

**Hamburg Public Library**

**Emergency Preparedness  
&  
Disaster Plan**

Prepared by:

**Hamburg Library**  
Hamburg, New York

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# Part I: Emergency Preparedness

## General Information

### Purpose

The purpose of this Manual is for the protection and safety of every employee in case of an emergency situation. This booklet is an effort to protect you as a valued employee, our library patrons, and Library property. The intent of these procedures is to ensure that emergency, security, or medical-related incidents events within the Library are dealt with in a safe and effective manner and that they are reported to the appropriate personnel within the Library and to the proper authorities.

In all cases, human safety is more important than that of objects or property. Note that each situation is different, always use common sense when following these procedures.

### Scope

These procedures apply to all employees of both the Hamburg and Lake Shore libraries. All personnel are expected to carry out these procedures as instructed.

### Terminology

Throughout this policy, the word “Library Director” refers to the Director of the Library or his/her designee

### Revision History

Date	Revision Information
March 2013	Initial template provided by the Massachusetts Library System
January 2019, March 2020, May 2021, July 2023, May 2024, July 2024,	Customized the Manual for Hamburg Public Library use

### Approval

I approve this version of the Hamburg Public Library Employee Emergency Procedures.

*Brian R. Hoth*  
 Brian R. Hoth, Director

*01/2019*  
 Date

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The Massachusetts Library System, a state-supported collaborative, fosters cooperation, communication, innovation, and sharing among member libraries of all types. The MLS promotes equitable access to excellent library services and resources for all who live, work, or study in Massachusetts.

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## Library Director Responsibilities

### Conduct the document review

These procedures are to be reviewed on an as-needed basis and at a minimum annually.

### Provide employee training

All employees are to be trained on this Manual once per year. New employees are to be trained on this Manual within one week of commencing employment.

### Designate a chain of command

The person in charge at the time an emergency situation occurs will remain in charge until someone higher up in the chain of command arrives and relieves him/her or until local authorities arrive and take command of the situation.

The Hamburg Public Library personnel chain of command: Director, Branch Manager, Director's designate, senior staff on duty.

### Verify that all employees:

- Employees are not expected to place themselves in imminent danger or risk their lives to carry out these procedures
- Know where the fire alarm boxes and fire extinguishers are located and how to use them
- Know what to do when a fire alarm is heard
- Know the layout of the building itself in order to be able to evacuate to safety
- Know where to assemble in case of building evacuation or if the building is rendered unavailable
- Be familiar with all the employees in their area. An updated list should be kept and accessible in the Director's office (bulletin board) and staff work area
- Let their supervisor know of any special needs or assistance that they may require during an emergency
- Understand any special needs of those in their area. Is there someone who is physically impaired such as; deafness, blindness, someone who is confined to a wheelchair or has mobility problems? If so, an employee should be assigned to assist them in case evacuation is necessary

## How to Report an Emergency

**All adult staff members of the Hamburg Public Library are empowered to call 911 without a supervisor's permission.**

An employee witnessing a safety-, security- or medical-related incident in or near the Library should:

1. Secure your immediate safety
2. If possible, ensure the safety of those around you
3. If necessary and possible, leave the area
4. **Call 911**
  - a) Provide as much information and detail as possible about:
    - i. Incident description
    - ii. Location
    - iii. Injuries
    - iv. Current situation
    - v. Address and telephone of the Hamburg Library: 102 Buffalo St., (716) 649-4415
    - x. 3
    - vi. Address and telephone number of the Lake Shore Branch: 4857 Lake Shore Rd., (716) 627-3017
  - b) Follow the Dispatcher's instructions. **DO NOT HANG UP UNTIL DIRECTED TO DO SO** by emergency personnel.
5. **Notify the Library Director of the incident.**
  - a) Provide information and detail per the above
  - b) Follow the instructions of the Library Director
6. **Complete the Library Accident/Incident Report as soon as practicable.**
  - a) Send a copy to the Process Improvement Manager and Paralegal, Town of Hamburg

### Other Emergency Information

- All buildings have fire alarms.
- Every employee should be aware of all building exits and vacate the building if the fire alarm goes off.

After emergency personnel are contacted, the Library Director will be responsible for contacting additional Hamburg and Lake Shore library staff. The Library Director will notify the Board of Trustees president.

If the emergency or disaster prevents staff from approaching one or both buildings, the B&ECPL website will be updated to inform the membership and the community, depending upon the nature of the disaster. The Library Director will notify the IT Department and requesting a "red ribbon" notification be placed on the B&ECPL homepage. The Director will also contact the three local television stations (WKBW, WIVB, and WGRZ) to have a notification posted on their respective websites and channels.

## **Evacuation Assembly Areas (Hamburg Library)**

During an evacuation, staff will go to the designated areas.

## Emergency Alert Stations



The EAS is a national public warning system that requires broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service providers, and direct broadcast satellite providers to provide the communications capability to the President of the United States to address the American public during a national emergency. The system also may be used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to specific areas.

Activation of EAS within New York State has three different components: National Plan, State Plan, and Local EAS Plan, which can be activated respectively by the President of the United States, Governor of New York, and the Erie County Executive.

All local broadcast and cable systems which have voluntarily joined the EAS program monitor the State Primary, State Alternate Facilities, and National (NOAA) Radio.

### Region 1 Buffalo

#### Counties of: Erie, Genesee, Buffalo, Niagara, Wyoming

WBUF 92.9 Buffalo	WBNF-CA 15 Buffalo
WFBF 89.9 Buffalo	WKSE 98.5 Niagara Falls
WBEN 930 Buffalo	WBNY 91.3 Buffalo
WGR 550 Buffalo	WLOF 101.7 Elma
WWKB 1520 Buffalo	WBXZ-LP 56 Buffalo
WGRF 96.9 Buffalo	WNED 970 Buffalo
WGRZTV 33 Buffalo	WDCX 99.5 Buffalo
WBBF 1120 Buffalo	WNEDFM 94.5 Buffalo
WHTTFM 104.1 Buffalo	WDTB-LP 39 Hamburg
WBBZ-TV 7 Springville	WNEDTV 43 Buffalo
WIVB-TV 39 Buffalo	WECK 1230 Cheektowaga
WBFO 88.7 Buffalo	WNLO 32 Buffalo
WJYE 96.1 Buffalo	WEDG 103.3 Buffalo
WBLK 93.7 Depew	WNYO 49 Buffalo
WKBWTV 38 Buffalo	WNEDTV 43 Buffalo
	WPXJTV 23 Batavia

*Current as of: 03/2026*

#### New York State EAS Monitoring Assignments – Region 1 - Buffalo

WSPQ 1330 Springville	WUFO 1080 Amherst
WUTV 14 Buffalo	WXRL 1300 Lancaster
WTOR 770 Youngstown	
WWWS 1400 Buffalo	WYRK 106.5 Buffalo

Source of New York State EAS information (March 2026): <https://nysbroadcasters.org/emergency-alerts/>

## Dealing With News Media and Public Inquiries

The Library Director, Library Board President, or Director's designate at the time an emergency occurs is the only person authorized to release information on behalf of the Library. **The in charge staff person at the time will immediately contact the Library Director in an emergency.** This spokesperson will coordinate information and information release with the Assistant Deputy Director, Development & Communications, law enforcement personnel, emergency medical personnel, health department staff, and Town of Hamburg officials as required.

During and after an emergency situation; Library employees:

- Will NOT respond to media or public information requests
- Will refer all public and media inquiries and information requests to the Library Director, Library Board President, or Director's designate
- If no Library System personnel are available, will refer all public and media inquiries and information requests to
  - The Police Department or Fire Department as appropriate
  - Other on-scene agency spokesperson
- Will NOT discuss or speculate on the cause, consequences, events, impact, or personnel involved with the situation. This includes communicating via the social media.

## Specific Threat Response

### Bomb Threat

**If you receive a bomb threat by telephone:**

- Evacuate patrons and staff immediately
- Call or have someone nearby call 911
- If the phone you are using has caller ID, copy the number down
- Notify the Library Director or designee
- Promptly complete the Bomb Threat Report

**If you are informed about a bomb threat:**

- Evacuate patrons and staff immediately
- Call the police or have someone call the police by dialing 911. Do not hang up until directed to do so by emergency personnel

## Contamination: Chemical, Biological, or Radiological

### Biological threats may include the following substances:

- Chemical: Any substance designed or intended to cause death or serious bodily injury through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic or poisonous chemicals, or their precursors, such as mustard gas, nerve agents, and sarin gas.
- Biological: Any substance involving a disease organism, such as smallpox, botulism toxin, anthrax, and ricin
- Radiological: Any substance designed to release radiation.

### For chemical, biological, or radiological contamination:

- Isolate it—don't handle it.
- Evacuate the area or building
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Call the police or have someone call the police by dialing 911. Do not hang up until directed to do so by emergency personnel.
- Otherwise call or have someone call the fire department and hazmat unit.
- Call Postal Inspectors at 877-876-2455 if the item was received in the mail.

## Evacuation and Assembly

### Evacuation Procedures

IMPORTANT: Any time you hear the fire alarm assume it is NOT a test. Evacuate immediately and meet at your designated assembly area.

1. ONLY IF TIME AND SAFETY PERMIT: Quickly gather your personal belongings - especially car keys, pocketbook, prescription medicines, coat
2. Instruct everyone to leave by way of the nearest exit (and if necessary, walk down the stairs) to their predetermined meeting place outside.
3. If there are guests or library patrons in the building, staff should guide them out.
4. Always check doors for heat before opening.
5. Exit through the nearest doorway. If exit is blocked, use the next closest exit situated away from the emergency
6. WALK, DO NOT RUN! Women wearing high heels should remove them to reduce the risk of falling.
7. Once at the Assembly Area, **the In-charge staff person should take a head count** to make sure everyone is out of the building and accounted for. They will then notify firemen, police officers, etc.
8. **Stay in your Assembly Area** until permission is given to return to your building.

### Evacuation Assembly Areas

During an evacuation, please assemble at the designated areas.

## Evacuation of Special Needs Persons

### **Prior to an emergency:**

This topic should be discussed in the planning stage. Agreement should be reached regarding how long the person giving assistance is expected to wait for the first responders to arrive. Such discussion is important because waiting too long can endanger more lives. If someone is willing to delay his or her own evacuation to assist a person with an impairment in an emergency, planning how long that wait might be is wise and reasonable.

People with mobility impairments need to know if there is a usable circulation path (a continuous and unobstructed way of travel from any point in a building or structure to a public way) from the building they are in. If there is not a usable circulation path, then their plans will require alternative routes and methods of evacuation to be put in place.

It is suggested that Special Needs employees develop a "buddy system." The "buddy system" designates a specific volunteer or two to assist and take responsibility for a person during an emergency evacuation or shelter-in-place event.

\*While first responders do their best to get to a site and the particular location of those needing their assistance, there is no way to predict how long any given area will remain a safe haven under emergency conditions.

### **Assisting impaired/disabled person/persons in an emergency:**

People with disabilities may require assistance from others.

- However, always ask someone with a disability how you can help before attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance.
- Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved, and whether they have any special considerations

The following procedures are suggested for individuals who can safely assist a person with a disability:

#### Assisting Hearing Impaired Persons

- Alert the hearing impaired to an emergency and assist with their evacuation
- Generally speaking, a person with a hearing impairment will not need to wait for first responders. Doing so would likely be a last choice when there is an imminent threat to people in the building.

#### Assisting Persons with Blindness or Visual Impairment

- Alert the visually impaired to an emergency and assist with their evacuation
- Generally speaking, a person with a visual impairment will not need to wait for first responders. Doing so would likely be a last choice when there is an imminent threat to people in the building.

- Do not grasp a visually impaired person's arm; ask if he or she would like to hold onto your arm as you exit.
- Give verbal instructions about the evacuation route using estimated distances and directional terms (Ex: twenty feet forward, turn right)

Evacuating a disabled or injured person yourself is a last resort. Consider your options and risks of injuring yourself and others in an evacuation attempt.

Do not make an emergency situation worse. Evacuation may be difficult and uncomfortable for both the rescuers and the people being assisted. Some people have conditions that can be aggravated or triggered if they are moved incorrectly.

Waiting with the person with the impairment for first responders would likely be a last choice when there is an imminent threat to people in the building. While first responders do their best to get to a site and the particular location of those needing their assistance, there is no way to predict how long any given area will remain a safe haven under emergency conditions.

## Explosion

In the event of an explosion:

1. Evacuate library patrons and staff immediately
2. Call 911 giving the approximate location of the explosion
3. Indicate if there are any patrons and/or staff trapped in the immediate area

## Fire

### Fire evacuation procedures

**IMPORTANT:** Any time you hear the fire alarm, assume it is NOT a test. Evacuate immediately and meet at your designated assembly area.

1. If you notice or cause a fire, pull the nearest fire alarm. Call 911.
2. If there are guests or library patrons in the building, the employee associated with the guest(s) should guide them out.
3. Evacuate the building through the nearest exit
  - a. If there is smoke: Crawl or stay as low to the floor as possible
  - b. If there is smoke: Use a wet cloth, if possible, to cover your nose and mouth.
  - c. Always check doors for heat before opening. Use the back of your hand to feel the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors.
  - d. If the door is not hot, brace yourself against it and open slowly.
  - e. If the door is hot, do not open it. Look for another way out.
  - f. If your clothes catch fire, do not run. **STOP-DROP-AND-ROLL** to put out the fire

4. WALK, DO NOT RUN! Women wearing high heels should remove them to reduce the risk of falling.
5. Go to your predetermined Assembly Area
6. Never go back into a burning building
7. Once at the Assembly Area, **Supervisors should take a head count** to make sure everyone is out of the building and accounted for. They will then notify firemen, police officers, etc.
8. **Stay in your Assembly Area** until you receive further instructions

**Fire Extinguisher Use: Remember “PASS”**

*Pull* the pin on the extinguisher handle  
*Aim* low at the base of the fire  
*Squeeze* the handle  
*Spray* from side to side

## Lockdown

Lockdown is a RESPONSE when there is an immediate threat to anyone in the building.

Staff and visitors are secured in designated rooms throughout the building and are NOT allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. The purpose of a lockdown is to keep staff and visitors safe.

Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to modify this procedure; common sense should prevail.

### Procedure:

Library Director or designee will:

1. Announce go around the building:  
“Attention: We are in a lockdown situation. Initiate lockdown procedure now.  
Staff will guide you to the nearest safe room.”
2. Call 911 and inform them that a lockdown procedure is underway and the reason. Do not hang up until directed to do so by emergency personnel.
3. Move to a safe area.

Staff will:

1. Comply immediately with a request to lock down the building.
2. Move patrons to a part of the building where their visibility to a threatening person is minimized (away from door and windows) and where doors can be secured behind them.
3. Listen for danger.
  - a. No immediate violence:

- i. Take a “quick peek” into the hallway; collect anyone from common areas.
  - b. Violence
    - i. Lock the room door immediately. Do not open the door for any reason.
    - ii. Turn all lights out (including monitors, projectors).
    - iii. Help everyone remain calm and caution them to remain COMPLETELY QUIET.
    - iv. If possible, do not let anyone leave the room.
4. Staff and patrons will remain in safe locations until emergency personnel or the Library Director tells them the situation has been resolved.

## Lockout

Lockout refers to securing the building so that no one may enter. The purpose of a lockout is to keep staff and visitors safe.

Generally this means that there is a situation OUTSIDE the library building requiring the library to take extra security measures. Situations such as an explosion outside the building, a hazardous materials leak outside the building, or a violent situation near the library.

Staff and visitors are secured in designated rooms throughout the building and are NOT allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved.

Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to modify this procedure; common sense should prevail.

### Procedure:

Library Director or designee will:

1. Announce around the building:  
“Attention: We are in a lockout situation. Please stay in the building and wait for further instructions. Staff will guide you to the nearest safe room. Staff closest to Exit doors: please lock them.”
2. Call 911 and inform them that a lockout procedure is underway and the reason. Do not hang up until directed to do so by emergency personnel.
3. Move to a safe area.

Staff will:

1. Comply immediately with the request to lockout the building.
2. Move patrons to a part of the building where their visibility to a threatening person is minimized (away from door and windows) and where doors can be secured behind them.
3. Staff will pull down the window shades.
4. Staff and patrons will remain in safe locations until emergency personnel or the Library Director tells them the situation has been resolved.

## Medical Emergency

Each library is equipped with first aid supplies in a first aid cabinet containing items such as bandages, gauze, cold packs, and antibiotic ointment.

### In the event of a medical emergency:

- Provide any first aid assistance that you are capable of/qualified to provide.
- Otherwise, do not attempt to treat the injured. This includes giving aspirin or other medication(s).
- Exception: CPR-certified staff will perform CPR when indicated, and must continue until emergency personnel arrive.
- Call 911
  - Provide the 911 dispatcher with any information that he/she requests.
  - Follow the dispatcher's directions.
  - Do not hang up until directed to do so by the dispatcher.

When in doubt about the nature and/or severity of a medical problem, staff should call 911 immediately.

Staff should clear the area around the injured person(s), keeping onlookers away, and maintaining a clear entrance to the building for emergency personnel.

If needed, or if advised by emergency personnel, staff will evacuate and/or close the library to the public until the medical emergency is resolved.

## Natural/Weather-related Events

### Tornado

The following are steps to be taken only when instructed to Shelter-in-Place:

- If instructed by Public Safety officials, you should immediately go indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows. Locking is preferred since it generally ensures that the door or window is shut tight.
- Close drapes, blinds and window shades.
- Go to a room in the center of your building with the fewest windows and doors.
  - **Hamburg Public Library – Hallway in area of the public restrooms**
  - **Lake Shore Library – Boiler Room**
- Stay away from windows, doors outside walls and corners, as they tend to attract debris
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck
- Avoid elevators
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed during an emergency.
- Do not call your local fire or police departments (9-1-1) for information. Public Safety workers will need their lines open for emergency use. Call the Hamburg Emergency Management Office 24/7 at 716-648-5111.
- Continue to monitor your Emergency Alert Station (EAS) and other news media for official warnings, messages, and instructions.
- New York State EAS Stations are listed on Page 9.
- Stay inside until officials say otherwise.
- Be aware of the potential for flooding.
- If you are in your vehicle and are advised to Shelter-in-Place', and are very close to home, your office or a public building, go there immediately. If you are caught outside or in a vehicle and shelter is not available, lie flat in a nearby ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle or crouch near a strong building.

### Earthquake

- **DROP! COVER! HOLD ON!**
  - Immediately drop to the ground or floor where you are.
  - Take cover under the nearest desk or table.
  - Hold on to something sturdy until shaking stops.
- After the earthquake, evacuate the building as described in the Evacuation procedures.
- Go to your Assembly Area
- Once at the Assembly Area, Supervisors shall take a head count to make sure everyone is out of the building and accounted for. They will then notify firemen, police officers, etc.
- Stay in your Assembly Area until you receive further instructions. Do not return to your building unless permission is given to do so by your Supervisor.

## Sabotage/Vandalism

Sabotage is the destruction of Library property (buildings, materials, books) or other treacherous action intended to obstruct, hinder, or defeat normal operations

Vandalism is the willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property

If you observe willful malicious actions or notice damage that you determine to be sabotage or vandalism:

- Report it immediately to your Supervisor or Library Director
- Complete the Library Accident/Incident Report as soon as practicable
- Include as much information as possible
- If no Supervisor or Library authority is available, contact the police.

## Suspicious Package or Mail

### Signs of a suspicious package:

- No return address
- Misspelled words
- Strange odor
- Restrictive notes
- Poor handwriting
- Stains
- Foreign postage
- Unexpected delivery
- Excessive postage
- Incorrect titles
- Strange sounds

### For suspicious packages and letters:

If you are unable to verify mail contents with the addressee or sender:

- Do not open it.
- Treat it as suspect.
- Isolate it—don't handle it.
- Ensure that all persons who have touched it wash their hands with soap and water
- Notify your supervisor immediately
- Call the police department by dialing 911.
- Call Postal Inspectors if the item was received in the mail.

### What should you do if you receive a suspicious substance by mail?

- Isolate the damaged or suspicious mail piece or package. Cordon off the immediate area.
- Ensure that all persons who have touched the mail piece wash their hands with soap and water.
- Notify your supervisor immediately
- Call the police department by dialing 911 if not already done.

- List all persons who have touched the mail piece. Include contact information and have this information available for the authorities. Provide the list to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.
- Place all items worn when in contact with the suspected mail piece in plastic bags and have them available for law enforcement agents.
- Shower with soap and water as soon as practical.
- Call a Postal Inspector to report that you've received a letter or parcel in the mail that may contain harmful substances.

## Unruly Patrons

Unruly patrons can be not only bad for the library, but they can also pose a danger to staff and other patrons. The following provides guidance for unruly patrons.

### **Important:**

Under no circumstances should library staff engage patrons in a shouting match or become involved in a physical altercation. Defuse or walk away from a potentially violent situation and call the police.

Throughout the event, don't lose your cool; remain calm and keep your composure. Don't argue. Speak slowly and quietly no matter how loud or confrontational the patron becomes.

Don't take anything an angry patron says personally! It's never about you. Stay calm.

### **What to do**

1. Inform another employee of the situation
2. Get the most senior person available to deal with the situation
3. Assess the situation and assess the person's degree of volatility. Call the police if you believe the person will "snap."
4. Try to diffuse the situation; if appropriate, empathize and apologize; ask them what the problem is or what they want
5. Give a polite warning; remind them they are in a Library where peace and quiet are necessary
6. If this does not work, ask them to leave. Be polite, but be firm. If the person(s) do not leave, walk away and contact the police.
7. If an unruly patron does not calm down, becomes abusive, or is getting/acting violent:
  - Turn the other cheek and back away. The best way to deal with a violent person is to get out of the situation as fast as possible without causing a big scene. Some people get violent when things aren't going the way they had planned.
  - Say as little as possible to avoid making the person angrier.
  - Do not try to apprehend this person yourself.
  - Call the police (911) then ensure the safety of other patrons and employees.
  - Complete a Library Accident/Incident Report as soon as practicable.

## Workplace Violence; Active Shooter

### Workplace Violence

- Avoid or discretely remove yourself from the area where the confrontation is occurring.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so.
- Report the incident to the Library Director or Supervisor.
- After the threat has passed, let your supervisor know that you are OK.

### Active Shooter

Profile: An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, typically through the use of firearms.

Characteristics of an active shooter situation:

- Victims are selected at random
- The event is unpredictable and evolves quickly
- Law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation

Coping with an active shooter situation:

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door
- Attempt to take the active shooter down as a last resort

In the event of an active shooter situation, one of the following actions is recommended:

1. EVACUATE (RUN)
  - a. Have an escape route and plan in mind
  - b. Leave your belongings behind
  - c. Keep your hands visible
2. HIDE OUT (HIDE)
  - a. Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
  - b. Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors
  - c. Silence your cell phone
3. TAKE ACTION (FIGHT)
  - a. As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
  - b. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
  - c. Act with physical aggression and throw items at the shooter

Call 911 when it is safe to do so. After the threat has passed, let your supervisor know that you are OK.

## **Workplace Violence; Active Shooter (continued)**

### How to respond when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating

### Information you should provide to law enforcement or the 911 Operator:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters
- Physical description of shooters
- Number and type of weapons held by shooters
- Number of potential victims at the location

## **Part II: Disaster Planning**

### **DISASTER PREVENTION**

Natural disasters including floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes cannot be prevented; however, the severity of their effects can be minimized by preparing ahead of time. Human-engineered disasters including fire due to faulty electrical wiring or unattended equipment, or water damage resulting from broken pipes, and damaged roofs can often be prevented altogether. Routine inspections of a facility can reveal conditions that invite disaster.

Basic measures including unplugging equipment when not in use, cleaning, and ensuring that work areas are clutter-free, help to prevent disasters.

### **DISASTER PLAN**

Despite the best efforts to prevent a disaster, they happen.

Contact information for supplies and equipment necessary for library disaster recovery are provided in this document.

### **SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

Safety is the primary consideration in any disaster. Escape routes will be clear to all staff members and visitors. If the building is unoccupied, it cannot be entered until it has been declared safe by a public official such as the building inspector or fire department.

In the best situation, outside sources of supplies and services can be contacted; however, if the disaster is widespread, they may be unavailable, which is why having some recovery materials onsite can be helpful. To avoid health risks in situations where one might be allowed in the building, it is suggested that persons wear plastic or rubber gloves during cleanup. If there is mold protective gear—surgical mask or respirator, goggles, and coveralls—is advised. When working in the aftermath of area floods, tetanus shots may also be recommended.

## DISASTER RECOVERY

Many disasters result in water-damage; mold can develop within two or three days. The following steps are recommended for an effective recovery operation:

### **Step 1. Assess the damage.**

How much damage has occurred?

What kind of damage is it? According to the Heritage Emergency National Task Force (<https://culturalrescue.si.edu/who-we-are/hentf>), a coalition of 41 national organizations and federal agencies, even if books and other materials are completely soaked, they can probably still be saved if they are not contaminated with sewage or chemicals.

Is the damage confined to one area or is the entire building damaged?

How much of the office has been affected?

What types of materials have been damaged?

Are the damaged items easily replaced or are they irreplaceable?

Can they be salvaged by an in-house effort or will outside help be needed?

Document the damage by a written description and by photographs.

Contacts should be made at this time with the sources of supplies and services.

### **Step 2. Stabilize the environment.**

The environment must be stabilized to prevent the growth of mold. Ideal conditions for a recovery operation are 65 degrees and 50% humidity.

Items to have on hand:

1. Portable generators, in case a power failure occurs.
2. Pumps, to remove large quantities of standing water. Exercise caution as standing water can conceal hazards.
3. Fans, for air circulation, particularly in the damaged area. Fans should preferably expel the humid air from the site. The Heritage Emergency National Task Force recommends gentle air-drying, indoors, if possible. They discourage the use of hair dryers, irons, ovens, and prolonged exposure to sunlight.
4. Thermometers, P.E.M. units to measure the temperature and humidity.
5. Dehumidifiers to help lower the humidity (need to watch temperature increases—monitor temperature and humidity constantly). As mentioned, mold can form within two days.
6. Remove damaged items; stabilize the environment and thoroughly cleanse the area. Scrub with soap and a fungicide floors, ceilings, and all furniture and equipment. Mold develops rapidly under carpeting and its padding. Only professionals should remove smoke odor or fog with fungicides or insecticides.

Also from the Heritage Emergency National Task Force:

7. “Separate damp materials: remove the contents from drawers; take photographs out of damp albums; remove paintings and prints from frames; place white paper towels between the pages of wet books.”
8. “Clean gently. Loosen dirt and debris on fragile objects gently with soft brushes and cloths. Avoid rubbing, which can grind in dirt.”
9. “Salvage photos. Clean photographs by rinsing them carefully in clean water. Air-dry photos on a plastic screen or paper towel, or by hanging them by the corner with plastic clothespins. Do not let the image come into contact with other surfaces as it dries.”
10. “Damp objects and items that cannot be dealt with immediately should be put in open, unsealed boxes or bags. Photos, papers, books, and textiles should be frozen if you can’t get them dry within 48 hours.”

## **SALVAGE PRIORITIES**

Priorities should be based on criteria such as the following:

Can the item be replaced? At what cost? Would the cost of the item be more or less than restoration? How important is the item? Is it unique?

According to Illinois State University, 95% of all disaster damage result from water. The first decision to be made will be whether to air dry or freeze materials. Their directions for handling water-damaged as well as for fire-damaged books and non-print materials are located at <http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/plans/isudis.html> .

## **UNRECOVERABLE MATERIALS**

Materials soaked, burned, contaminated, or otherwise damaged beyond repair must be removed. In the case of books, it will be necessary to note title pages or other available identifying matter in order to search for availability, replacement or withdrawal (including removal from OCLC in the case of cataloged items).

**APPENDIX A****EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES TO HAVE ON HAND**

Batteries (flashlight)  
Boxes (flat)  
Bricks  
Brooms – Boiler Room  
Buckets – Boiler Room  
Chemical sponges  
Crates – Boiler Room  
Dehumidifiers (borrow from B & G)  
Drying racks – Boiler Room  
Drying space – Boiler Room  
Extension cords  
Fans (borrow from LSH)  
First aid supplies – in First Aid cabinets located in staff work area  
Flashlights  
Generators, portable (borrow from B & G)  
Masks  
Mops – in Boiler Room  
Paper towels – in Boiler Room  
Plastic sheeting  
Plastic trash bags  
Rubber gloves  
Sponges  
Thermometers

**Routinely check supplies and replace as needed.**

**APPENDIX B****EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS & SERVICES**

Reputable companies experienced in salvaging buildings and collections (e.g., drying and cleaning buildings, wet books, documents, computer data, microfilm, and audio/video) for cultural institutions:

**American Freeze Dry**

P.O. Box 5740  
Deptford, NJ 08096  
866-939-8160  
Emergency: 609-458-0510

**Cleaning and Recovery**

ServPro of the Southtowns  
97 Evans St.  
Hamburg, NY 14075  
716-646-8102

[https://www.werecoverdata.com/lp/google.aspx?utm\\_source=Adwords&utm\\_medium=CPC-Search&gclid=Cj0KCQjwpLzBRCRARIsAHuj6qW4Fr7TIFhrv-s454qAOIM2RAh\\_3IT7ApvzT74\\_7ifpmLZzR6FRgF8aApe-EALw\\_wcB](https://www.werecoverdata.com/lp/google.aspx?utm_source=Adwords&utm_medium=CPC-Search&gclid=Cj0KCQjwpLzBRCRARIsAHuj6qW4Fr7TIFhrv-s454qAOIM2RAh_3IT7ApvzT74_7ifpmLZzR6FRgF8aApe-EALw_wcB)

## APPENDIX C

### Resources

**Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, *Response Resources***

<https://culturalrescue.si.edu/what-we-do/response>

**American Red Cross**

786 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, NY 14209

(716) 886-7500

<https://www.redcross.org/local/new-york/western-new-york.html?srsId=AfmBOoqzd2-LRKEI0jz55xIoAj-9fSWrZ5fgaYdiaE4majBxUzmYqqP3>

**Illinois State University, Normal, IL.** Is a very comprehensive plan with good, technical information. <http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/plans/isudis.html>

## Sources of Information; Additional Resources

### ORGANIZATIONS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the federal agency responsible for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery training.

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning>

FEMA also supplies much information about what families and communities can do to be ready for an emergency.

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mission is to secure the nation from the many threats we face, ranging from aviation and border security to emergency response, from cyber security analysis to chemical facility inspections.

<http://www.dhs.gov/>

The Department of Homeland Security aims to enhance preparedness through a “whole community” approach by providing training and resources to a broad range of stakeholders on issues such as active shooter awareness, incident response, and workplace violence.

<http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigates cases related to weapons of mass destruction and terrorist attacks. The site also contains emergency planning information.

<http://www.fbi.gov>

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the federal agency charged with the enforcement of safety and health legislation. The site also contains emergency planning and response information.

<http://www.osha.gov>

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service can provide information about establishing secure mail practices and protecting your business.

<http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/>

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a clearinghouse for information on fire protection and prevention as well as NFPA standards. NFPA also provides much emergency preparedness and response information.

<http://www.nfpa.org/>

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a U.S. Public Health Service agency that monitors and works to prevent disease outbreaks. The site also contains emergency planning and response information, including Risk and Crisis Communications information.

<http://www.cdc.gov> and <http://emergency.cdc.gov/erc>

## DOCUMENTS

There are a plethora of emergency planning and emergency response documents available, particularly on the Internet. A few relevant documents include:

The Massachusetts Library Board of Commissioners has a web page with many emergency preparedness documents and links. Some of those documents were used in the preparation of this manual. It also describes the Emergency Assistance Program that provides assistance to libraries, archives, historical societies, and other repositories in the event of an emergency.

<https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/emergency-planning/index.php>

“How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations” U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration

<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3088.pdf>

*Options for Consideration* is an Active Shooter Training Video. *Options for Consideration* demonstrates possible actions to take if confronted with a active shooter scenario. The instructive video reviews the choices of evacuating, hiding, or, as an option of last resort, challenging the shooter. The video also shows how to assist authorities once law enforcement enters the scene.

This video is available at <http://www.dhs.gov/video/options-consideration-active-shooter-training-video>.

“ACTIVE SHOOTER: How to Respond” U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

- Booklet: [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf)
- Pocket Card: [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_pocket\\_card.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_pocket_card.pdf)
- Wall poster: [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_poster.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_poster.pdf)

“Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication by Leaders for Leaders” by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Download the Manual: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/erc/leaders.pdf>. Visit the CDC website and get many helpful documents: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/erc>

*Emergency Evacuation Guide for People with Disabilities*. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) <https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/guides/evacuation-guide-pdf>