AGENCY EMERGENCY PLANNING

Last updated July 2009

COLLABORATING
AGENCIES
RESPONDING TO
DISASTERS

Helping Nonprofits Prepare to Prosper!

ENGAGEMENT & POSITIVE FRAMING

ENGAGEMENT

A successful strategy for effective agency planning is engaging everyone – 100% of the staff, including regular volunteers, and as many consumers as is possible. Everyone should have the opportunity to comment and provide their knowledge and insight. You want everyone to say that they were part of the team responsible for preparing your agency.

This is NOT about promising to act on every idea or suggestion. This is about making your planning process a team-building activity, and having the process express your agency's commitment to the safety and well-being of everyone participating in the process.

When you are done, our hope is that you are able to say the following:

- Everyone has played a part in making this plan happen.
- Everyone feels empowered to do what needs to be done in an emergency.
- Everyone says that their safety and the safety of others is truly valued.
- Everyone feels the physical environment supports safety and preparedness.
- Everyone says that the organizational culture embraces preparedness.
- Everyone feels acknowledged and proud of their role.
- Your plan is more resilient, better able to withstand turnovers, cutbacks and changes.

> ***Getting started:*** Bring as many people as possible in the conversation to an orientation.

POSITIVE FRAMING

"Disaster Preparedness" is usually presented as an obligation – with a threat attached, few resources, little time and high consequences for failure. This approach hasn't left many people enthusiastic about preparedness, and that most people say they haven't done enough. ***The CARD approach eliminates the negative, fear-based conversation.*** Preparedness can and should be about:

- protecting people we care about
- safeguarding things that matter to us
- using every piece of the process as a learning opportunity
- learning how to make good decisions under stress
- having fun; learning about each other's strengths and skills
- building a strong, empowered team.

People frequently postpone work that may help them avoid "someday" problems. The *Prepare to Prosper* approach makes preparedness immediately beneficial, with results such as increasing teamwork and shared vision, building financial stability, or providing proof of compliance and establishing "good faith" standards of liability.

> ***Getting started:*** Keep the preparedness conversation focused on what you CAN DO and how it will help!

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CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER MISSION

From *Agency Emergency Planning*

CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

A culture of preparedness is present when you have preparedness as a way of being – it is not something you complete, check off and then forget about. It's simply how you operate, how you think, what you do. At the organizational level, this means creating a culture of preparedness that can survive and prosper in the face of: changes in staff, current events, and funding instability.

Low hanging fruit: Here are some things you can put in place to help keep people aware of and connected to agency preparedness. You might:

❑ put up signage, posters and other tangible ways of keeping it visible [see **MAKE PREPAREDNESS VISUAL**]

❑ start each meeting with "Thirty Seconds of Safety" covering exits, meeting points, and Drop Cover and Hold, etc.

❑ include safety as a regular fixture of staff meetings, with "bite-sized" actions and reminders

❑ pass on preparedness information in newsletters, emails or other regular communications. For ideas and/or content, subscribe to CARD's free weekly "5-Minute Messages" at www.CARDCanHelp.org/STAT

❑ give every new staff, volunteer and visitor the "Safety Tour" to help convey the strong agency commitment to preparedness

❑

❑

> ***Getting started:*** Sign up for CARD's "5 Minute Messages" and share them with ALL staff, including volunteers!

DISASTER MISSION STATEMENT
Make sure you know what role you are planning to play in a disaster

• *Who are you going to be for your clients and community when disaster strikes?*

• *Does your current mission statement encompass how you see your agency functioning in a disaster?*

• *Think about your commitments and your resource limitations and create a disaster mission statement.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

> ***Getting started:*** Get people's answers to these questions to have a broader perspective!

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

STAFF

An organization depends on its staff, both paid and unpaid. Their personal preparedness is a critical aspect of your ability to depend on them during emergencies. Investing in their personal preparedness is a sensible use of resources, but be sure to offer support in the context of opportunity and responsibility, not obligation or threat.

1. Have all staff and key volunteers trained in basic emergency preparedness on a regular basis.

2. Encourage and support staff and key volunteers to have a family or home emergency plan (see note below). This increases the likelihood that staff and their families can cope with the disaster without outside help.

3. Your agency will want to ensure that all staff members have an opportunity to check on their homes and family members as soon as possible following an emergency or disaster.

In an emergency, the first concern of staff will be the safety and welfare of family members. Consider these pieces:

1. How many staff are likely to be present if an emergency occurs during work hours?

2. What about other times, such as early morning, weekends or the middle of the night?

3. Realistically, how many staff will be able to stay and continue working? What can you do to increase this?

4. Do you have contact information for all staff? Have you updated it in the last six months?

5. Do you have emergency contacts and out-of-area contacts for all staff? Is this list updated?

> ***Getting started:*** Begin or update your contact list for staff. Schedule a personal preparedness training!

VOLUNTEERS

Know how you will appropriately recruit, task and manage volunteers.

1. Are your current volunteers appropriate for disaster-related work?

2. Do your current practices of recruiting or accepting volunteers include your disaster preparedness and response needs?

3. What important activities (that keep your agency able to provide services) can be assigned to spontaneous volunteers? What activities **should not** be assigned to spontaneous volunteers?

4. What safety and/or legal considerations should you include in your plan? Consider: do you have proper insurance for volunteers, do you need background checks on volunteers, is any specialized training or knowledge required for working with your agency or clients, etc.?

5. Do you have someone in charge of volunteers? Who (else) might take that role for new volunteers?

> ***Getting started:*** Brainstorm roles suitable for both experienced and untrained volunteers.
> What do you need before, during and after a disaster? Make a nice long list.

PEOPLE YOU SERVE

Your consumers depend on you for everyday services, but in an emergency they may need you even more.

1. What are the special needs of the people you serve? Are these needs of the group or of individuals?

2. How many total consumers and guests would most likely be at your site in a disaster? (Look at both maximum consumer load and minimum staff availability for day, for evening and for weekends.)

3. How will you find out about the condition of people you serve who are off site?

4. In an emergency, who else needs information about the status of people you serve? Off site staff? Families of consumers? List the most critical contacts that need to be made. Be sure to have all necessary phone numbers and other relevant contact information for each.

5. What else will be needed (e.g., bedding, medicine, special equipment, etc.)? Where can you get these items?

Also consider: What skills can you instill in your consumers to let them take part in your preparedness and response efforts as full partners and leaders?

Getting started: Assess your consumers' preparedness needs, so you can articulate this to funders or planners.

COMMUNICATION (1)

Communications will make or break a disaster response. From a simple note on the door identifying your new location to a Public Information Officer correcting news reports about your agency, communication is the key to letting people make the right decisions. **Establishing when to communicate your message(s) is vital – think through the following considerations before putting out your message.**

WHAT should you communicate?
- ❑ Agency Operational Status reports
- ❑ Damage assessment
- ❑ Services offered or changed
- ❑ Funds needed
- ❑ Volunteers needed
- ❑ Other needs
- ❑

TO WHOM are you communicating?
- ❑ Disaster services partners
- ❑ Staff & volunteers
- ❑ Consumers
- ❑ Funders
- ❑ Media
- ❑ General public
- ❑

WHO should communicate the message?
- ❑ Ensure they have proper training
- ❑ Ensure they have proper authority
- ❑ Ensure they share appropriately consistent messages

HOW should you communicate?
- ❑ Electronic: Texts, Emails, Twitter, Blog, Video
- ❑ Paper: Faxes, Signage, Notes and Notices
- ❑ Verbal: Voice mail, In person
- ❑

WHAT can you prepare in advance?
- ❑ Agency talking points/key messages
- ❑ Disaster/Emergency response press release
- ❑ Emergency related funding solicitation
- ❑ Email, phone, pager, cell phone and fax lists
- ❑

Getting started: Designate appropriate staff for speaking to media, and write your 30-second "elevator speech".

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COMMUNICATION

From *Agency Emergency Planning*

COMMUNICATION (2)

Make sure you know all the communication tools available to you

Mastering how you send and receive information will help you in both crisis and opportunity. A variety of options is the key to maintaining communications. **Establish regular times for your communications.**

Disaster Communication Tools

There are many communication tools we don't normally consider that may become useful if a disaster cuts off your normal channels.

- ❑ Bulletin Board/White Board
- ❑ Carbon Paper / NCR paper
- ❑ CB Radios
- ❑ Cell Phones
- ❑ Digital Telephones
- ❑ Drums
- ❑ Flag Pole
- ❑ Ham Radios
- ❑
- ❑

- ❑ Megaphones / Bullhorns
- ❑ Pagers
- ❑ Palm Pilots / Blackberries
- ❑ POTS Telephones
- ❑ Public Signage
- ❑ Runners
- ❑ Walkie-Talkies
- ❑ Whistles
- ❑
- ❑

Community Outreach Options

What are all the different ways you can speak to your community? Different methods have different advantages, and may help you reach people you had not reached before.

- ❑ Social Media: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- ❑ American Sign Language (ASL)
- ❑ Computers : DSL or dial-up
- ❑ Door-to-door canvassing or home visits
- ❑ E-mail and listserves
- ❑ Fact Sheets or FAQs
- ❑ Fax Machines/WinFax
- ❑ Information Phone lines (such as 800 numbers)
- ❑
- ❑

- ❑ In-person events, workshops or classes
- ❑ Language Translators
- ❑ Mailing lists: brochures, fliers
- ❑ Radio
- ❑ Television
- ❑ Video / cassette tape / CD-ROM / DVD
- ❑ Websites, blogs, RSS feeds
- ❑
- ❑

Getting started: Brainstorm a list of all the communication tools you have access to – have all staff contribute!

MAKE PREPAREDNESS VISUAL

Making your commitment to safety and preparedness visible:

- helps your preparedness to be more sustainable by helping everybody remember your priorities.
- shows new staff and visitors that you take their safety seriously.
- helps new people get on board more quickly with safety policies, practices and procedures.
- makes it easier for anyone to remember the right thing to do, even during stressful times of crisis.

How can you make preparedness visual at your facilities? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- put up signage identifying the locations of things like supplies, exits and shutoffs. [see **SIGNAGE**, below]
- keep posters in waiting rooms, restrooms and break rooms to spread basic safety skills and understanding. Keep them fresh by changing them regularly so people pay attention. Start with CARD's Potty Posters on our website!
- post awards or other recognition for individuals, groups or the whole agency for safety successes.
- put safety actions on calendars and meeting agendas.

> *Getting started:* download CARD's FREE "Potty Posters" at www.CARDCanHelp.org/posters

SIGNAGE

Clear and visible signs indicating safety tools, exits and emergency instructions will help people to keep themselves safe while at your agency.   Post signs such as these as appropriate at your facility:

> *Getting started:* Download CARD's FREE signage at www.CARDCanHelp.org/tools

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═══ **FACILITY PREPARATION** ═══

Make sure your physical environment supports your safety

Making your physical space safer helps in many ways:
- it protects people in both emergencies and everyday circumstances
- it protects material possessions and important information
- it demonstrates "reasonable care" and concern for staff, consumers and visitors
- it makes your preparedness visible and tangible [see **MAKE PREPAREDNESS VISUAL**]

Remember: Facility preparation can include not just hazard reduction – *removing* dangers – but also *adding* constructive elements to help keep people protected, informed and able to act quickly and make good decisions.

Earthquake Putty (also called **Museum Wax**) holds delicate items in place
Straps brace heavy furniture and large items in place
Safety hooks stop pictures, clocks and mirrors from falling
Cabinet latches keep fingers and toes away from broken glass

	Assigned To	**Date Done**
☐ Bolt heavy cabinets, bookshelves or other furniture to wall studs		
☐ Strap computers, fax, equipment to desk or tables		
☐ Secure pictures and other wall hangings by using safety hooks		
☐ Clear exits, pathways and earthquake-safe spaces		
☐ Fasten breakables to walls or shelves with museum wax		
☐ Lower heavy items to bottom shelves		
☐ Remove fire and chemical hazards		
☐ Install smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, cabinet latches		
☐ Label fire exits and safety supplies		
☐ Clearly mark your gas and water shut-off valves. Post clear simple instructions for shutting off each one (in all languages needed).		
☐ Keep a conveniently located set of tools to facilitate prompt gas shut-off. Tools should include both pipe and crescent wrenches.		

Sketch your facility and note vital emergency resources including:

☐ Fire extinguishers	☐ First Aid Supplies	☐ Escape routes
☐ Go kits	☐ Water shutoff	☐ Generator(s)
☐ Tool kits	☐ Gas shutoff	☐ Documents safe
☐ Supply Cache	☐ _____	☐ _____
☐ _____	☐ _____	☐ _____

> ***Getting started:*** Clear space around emergency exits, important paths, and places to Drop, Cover & Hold.

EVACUATION

Fire, hazardous material spill, structural damage or other situations may require you to evacuate.

1. Are there program participants who will need assistance evacuating your facility?
Remember to assign staff and volunteers to help these participants and have assistive aids/devises available to help with their evacuation.

2. If your facility must be evacuated, assign a staff person the responsibility of taking a head count to ensure all staff, volunteers and program participants have exited.

3. Keep an "Agency Go-Kit". Include copies of your emergency plan, action checklists, phone rosters, copies of vital documents, credit cards, etc. [see **AGENCY GO-KIT**]

4. Post a notice indicating where you have gone.

practice your evacuation plan!

If you will have to provide care and shelter for people you serve:

1. Locate and secure a temporary shelter to be used (consider congregation sites, nearby community centers, schools, other residential facilities). You may want to develop mutual aid agreements with these sites.

   Temporary Shelter Name: _____

   Address: _____

   Contact Name: _____   Phone: _____

2. Create a phone list and a system for letting the authorities, family and friends know where you are sheltering your program participants. *"Date created" should appear on this and all lists and documents.*

3. Assign responsibility for the care of your clients at the alternate site(s). Identify this person or persons.

   a. _____   b. _____

4. If evacuated, what will your consumers need that may not be available in the temporary shelter?

   _____

> *Getting started:* Designate a location for gathering outside the building. Post a "Rally Point" sign – and tell everyone!

TRANSPORTATION

If you need to re-locate beyond walking distance, that means transportation. Just as with evacuation, it is helpful to know your transportation capacity and how quickly you can go. Do you have any transportation needs in addition to potential evacuation?

Do your staff or clients need special accommodations or alternative transportation?

Designate and identify alternative transportation for moving your program participants to your temporary shelter, or to clients' homes, if necessary.

   Alternative Transportation: _____

   Contact Name: _____   Phone: _____

> *Getting started:* Get up and go! Practice getting to your chosen site. Even identifying the challenges is valuable!

Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters

━━━ **NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES** ━━━

Make sure preparedness resources in your neighborhood are known and mapped. Post a large, clear map of your neighborhood. Note these potentially valuable resources, and highlight:

key preparedness resources
- ❑ payphones
- ❑ evacuation Rally Points
- ❑ neighbors / potential assistance
- ❑ potential electricity; heat; air conditioning
- ❑ _____

liaison /connections
- ❑ CARD
- ❑ funders
- ❑ partner agencies
- ❑ _____

food/ water
- ❑ restaurants
- ❑ soup kitchens
- ❑ grocery stores
- ❑ corner stores
- ❑ _____

medical
- ❑ hospital
- ❑ clinic
- ❑ veterinary offices
- ❑ pharmacy
- ❑ _____

key resource framework
- ❑ OES
- ❑ City Hall
- ❑ other government offices
- ❑ Fire Station
- ❑ Police Station
- ❑ Red Cross
- ❑ Public library
- ❑ _____

possible gathering points
- ❑ faith/congregation sites
- ❑ school
- ❑ gym
- ❑ shelters
- ❑ open space
- ❑ _____

supplies
- ❑ hardware stores
- ❑ disaster stores
- ❑ drugstores
- ❑ sports/camping stores
- ❑ "big box" stores
- ❑ dollar stores
- ❑ _____

This information changes over time, and keeping it up to date is a simple way people can contribute to your agency's ongoing preparedness. Does your staff work out in the community? Do people take walks on their lunch breaks? If nothing else, people can simply take note of what they pass going to and from work.

> *Suggestion:*
>
> **Download and print out the FREE poster at www.CARDCanHelp.org/maps**
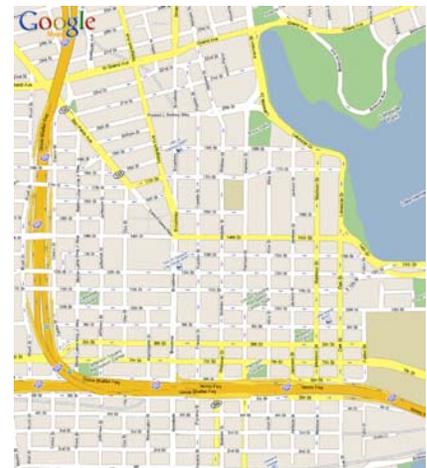
Getting started: Get a free map from a car club, or print out an oversized map from online, to post on your wall!

═══ **ON-SITE SUPPLY CACHE** ═══

Make sure you have preparedness supplies available

Create and maintain an onsite cache of emergency preparedness supplies. The exact contents will depend on the size and diversity of your staff, volunteers, consumers and potential visitors. Remember to consider special needs additions such as medication. Perishable supplies, such as food, water and medicine, need to be replaced regularly. One way to do this is by "cycling" the food and water – eat supplies while they are still good, and put new ones in the cache.

Store these supplies in multiple locations so if one cache becomes unusable or unreachable, you will still have options. The supply cache complements your agency go-kit.

Some basic contents of an on-site supply cache are:

• Food and Water	• Radio(s)	• Blankets
• First aid supplies	• Batteries	• Garbage Bags
• Lights/Flashlights	• Whistles	• Duct Tape

Remember: It is important for people to know that their needs will be met if they are at work.

Getting started: Choose, label and announce your locations for supplies, then begin adding items as you get them.

═══ **MAKING USE OF WHAT YOU HAVE** ═══

Some items, such as food and water, are universally useful as preparedness supplies. But don't be fooled into making the whole conversation be about what you need to buy! Even when your resources are limited, you can still be resourceful by using what you have at hand. Simple pens and paper help with communication, planning, record-keeping and morale. Phones and computers may make you a communications hub for your consumers or your neighborhood. A vehicle fleet could meet a critical need.

The strengths and assets you take for granted may be exactly what others need. Look for partnerships that help you both benefit from the other, and find ways that you can build on your best resources.

This is just as true at other levels. Help your staff discover their own creativity and resourcefulness so that they become experts at exercising it.
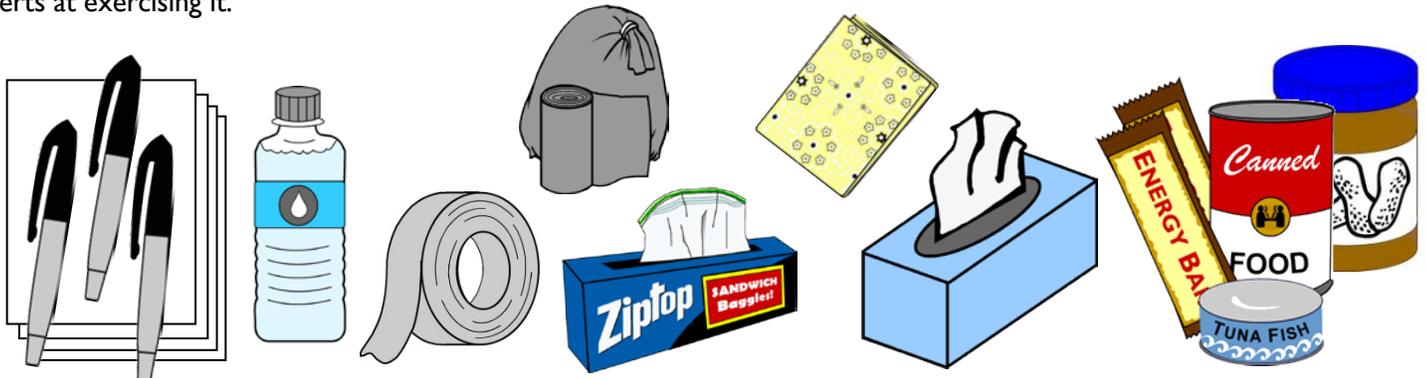
Getting started: Practice the "MacGyver Game" at staff meetings with items you typically have at your site.

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KEY DOCUMENTS & RECORDS

From *Agency Emergency Planning*

AGENCY GO-KIT

Make sure you can operate even if you evacuate

If you need to evacuate your facility, an Agency Go-Kit should allow you to continue providing your most vital services wherever you go. This small, portable container should hold copies of every vital document as well as some basic supplies such as pen and paper. Consider two kits: it's not much harder than one, and an off-site backup helps ensure that you have needed records. Some basic contents of an Agency Go-Kit are:

- Your disaster plan
- Insurance documentation
- The deed or lease for your facilities
- Legal identification, such as your taxpayer ID number and evidence of exemption status
- Bank information, including all of your account numbers, including personnel contacts
- Documentation for your emergency line of credit
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
- Contact and Emergency Contact information for your staff and key contacts
- Some cash, including coins for phones

> *Getting started:* Get a portable container and write your content list, so you can start adding items over time.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Make sure you know your financial assets, limitations and commitments

It is a good idea for your organization to be aware of its cost of normal operations. Estimate cost increases that might arise from emergencies and be familiar with eligibility prerequisites for aid and reimbursements from federal and other agencies. Be prepared to share how much it costs to provide your disaster services. Some topics to explore include the following:

1. Copies of financial support documentation to have ready
    - Insurance policies
    - The deed or lease for your facilities
    - Bank information, including all of your account numbers, including personnel contacts
    - Legal identification, such as your taxpayer ID number and evidence of exemption status
    - Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

2. Liquid Assets
    - How much cash do you keep in "petty cash?"
    - Do you have $15 - $20 in coins for pay phones?

3. Credit Cards / Lines of Credit
    - What credit cards does your agency own?
    - Where are they?
    - What are the limits of each?
    - Who can sign on each?
    - Do they have emergency credit extensions?
    - Do you have a line of credit immediately available?
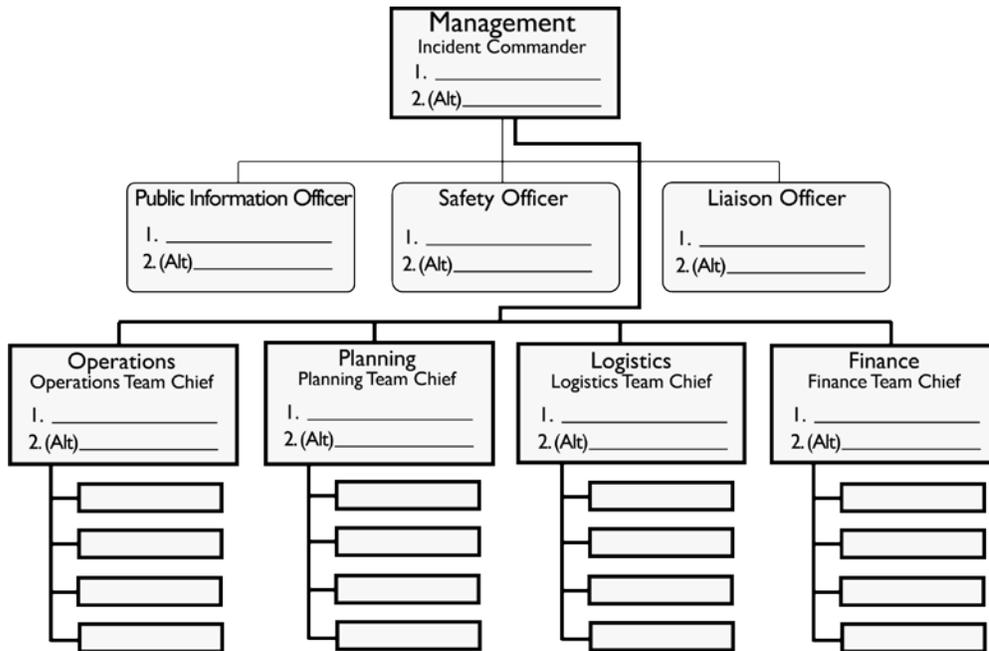   - Who can access the money?

> *Reminder:*
> *Keep this information updated; be sure it reflects any staff or policy changes!*

> *Getting started:* Copy your basic financial information to a safe backup location – paper AND digital is best!

ICS (1)

Make sure you know the Incident Command System for Community Responders

Understanding the Incident Command System that is the core of the National Incident Management System will allow you to organize for managing any situation, coordinate with your community partners, and "speak the language" of the professional responders – which makes you that much easier to help.

Management
Incident Commander
1. _____
2. (Alt)_____

Public Information Officer	Safety Officer	Liaison Officer
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. (Alt)_____	2. (Alt)_____	2. (Alt)_____

Operations	Planning	Logistics	Finance
Operations Team Chief	Planning Team Chief	Logistics Team Chief	Finance Team Chief
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. (Alt)_____	2. (Alt)_____	2. (Alt)_____	2. (Alt)_____

Incident Command: Leads the response; appoints and empowers team leaders; sets tone and standards for response; encourages teamwork and communications.

Safety and Security Officer: Focuses on the safety of all people responding to the incident.

Public Information Officer: Works with the media and distributes messages to the public and local community.

Liaison Officer: Links to and supports external partners and organizations.

Operation Team: Handles key actions including first aid, search and rescue, fire suppression and securing the site.

Planning Team: Gathers information, creates the action plan, thinks ahead and keeps all team members informed and communicating.

Logistics Team: Finds, distributes, and stores all necessary resources (supplies and people) to respond appropriately.

Finance/ Administration Team: Tracks all expenses, claims and activities and is the record keeper for the incident.

> ***Getting started:*** Host a CARD class on ***Incident Command System for Community Responders.***

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ICS

From *Agency Emergency Planning*

ICS (2)

Considering who might do well at certain functions is an excellent practice for understanding ICS and getting people used to the idea. Be careful, though: You never know who will be part of your disaster response team! People you assign to roles may be unable to fulfill that role, distracted, overly stressed, or simply on vacation that day! Be prepared to assign roles when they are needed, and remember that a list like this should be designed for change!

Primary Functions – Possible Candidates	
Incident Commander	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Operations Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Planning Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Logistics Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Finance / Admin Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Support Functions – Possible Candidates	
Safety and Security Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____
Public Information Officer	
Name:_____	Name:_____
Phone:_____	Phone:_____
Alt. Phone:_____	Alt. Phone:_____

Getting started: Brainstorm your "Plan A" candidates for these roles. Ask what roles they see themselves filling.

**For permission to use this material in a training or other capacity,
or to sponsor disaster response trainings for community agencies in Alameda County, contact:**
CARD (Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters)
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CARD is a 501(c)3 corporation and tax-deductible contributions are gratefully accepted.

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http://www.CARDCanHelp.org/donate

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