

Episcopal Actions

A. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

1. Stay current. Listen to news reports of any impending storm activity or other event which could lead to a disaster.
2. Initial contacts. Contact the Conference Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, and the Conference Disaster UMVIM Coordinator and prepare for possible action should a disaster strike. Make sure that you all know the others' location and remain available to each other.
3. Personal Safety. If your immediate area is likely to be affected and an evacuation is recommended, move out of the area and be certain the Cabinet knows where you will be. You may want to set up a temporary office in a church away from the danger zone.

B. RESCUE OR EMERGENCY RESPONSE PHASE

1. Personnel Assessment. Assess your own damage first. See if anyone in your household is injured. Stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you. If you are a victim, do not rely on your own judgment. Do not rely on the judgment of other victims, either. Listen to emergency personnel and follow their instructions.
2. Monitoring the Event. Monitor the damage to the Conference by listening to news reports, web pages, and by information forwarded to you from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts. Stay in your home and office until the danger is past. It will be easier for the Cabinet to reach you if you remain at your home or office during this phase.

C. RELIEF PHASE

1. Initial Contacts
 - i. Contact the Conference Disaster Preparedness Coordinator. He/she should be attempting to establish contact with the Early Response Teams, and when available, District Preparedness Coordinators in the affected areas. He/she should also be in contact with the State Emergency Management to get an initial report on damaged areas. At this point, all information will be preliminary and general.
 - ii. Contact the District Superintendents in the affected areas and check on their personal situations. See if they are attempting to assess the damage on the Districts if this has not been done earlier. Let them know that you are interested in what they are able to find out from their damage assessment contacts.
 - iii. Tour shelter areas to see what involvement the church has in caring for evacuees.

2. Damage Assessment Tour

- i. As soon as possible after the event, the District Superintendent(s), the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator and the Conference Disaster UMVIM Coordinator should conduct damage assessment tours.
- ii. The general assessment should be to look for damage in terms of areas hit and church property damage. Attempt to gain a sense of the magnitude and severity. The only specific information at this point should be with regard to injuries to pastors and their families plus damage to church property.
- iii. Tour shelter areas to see what involvement the church has in caring for evacuees.
- iv. Obtain a copy of the Red Cross Preliminary Damage Assessment.

3. The Episcopal Tour

- i. Once the District Superintendent has completed the damage assessment, he/she should report the findings to you and the Conference Insurance contact. If the damage is widespread, or if church personnel and/or property are involved, the District Superintendent should request an Episcopal tour.
- ii. The tour should be coordinated through the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, who will have contacts with the appropriate county Emergency Management office(s) who can authorize access of areas. The tour should not be conducted without these prior arrangements.
- iii. The focus of the tour should be to demonstrate the Church's presence and willingness to help in the affected area(s). Personal contact with those who have suffered losses should be encouraged, always with their feelings kept in mind.
- iv. The entourage should be kept to a minimum.
 - A. The key individual would be the Resident Bishop. He/she maintains the interest of the Church in the disaster by providing personal contact both with the victims and those involved in the relief effort, and provides assurance of the Church's involvement. Specific promises of aid should be discouraged until a more complete assessment of damage and available resources can be made.
 - B. All tour personnel should remember to be sensitive to the feelings of the victims. This applies especially to any photography that is projected to be used for articles about the disaster for various media. Obtain permission to take photos if they may be published, and ask permission when people (especially those who have been stricken by the disaster) will be in, or the subject of, the photos.

4. Organizing the Conference for Disaster Relief and Recovery

- i. The task of organizing the conference for disaster relief and recovery belongs to the Conference Disaster Preparedness Coordinator through the Conference Office of Connectional Ministry.
 - ii. The task of organizing the conference for disaster volunteers in ministry teams belongs to the Conference Volunteers in Mission Coordinator and Early Response Coordinator through the Conference Office of Connectional Ministry.
 - iii. When a disaster occurs, the Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee should be called together by the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator to develop the best approach to use in dealing with the event.
 - A. When sufficient information on the magnitude and severity of the disaster has been gathered, a determination relative to an Episcopal appeal for relief funds will be made.
 - B. A decision should be made to request UMCOR funds at the same time. If the Bishop is present at the meeting, the appeal process and UMCOR request can be expedited. If not, the Conference Coordinator has the responsibility to convey the recommendations to the Bishop as quickly as possible.
 - iv. A complete report on the types and levels of assistance offered should be made by the Conference Coordinators of Disaster Response and UMVIM to the Bishop.
 - v. If the Conference does not have adequate resources on hand, or if there is a need which requires specialized help, the Bishop may request such assistance from UMCOR. The decision to request assistance should be coordinated with the Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee (through the Conference Coordinator).
5. Keep a journal of everything that you do or that happened to you in the course of the disaster.

D. RECOVERY PHASE

- i. **Monitoring Progress** - The recovery process may last for more than a year for some disasters. The highest level of involvement may well be in four to six months after the event. Periodic reports will be given to the Bishop and to the Conference Connectional Table regarding the progress of the recovery effort.
- ii. **Problem Solving** - When problems arise within the Conference regarding policies or procedures in disaster relief, the Disaster Coordinating Committee may need some assistance in clearing up misunderstandings. Since the committee has no authority over any

other boards or agencies, it may defer to the Bishop or other Conference leaders for a solution.

E. THE AFTERMATH

1. After Action Review - An After Action Review of the disaster should be held after the last requests for assistance or at UMCOR's request. The meeting should include all the key personnel at all levels of the relief effort to review how the effort went and how the response could be improved in the next disaster. The presence of the Bishop would be helpful, but is not mandatory.

After Action Report - A statistical overview and final report should be compiled based on the information obtained at the After Action Review with the Bishop and UMCOR receiving a copy of this report.