary, parish dining hall, etc.).

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
## CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS- PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

### MASTER SCHEDULE FOR:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Age Group&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th># Staff/ Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEEKLY TOTALS</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>3</sup> Age Groups: SEN (65+), AD (18-64), HS (14-17), JR (11-13), EL (5-10), YC (4-Infant)
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. The chart should look similar to what is shown in Figure 2 below. 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.
Volunteers

Like staff, 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.

Creating A Talent Bank Of Volunteers

Each year, the disaster coordinator should profile the parish to identify and gather a pool of volunteers who could aid in time of disaster. Many faith-based communities have done this by using a “talent bank survey”. Below is an exercise to help you develop your own talent bank survey.

Pastors play an important role in determining how best to involve parishioners in completing the survey. They may choose to discuss the Disaster Committee’s efforts to the parish, then distribute the survey in the bulletin and provide drop-off boxes. Or, they may decide to distribute them in a more intimate setting, such as committee meetings, activities, or Bible Study classes during the week. It is important to remind parishioners now that completing the form does not commit them to respond to every disaster.

Discuss how the committee will organize and track this information.

**DETERMINE WAYS TO ACQUIRE A HIGHER RETURN RATE ON THE SURVEY.**

**HOW OFTEN WILL THE PARISH UPDATE THIS INFORMATION?**
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SHOULD THE PARISH CREATE AND MAINTAIN A DATABASE THAT WOULD STORE THE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION?

Catholic Charities requests that the Parish Volunteer Coordinator submit talent bank survey results to Catholic Charities, which will then maintain and update annually a Diocesan-level database of disaster volunteer information. This step is extremely important in order to facilitate (a) information sharing about volunteers with other parishes and (b) a collaborative effort within the Diocesan Catholic Community that will help the community during times of major disaster.

Do not reinvent the wheel. Review existing parish volunteer teams (i.e. fix-it friends), and utilize their expertise where needed.

**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 assistants
- Shelter assistants
- Cooks and food distributors
- Childcare
- Emergency housing (identify homes for victims and volunteers)
- Clean-up
- Home visitors for at-risk parishioners
- Spiritual support
- First Aid

**Professional teams**
- Counselors
- Construction
- Medical
- Legal
- Caseworkers

**HOW WILL YOUR COMMITTEE MOBILIZE THE POOL OF VOLUNTEERS?**

**WHO IS DESIGNATED AS VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AT THE PARISH LEVEL?**

**HOW WILL YOU SCREEN VOLUNTEERS FOLLOWING THE DISASTER? (SEE SAMPLE ON-SITE REGISTRATION FORM) WILL YOU COLLECT A RELEASE FORM FOR EACH VOLUNTEER? (SEE SAMPLE FORM)**
Catholic Charities will maintain a CENTRAL volunteer hotline following a disaster. Parish Committee Volunteer Coordinators can update volunteer TALENTS AND NEEDS by contacting the hotline at 1-866-523-2900/

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.

Eucharistic ministers can provide a list of those who receive Communion at home and in nearby nursing facilities. Social Concerns offices and parish volunteers also may know which persons have medical disabilities that result in their reliance on electricity for homebound medical treatments – these people 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 is found below and in the Forms section (Form 2-C) at the back of this manual.
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SPECIAL NEEDS PARISHIONERS

Parish Name: ____________________________ Diocese of Galveston-Houston

Name: ____________________________ Spouse: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

List names and ages of additional members:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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 dog(s)? □ Yes How many? __ Cats? □ Yes How many? __
(Note: Pets are NOT allowed in shelters. Make evacuation-shelter arrangements for them
BEFORE a disaster strikes.)
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

CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS – PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

Profiling the Community

Once the parish has examined its facility, become familiar with its routine schedule, updated its phone tree, and identified vulnerable parishioners, it is time to identify which disasters could affect the parish due to its location. Locate a map and mark off the parish boundaries. Use this map as a tool in determining risks that certain disasters may pose in your community.

IDENTIFY THE PARISH BOUNDARIES. HOW MANY SQUARE MILES DOES THE PARISH INCLUDE?

Look back over the past 10 years and make a list of all disasters or emergency situations that have impacted the community. Do not limit the list to natural disasters; non-natural disasters such as chemical leaks can be just as disruptive to the community.

Helpful Websites

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website (www.fema.gov) lists all federally declared disasters and emergencies from 1992 to the present. Click on FEMA Region VI's website to obtain regionally based information.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management's site (http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/) provides a list of current disasters. Additionally the site provides links to county emergency management offices and to Local Emergency Planning Committees' (LEPCs) websites. The latter groups monitor, plan, and inform the public of hazardous materials incidents.

Dodson and Associates, Inc. provides floodplains maps online for Harris County, Fort Bend County, and Montgomery County at www.efloodmap.com. These maps are useful in determining if the parish is located in the floodplain. Maps also are available at public libraries or may be purchased at the FEMA flood maps store (www.fema.gov). The Diocese may be able to help you acquire maps if you live outside of these counties. Call the Risk Management Office at (713) 659-5461, extension 225 for more information.

The National Weather Service Forecast Office for Galveston-Houston (http://www.srh.noaa.gov/hgx) provides Hurricane Risk Maps by county for Southeast Texas. Follow the link to “Tropical” located in the left side bar under the subcategory “Forecasts” and then click on “Evacuation Maps of Southeast Texas”.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a simple search engine that lists facilities regulated by the agency. Go to the main EPA website (www.epa.gov) and click on the link “Where You Live” and search the various databases to get a list of hazardous materials plants near the parish.
LIST THE DISASTERS THAT AFFECTED THE PARISH OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS. (For assistance, use FEMA’s and Texas Division of Emergency Management’s websites noted above).

Other disasters may have affected the community prior to the past decade; additionally, the community may be vulnerable to other types of disasters that fortunately have not yet occurred (ex. terrorism). Disasters that the parish may be susceptible to include hurricanes, tornadoes, severe weather events (thunderstorms, lightning, hail, or downbursts), fire (either structural or brush fire), kidnappings, hostage situations, civil disturbances, vandalism, bomb threats, or hazardous materials incidents (spill, leak, explosion, or overturned hazmat vehicles).

LIST ANY ADDITIONAL DISASTERS THAT THE PARISH SHOULD FOCUS ON.
In the Galveston-Houston region, floods caused by hurricanes, tropical storms, or even prolonged rain pose the greatest natural disaster threat to the community. Determine if the parish is in the floodplain or is vulnerable to storm surge from a hurricane.

**Reading a Floodplain Map**

If the parish is located in areas of gray-dark gray color, the parish is located in the floodplain.

The darkest areas, listed as Zones A, AE, AO, A99, V, and VE indicate that the parish is located in the 100-year floodplain. This means that the parish stands a 0.1 percent chance of significant flooding each year.

The hatched area, dark gray in color, indicates that the structures are in the floodway.

The light gray area listed as Zone X indicates that the parish is located in the 500-year-flood plain. Which means that the parish stands a 0.05% chance of significant flooding each year.
IS THE PARISH LOCATED WITHIN THE 100-YEAR OR 500-YEAR FLOODPLAIN?

Figure 3: An example of a Storm Surge Map

IS THE PARISH LOCATED IN A HURRICANE EVACUATION ZONE FOR STORM SURGE? (Use Storm Surge maps provided on the National Weather Service Forecast's web site (http://www.srh.noaa.gov/hgx). A description of this website is found on page 50). The map above is an example of what a storm surge map looks like.
Chemical and Hazardous Materials also are of concern in our diocesan community due to the large concentration of industrial facilities in the area.

**LIST THE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS FACILITIES FOUND IN OR NEAR THE PARISH BOUNDARIES.** (Use the EPA’s website [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) to identify these facilities. A description of the website is found on page 50.

________________________________________________________

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The disaster planning committee has now become familiar with the parish facility, determined the daily activities taking place in the parish, updated its staff phone tree, determined who its vulnerable parishioners are, and identified the risks posed by the environment. Now, the task of planning for both general and specific disasters can begin.
SECTION TWO
Protecting Church Property

SECTION KEY

- Routine Maintenance
- Protecting Computer Hardware and Software
- Beyond Routine Maintenance
- Emergency Supplies Checklist

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 which, in effect, creates 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 (Forms 2-L and 2-M) 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 at (713) 659-5461 extension 282

The table below provides a schedule of how long records should be kept (a copy of this table can be found in the Forms section (Form 2-D) at the back of this manual):
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Record</th>
<th>Length of Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit Reports</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Statements, Cancelled Checks</td>
<td>Current Fiscal Year and 5 Previous Fiscal Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Envelopes</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year and 2 Previous Calendar Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Records (Contracts, Correspondence, Specifications, Drawings, etc.)</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution Records</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year and 5 Previous Calendar Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence Files (Letters and Memos to and from Pastor and Staff Members)</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeds, Decree of Erection, Blueprints</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Ledger</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Packets</td>
<td>80 Years from the Date of Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes of Councils, Organizations, and Groups</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Bills and Receipts</td>
<td>Current Fiscal Year and 5 Previous Fiscal Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Bulletins</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Census</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Files</td>
<td>10 Years after Termination of Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptionist Logs/ Visitor Sign-in Sheets</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year and 3 Previous Calendar Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramental Registers (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Burials)</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Federal Tax-Related Documents</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year and 5 Previous Calendar Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Exemption Records (Certificates and Correspondence)</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Message Books/Pads</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Cards/Sheets</td>
<td>Current Calendar Year and 3 Previous Calendar Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Bill and Receipts for Capital expenditures should be kept for the life of the equipment.
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Protecting Computer Hardware and Software

More and more, electronic information has become a vital part of our organizations. As such, there are various steps parishes should take in order to protect these resources in the event of a disaster. In this section, some of the major steps that should be taken as we prepare ourselves to recover from a disaster are identified. Copies of these forms are included below and in the Forms section at the back of this manual.

1. Inventory and document systems
   a. Maintain an Inventory of Assets (Form 2-E) so losses can be documented for insurance.
   b. Identify the functions performed by your computer systems and develop procedures and practices to accomplish those tasks manually. (For example: publishing the parish bulletin and newsletters, maintaining pastoral records)
   c. Complete a Network Configuration Diagram (Form 2-F).

   Draw a diagram of how your network is connected. Include any routers, hubs, switches, servers, workstations and printers.

   ![Diagram of network configuration]

   d. Document your hardware configurations.

   Make a Hardware Configuration List (Form 2-G) that includes each piece of hardware. Keep a file on each of these pieces of equipment that includes any special settings or software drivers required.
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS- PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

e. Document your software applications.

Create a **Software Applications List** (Form 2-H) that includes all the software programs you use along with their associated licenses, if applicable. Make a copy of this software and store these copies at an off-site location. Be sure to treat your software licenses as you would any titles or deeds.

f. Identify hardware and software critical to the recovery of the administrative functions of the organization. (i.e. publishing the parish bulletin and newsletters, maintaining pastoral records, etc.).

From the lists prepared in Items 1d and 1e, identify which hardware and software is critical and needed to the recovery of the administrative functions of the organization.

g. Develop a **Recovery Priority List** (Form 2-I).

Using the information gathered in Items 1b and 1f, prioritize the order in which hardware and software elements will be recovered.

2. **Backups**

Perform daily data backups as well as separate weekly and monthly backups. These backups also should be stored at a secure off-site facility. Use a **Backup Schedule Chart** (Form 2-J) to track your activities.

3. **Backup Processing Facilities**

Develop a plan for utilizing other computer systems as a backup for critical processing needs. Consider making vendor agreements and teaming with other parishes (Back-up Schedule Chart Form 2-J).

4. **Contact List**

a. Keep an up-to-date list of support personnel and vendors (Form 2-K).

b. Identify and line up alternate vendors for essential supplies and equipment.

5. **Security**

Physically secure your computer assets in areas that can be locked and restrict network and PC access with the use of passwords. Additionally, it is very important to obtain up-to-date virus software patterns from your anti-virus software vendor.
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS- PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

6. Environment

   a. Consider where business equipment is located, i.e., near a hot water tank or pipes that could burst or on the floor where things could fall on it.
   b. Use UL listed surge protectors and battery backup systems for all computers.

7. Other

   a. When there is a change in hardware, software, or a process that might impact the business of the institution, make sure the plan is reviewed and updated immediately.
   b. If vital records are not computerized, ensure that either copies or originals, as appropriate, are kept offsite (i.e., in a safe depository).
### INVENTORY OF ASSETS

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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### HARDWARE CONFIGURATIONS

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Processor Speed</th>
<th>Amount of Memory</th>
<th>Hard Drive Size</th>
<th>Operating System</th>
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## Software Applications

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2003 the Diocese of Galveston-Houston & Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston

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2003 the Diocese of Galveston-Houston & Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston
# Vendor Contact List For Goods and Services

*Be sure to include alternate vendors for the goods and services you need.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Extension</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Address</th>
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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 the Houston-Galveston region. 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 checklist to save the parish from sustaining additional unnecessary damage (checklist also found in the List of Resources section at the back of this manual).

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 shutdown 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Switch</th>
<th>Color Coding</th>
<th>Conditions Necessary for Shut-off</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Water</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>• Severe Flooding&lt;br&gt;• Severe Freezing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>• Fire&lt;br&gt;• Severe Flooding&lt;br&gt;• Brownout&lt;br&gt;• Shorting Connections&lt;br&gt;• Flickering&lt;br&gt;• Equipment Failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>• Smell of Gas&lt;br&gt;• Fire&lt;br&gt;• Severe Flooding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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**.

- [ ] _________________ Insure vehicles have updated preventative maintenance.

- [ ] _________________ Insure jumper cables are on hand.
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 and fax in quick response form if the Parish facility has sustained damaged as a result of the storm.
Emergency Supplies Checklist

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 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 in the Forms section (Form 2-N) at the back of this manual.

**Food**

Make sure that enough food is onsite 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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5 A camper’s stove or other portable stove is a good purchase for cooking and boiling water.
## Emergency Supplies List

### Equipment for Facility Preparation and Clean-up

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

### Disaster Supplies for Persons Onsite

- Blankets/sleeping bags
- Sun screen
- Canned goods
- Water
- First aid kits
- CPR kits
- Paper goods, plates, cups, plastic utensils
- Insect repellant

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6 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.

7 Be sure that the food is non-perishable and packaged or canned. 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.

Attached are two different preparedness guides that can be distributed to families. The first is a family readiness guide produced by Catholic Charities USA that will prompt families to begin thinking about preparing themselves for disaster. The second is a comprehensive guide produced by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, which provides more detailed planning for families. This guide also provides basic facts about specific disasters.

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.

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8 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.
Preparing your Family for a Disaster

Unfortunately, disasters are familiar to many Texans. In the past few years, the Southeast region has been impacted by the worst flooding in recent 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 Galveston- Houston region is susceptible to natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Depending on where you live, however, could put you at even a greater risk for a disaster. For instance, parishioners living in Deer Park are more concerned about a hazardous materials leak from one of the oil refineries than are parishioners in Katy. 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.
Create a Family Emergency Plan

Hold a family meeting: Keep it simple and work as a team!

It is important to warn children - without overly alarming them - about potential disasters. 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.
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS – PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

- 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 have to evacuate...
If you are told to evacuate, please take the following steps:
- In Texas, there is no such thing as a mandatory evacuation, however 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.

Hurricanes and Evacuation

You will have more time to prepare for evacuation in the event of a hurricane than during 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 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 stay at home...
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 windows.
- If flooding occurs, move to higher floors.
- Keep all windows and doors closed tightly.
- Monitor radio for news and weather reports continuously.
- Turn off propane tank. 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 floors and take refuge in the halls or interior doors.
- 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 to 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.
Create a 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 essential thing 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 2-O) at the end of this manual).

**Household Items**
- Battery-powered radio
- Battery-powered flashlights
- Extra batteries
- Cash or Travelers Checks and change
- Map to follow evacuation routes/ find shelters
- 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)
- Basic food seasoning (salt/pepper)
- Manual can opener
- Paper plates
- Cups
- 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.
- First Aid Kit
- Fire extinguisher (small ABC type)
- Duct tape
- Waterproof matches
- Sewing kit
- Plastic storage containers
- Paper, pencils and pens
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic sheeting/tarps
- Basic tool kit (adjustable wrench, screwdrivers, hammer, etc.)
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Family Documents (stored in a water-proof container):
- Birth Certificates
- Marriage Certificates
- Death Certificates
- Ownership Documents
- Insurance Policies
- Passports/ Visas
- Social Security Cards
- Bond/Stock Issues
- Wills/ Living Trusts
- Medical Records/ Children’s vaccinations histories
- Backup disks of computer information
- Irreplaceable photographs/ videotapes/family heirlooms
- Inventory of personal property for filing insurance claims. List everything and include receipts of big-ticket items.
- Videotape or photos of home(s) contents to supplement your written inventory of your home.

- Clothing and Bedding (For Each Family Member)
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear
- Blankets and sleeping bags
- Hat and work gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent and sun screen
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS – PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

Sanitation Supplies
- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags with ties
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Unscented household bleach

Baby Needs
- Disposable Diapers
- Formula
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications
- Changes of clothing

Adult/Elderly Needs
- Extra Months’ supply of prescription medicine refills (Store in easily accessible bag in medicine cabinet, rotate pills as prescription is refilled).
- Walkers/ Wheelchairs/canes
- Denture Needs
- Extra set of prescription glasses/ contacts.
- Don’t forget these odds and ends...
- Entertainment – Books, Toys, and Games
- Extra set of car keys.

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 breakdown 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 – PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

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.
Disaster Facts – Hurricanes and Tropical Storms

A **Tropical Storm** sustains winds of 39 to 73 miles per hour; a storm is assigned a name when it reaches tropical storm strength.

A **Hurricane** sustains winds of 74 miles per hour or more and is accompanied by heavy rain. Hurricanes are designated from categories one through five as they increase in wind strength and the height of expected storm surge. Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992 were both Category 4 hurricanes.

A **Storm Surge** is a rise in tide caused by a hurricane as it moves over or near the coastline, often with breaking waves on top. A storm surge can cause devastating damage: entire buildings can collapse once the storm surge wipes away the foundation; millions of fish are killed by the crash of the storm surge against the coastline, and many people drown in the strong current produced by the storm surge.

A **Hurricane Watch** is issued when hurricane conditions pose a possible threat to an area within 36 hours.

A **Hurricane Warning** is issued when a hurricane is expected to strike within 24 hours.

The **Hurricane Belt** is described as the area along the Atlantic coast from Virginia south to Key West, Florida, and along the Gulf of Mexico from Key West to and including Texas.

**Tornadoes** often accompany hurricanes.

Hurricanes spiral counterclockwise around a relatively calm center known as the **eye of the storm**. Hurricane-force winds and torrential rains border this calm. Additional winds, rains, etc. will follow the calming down of the storm (eye of the storm). **Remain indoors until experts advise that the storm has passed.**

Hurricane winds do much damage, but huge waves can raise tides 15 feet or more. These waves often come rapidly and produce flooding and flash floods. **Drowning is the greatest cause of hurricane deaths.**

**Vertical evacuation (moving to second or third floor) is not safe.** Storm surges can wipe out the foundation and/or the first floor, destroying the upper floors in the process.
CHAPTER II: PREPAREDNESS – PLANNING FOR PEOPLE, PARISH, AND PLANT

**Board windows up instead of taping them.** Broken windows can allow hurricane winds to enter a building and blow off the roof. Boarding up windows where strong winds are expected is a safer method to protect the roof, the interior, and the overall structure of the property and prevent flying glass.

Officials may advise that all utilities be shut off to homes and other property. **Locate shut off valve(s) in advance and know how to use them safely.** Write down step-by-step instructions and make sure more than one person knows how to use them.

When storm conditions arrive, **secure all outside items** such as lawn furniture, children’s toys, etc. so they do not become airborne.

**Important records** such as tax documents, insurance policies, social security cards, birth certificates, passports, bonds, stocks, wills, and medical information **should be placed in a waterproof container and stored in a safe place.**

If sheltering at home, **stay in the room or area most central to the home,** preferably without windows.

**Take pictures** of your home and property before a storm hits. If your property is damaged, take more photos after the storm. Develop 2 sets and give one set to your insurance company. Keep one set and the negatives in a safe location. Do not begin clean up until an insurance agent has inspected the damage.

When flooding accompanies a hurricane, **snakes and rodents can become a hazard.** Stray dogs and cats can cause problems also. Pets can become hostile once they have endured the effects of a serious storm.

**Disruption of garbage and trash pickup can pose a problem.** Food that cannot be used or saved after a storm should be buried rather than left outside to attract animals.

To **avoid accidents** in the home after a storm, clean up a room where small children can stay safely.

**Looting can also be a problem after a storm.** Work with your neighbors and friends and consider taking turns standing watch if looting becomes a problem.

Check with local civil defense or emergency management authorities before using any water after a flood. **Water sources may have been contaminated.**
Disaster Facts – Floods and Flash Floods

Flash floods occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, a dam or levee failure, or a sudden release of water held by an ice jam. Flash floods can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and scour out new channels. Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more. Flash flood-producing rains can also trigger catastrophic mudslides. You will not always have a warning that these deadly, sudden floods are coming. Most flood deaths are due to flash floods.

Floods claim an average of 263 lives every year. Flood waters only one foot deep can sweep you off your feet and a depth of 2 feet will float your car. Never try to walk, swim, or drive through such swift water. If you come upon floodwaters, stop! Turn around and go another way.

Officials will forecast flood(s) when the rainfall is heavy enough to cause rivers to overflow their banks.

Property damage and/or loss due to flood is not covered by regular homeowners’ insurance policies. Flood insurance is available through the government’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Your insurance agent should have further information about how to insure your property against flood damage, or call the NFIP at 1.800.427.4661.

Do not stack sandbags directly against the outside walls of a building. Pressure against the foundation can cause severe damage. Stack sandbags away from building walls to prevent floodwaters from reaching your home or business.

To avoid structural damage to the foundation of your home if you have a basement, some experts recommend permitting flood waters to flow into the basement or to flood the basement yourself if you are sure it will be flooded anyway. This equalizes the water pressure on the outside of the walls. Basements should be pumped out gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.

Be careful of electrical and gas utilities. Have experts inspect and reconnect utilities after a flood.

Check with local civil defense or emergency management authorities before using any water after a flood. Water sources may have been contaminated.
Hidden Dangers of Areas Flooded by Storm

Do not walk through flowing water - Drowning is a major cause of flood deaths. Use a pole or stick to make sure the ground continues in front of you.

Do not drive through a flooded area - If you come upon a road barrier, turn around and go the other way; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires - Electrocution is also a major killer in floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines.

Turn off your electricity when you return home - Some appliances, such as TV sets, can shock you even after they have been unplugged. Don’t use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried by a professional.

Watch for animals – especially snakes - Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a stick to poke and turn items over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step - After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles and nails, and may be slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks - Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don’t smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you are sure that the gas has been turned off and the area aired out.

Carbon monoxide exhaust kills - Use generators, gas powered machines, and camping stoves outdoors. Cook with charcoal outdoors only.

Clean everything that got wet - Floodwaters have picked up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories and storage buildings. Spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicine are health hazards. When in doubt, throw them out.
Disaster Facts - Tornadoes

Tornadoes often accompany hurricanes, and while they can strike at any time of the year, they occur most frequently during April, May and June. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and over 1,500 injuries. A tornado is defined as a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.

What causes tornadoes?

Thunderstorms develop in warm, moist air in advance of eastward-moving cold fronts. These thunderstorms often produce large hail, strong winds, and tornadoes. Tornadoes occasionally accompany tropical storms and hurricanes that move over land. Tornadoes are most common to the right and ahead of the path of the storm center as it comes onshore.

Tornadoes may form during the early stages of rapidly developing thunderstorms. Tornadoes may appear transparent until dust and debris are picked up. Occasionally, two or more tornadoes may occur at the same time.

A tornado watch is issued when conditions are favorable for tornadoes to develop (often during severe thunderstorms). This does not mean that a tornado will occur, just that it is possible.

A tornado warning means that a tornado has actually been sighted on the ground or a funnel cloud has been spotted.

The safest place to be during a tornado is in a basement, under something sturdy like a workbench or strong table. If there is no basement, go to a small interior room in the middle of the house, like a closet or a bathroom. Stay away from outside walls and windows. Never seek shelter in a car.

Opening windows to equalize pressure during a tornado is ineffective in reducing damage, and adds to the risk of flying glass.

Hail often accompanies severe storms, so move cars inside a garage or carport if possible to avoid damage. Keep your car keys and house keys on your person.

If time permits, move lawn furniture and yard equipment inside so that they do not become airborne.
Environmental Clues - Tornadoes

**Look out for:**
- A dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- A loud roaring sound – similar to a freight train
- Some tornadoes appear as a visible funnel extending only partially to the ground. Look for signs of debris below the visible funnel.
- Some tornadoes are clearly visible while others are obscured by rain or nearby low-hanging clouds.

**Other Hazards**
- Flash floods
- Lightning
- Damaging straight-line winds
- Large hail – can reach the size of a grapefruit

**Tornado Myths and Facts**

*Myth:* Areas near rivers, lakes and mountains are safe from tornadoes.

*Fact:* No place is safe from tornadoes.

*Myth:* The low pressure with a tornado causes buildings to “explode” as the tornado passes overhead.

*Fact:* Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.

*Myth:* Windows should be opened before a tornado approaches to equalize pressure and minimize damage.

*Fact:* Opening windows allows damaging winds to enter the structure. Leave the windows alone; instead, immediately go to a safe place.
Disaster Facts - Fires

From 1900-1990 more Americans died in fires than were killed in all of the wars during that same period. Each year, fire kills more Americans than all natural disasters combined. Residential fires are the leading cause of accidental death for children under the age of five. (Source: “Are You Ready”, FEMA publication).

Fire spreads quickly; you may not have time to grab valuables or make a phone call. In two minutes a room can become life threatening. In five minutes your house can be engulfed in flames.

A fire’s heat and smoke are more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear and scorch your lungs.

Fire produces poisonous gases that can cause you to be disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep.

Most injuries due to fire come from smoke inhalation rather than burns.

Working smoke detectors double your chance of surviving a fire. Experts advise that you clean smoke detectors regularly and replace batteries once a year.

Plan two escape routes from every room in the house. Visibility is severely limited during a fire. Practice escaping from rooms with your eyes closed or blindfolded, since during a fire, the house will be filled with thick, black smoke. Pick a place outside your home for the family to meet after escape.

Windows should be easily opened, not nailed or painted shut. If you have security bars on windows, have a fire safety opening feature so they can be easily opened from inside.