

Section 3: Preparation

“Any community that fails to prepare – with the expectation that the federal government can offer a life line – will be tragically wrong.” - Michael Leavitt, Former U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services comments regarding a potential pandemic flu outbreak.

To be prepared means having plans and resources in place so that your organization can continue to offer services, support, and hope – even under unusual circumstances. This section of the toolkit will give your organization a guideline to prepare for an emergency. There is a great deal of information in this section of the toolkit, but start small and move to bigger preparation areas as time and personnel become available.

This section includes:

- Preparing the Facility
- Preparing Leadership and Staff
- Preparing for Continuing Operations
- Preparing with Neighboring Organizations
- Preparing the Clients and Members of your Organization



Tools in this section:

- *Insurance Coverage Discussion Form*
- *Emergency Generators*
- *PowerPoint Presentation, “Emergency Preparedness for Leadership and Staff”*
- *Job Action Sheets*
- *Fill-In Incident Command System Chart*
- *Core Preparedness Training Recommendations for Emergencies (including Pandemic Influenza)*
- *Phone Call Tree*
- *Connecting with Clients*
- *Survey of Clients to Assist During Emergencies*
- *Letter of Intent with Local Government*
- *Sample Letter to Partner with a Neighboring Community-based Organization*
- *PowerPoint Presentation, “Are You Ready? Personal and Family Emergency Preparedness”*
- *Planning Guide for Individual and Family Readiness*
- *Sample Email or Letter to Clients on Preparing for Emergencies*
- *PowerPoint Presentation, “Psychological First-Aid”*



Activities in this section:

- *Self-Assessment Questionnaire of Readiness*
- *Individual Job Continuity Planning*
- *Get a Kit Together*

A. Preparing the Facility

Routine facility maintenance is a good business practice. Completing routine maintenance can also minimize greater damage during an emergency. In addition to routine maintenance, there are suggested tasks listed below that will reduce the damage, cost and frustration related to an emergency (*Organizational Facility Checklist and Maintenance Calendar* on pg. 12 can help with this process):

- Complete a facility assessment for safety compliance with electricity, plumbing and water systems, as well as for the building's structural soundness.
- Clearly mark gas and water shut-off valves with legible instructions how to shut off each.
- HVAC system preventive maintenance (functions and control options).
- Assess and inventory all information technology, equipment and furniture, noting the condition.
- Complete repairs as needs are identified.
- Discuss the adequacy of the organization's insurance coverage with the insurance agent.
- Maintain records of all inventories and assessments.
- Post clearly visible emergency numbers by every phone, including 911, poison control center, law enforcement and fire department.
- Identify a storm shelter and procedures.
- Take photographs of buildings for insurance purposes (include all sides of the building and the roof, if possible).
- Store records, insurance policies, recent blueprints and other documents in a safe place with back-up copies off-site.
- Provide safe storage for valuable items.
- Develop a clean-up committee.

Review insurance policies annually.

- Does your insurance policy meet the minimum requirements of your mortgage holder?
- When was the last estimate on the value of property? How accurate are the figures?
- Does your insurance policy cover the cost of any recent additions or high value items?
- Does your insurance policy cover the cost of temporary rental of another facility in the event your facility is severely damaged or destroyed?

Determine **financial arrangements** during a time of emergency, such as:

- Accessing savings accounts
- On-line donations
- Payroll
- Acquisition of supplies and equipment to continue operations during an emergency



Tool: Insurance Coverage Discussion Form

This form can help facilitate an understanding among your organization and with your insurance agent of what insurance your non-profit has and consideration of insurance your group may want to acquire. This form was modified from the *Open for Business Worksheet* by the Institute for Business and Home Safety.

Insurance Agent: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Insurance Policy Information

Type of Insurance	Policy Number	Deductibles	Policy Limits	Coverage (General Description)

Do you need Flood Insurance? Yes No

Do you need business income and extra expense insurance? Yes No

Is your Organization covered for loss of income in the event of an interruption? Yes No

Does your insurance cover the cost of temporary rental of another facility in the event your facility is severely damaged or destroyed? Yes No

What perils or causes of loss does your insurance cover?

Other disaster-related insurance questions.



Tool: Emergency Generators

(From the Florida Center for Assisted Living: Disaster Preparedness Guide for Assisted Living Facilities)

Emergency Generators

In an emergency, electrical power is often interrupted. Generators are expensive, require space, and ongoing maintenance; but under emergency conditions, they might make the difference in being able to serve residents. The following steps will prepare you to make an informed decision.

Should You Purchase Or Rent A Generator or Do You Even Need One?

Most facilities conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether or not they need a generator. Some multi-story buildings that have elevators are required by building codes to have a generator that will provide power to at least one elevator. Generators may also be rented, although it is unlikely that during a crisis, one would be able to be obtained.

Determine How Much Power You Need

- Determine power distribution: What is on separate breakers?
- Whole facility or just critical loads: Determine if you need to power your whole facility or just critical loads, and determine the aggregate electrical load. Consult a qualified electrician to perform an ammeter reading of your electrical distribution box when your facility is running at peak load. Your utility bill may provide peak electrical usage.
- Power for critical loads: Prioritize individual loads (lights, a/c, machines, etc). Decide which require power immediately during an emergency. If you have a separate distribution box to feed critical loads, you may only need enough temporary power for the loads served by that set of circuit breakers. Another method is to take an ammeter reading with just the critical loads running. To determine amperage or voltage for a piece of equipment, check the nameplate.

Develop a Generator Plan

- Generator Location: Generators range in size from the petite to the gigantic! Once you know how much power you need, be sure you have the space to accommodate the generator. You might need to get two smaller ones rather than a large one. It is helpful if the dealer comes to your facility to do an inspection. They can often provide tips and ideas on location, installation and other important concerns. Also check with the local building permit department and air quality board to determine if there are any regulations that govern generator use. Lastly, check with your neighbors. A loud, smoking diesel generator could be a problem to a neighbor.
- Getting the Generator to your Location: Most are towed on semi-trailers or pull trailers. Others are skid mounted and require a forklift. If you are picking up your own generator, make sure you have the right size truck or get a contract with a trucking firm for delivery.
- Getting the Cable Routed from the Generator Outside your Building to the Electrical Distribution Boxes Inside: An open door or window will work, but not in extreme weather. Consider installing a weather head or cable access door that can be closed when not in use.
- Adequate Fuel: You must have extra fuel if you need to run for an extended period of time. Ideally, have enough fuel for three days or more. An auxiliary tank of fuel is important. If you are in a very cold climate, you will need special winter fuel. Always have

at least two vendors on contract, in case one runs out or has difficulty delivering to your area.

- **Hooking Up and Maintaining the Generator:** If you don't have trained people on site, you will need an electrical contractor, or have someone train and certify your staff. A survey of your facility and your electrical needs by a licensed electrician is essential. You may need to consider an exterior outlet on your building to be able to connect a generator.
- **Automatic Bus Transfer Switch (ABT):** The ABT switch has power coming into the switch from the normal power source and from the emergency power source. The wires leading to the building are usually connected to the normal power source. In the event the normal power is lost, the ABT immediately transfers the building to the emergency power source. When normal power is restored, the ABT shifts the building back to normal power. The switch that automatically starts the emergency generator is often built into the ABT. This switch automatically starts the emergency generator when normal power is lost, and shuts down the generator when normal power is restored.
- **Document the Plan:** Write the generator plan documenting the entire process from obtaining the equipment, installation and maintenance.

Generators—How to Determine the Size You Need

- Contact a qualified electrician or electrical engineer to determine actual load, and then determine the critical and secondary loads. As an example, the following questions and methods can be used to determine your needs.
- If you have the electrical line diagrams, you can add the circuits together that you intend to power from the generator.
 - Do you have an existing transfer switch that is rated to accommodate the capacity size of the generator?
 - Do you want to provide a full or partial backup of current building?
 - Is the business growing? Shrinking?
 - Do you want full load on generator or partial load?

The electrician must determine the amount of current you need and at what voltage. Then a generator company can tell you the size. If you base it on current load, you will get a minimum size to support those needs. Your other needs will determine the cost to increase your capacity. The installation cost is basically the same in size ranges.

B. Preparing the Leadership and Staff

Preparing employees and making work accommodations are important parts of an Organization's emergency preparedness (see the *PowerPoint Presentation, "Emergency Preparedness for Leadership and Staff"* on pg. 27). Organization employees and volunteers will be on the front line of emergency response for communications, maintaining the essential functions of the organization, and providing emotional support for the clients. Consider the following when preparing employees/volunteers:

- Orient and provide on-going training on the organization's emergency plan to help reduce anxiety and allow staff/volunteers to function in an emergency (see the *Self-Assessment Questionnaire of Readiness* activity on pg. 80).
- Post the communication plan and emergency numbers in appropriate locations to facilitate communication between organization staff, clients, volunteers, emergency management and public health.
- Provide cross-training of staff to maintain essential functions.
- Plan for changes in work space and location that may be necessary depending on the type and extent of the emergency (see the *Individual Job Continuity Planning* activity on pg. 81).
- Consider how to protect employees and their families if the employee is required to be exposed to hazardous situations (i.e. provide personal protective equipment, extend sick leave benefits etc.).

Command Structure

In any emergency response, it is critical that clear lines of authority exist within the organization to make sure there is timely and efficient decision-making. It is important that you define your command structure and the authority for decision-making. Before an event, you must identify the organization's incident commander and identify who is in charge if the incident commander is not available. This is an important aspect of your emergency plan because it will help you run efficiently in an emergency and allow other organizations to communicate with you effectively.

Incident Command Structure (ICS) is a universally used structure in the United States for emergency response – but it takes planning to be able to use it. It can be used for organizations both large and small. If you have a small organization, the same person may fill multiple spots on the ICS organizational chart. Just be sure that one person is not disproportionately overburdened with their roles in an emergency. It is important to use this command structure and job function system because all other organizations (including police, fire, and government) will be using it. If we are all on the same page, communication and collaboration will be much more efficient.

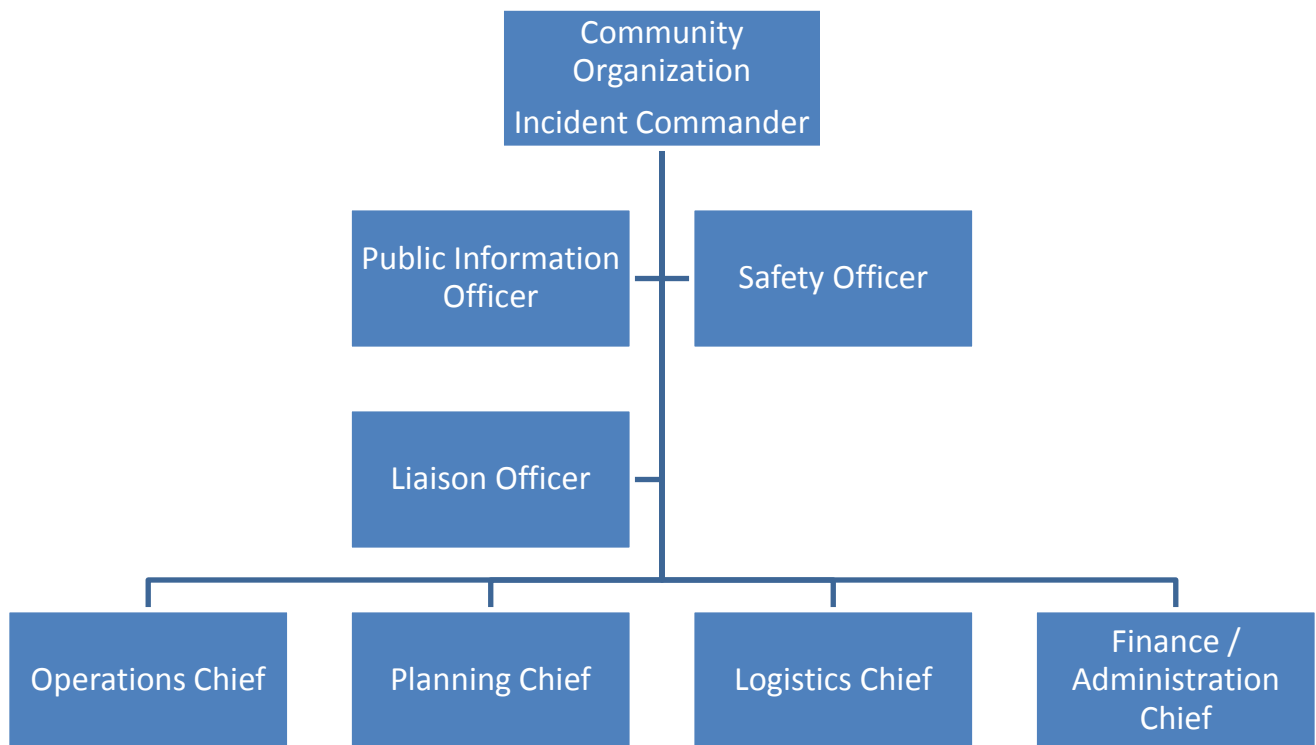
Basic ICS Job Functions (see *Job Action Sheets* on pg. 34-42):

- **Incident Commander:** Leads the response, appoints team leaders, approves plans and key actions (president, administrator).
- **Operations Chief:** Handles key actions including first-aid, search and rescue, fire suppression, securing the site (office staff, direct care staff).
- **Planning Chief:** Gathers information, thinks ahead, makes and revises action plans and keeps all team members informed and functioning.
- **Logistics Chief:** Finds, distributes and stores all necessary resources (maintenance supervisor).
- **Finance Chief:** Tracks all expenses, claims, activities and personnel time, and is the record keeper for the incident (office staff, accounts department, payroll).

- **Public Information Officer:** Provides reliable information to staff, visitors, families, news media, and concerned others as approved by the Incident Commander.
- **Safety Officer:** Ensures safety of staff and members, and monitors and corrects hazardous conditions. Has the authority to halt any activity that poses a threat to life and health.
- **Liaison Officer:** Is the point of contact between the Incident Commander and partner organizations (examples include local public health liaison officer, the police department, and other community-based organizations).

Depending on the size of the facility, one person may occupy multiple positions. You do not need to activate all positions – only activate what you need for the incident. This is your basic Incident Command Structure.

Community Organizations Incident Command Structure Chart Example
(See the *Fill-In ICS Chart* on pg. 43)



Training

Make sure your staff is mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared to respond. In an emergency, the first concern of staff will be the safety and welfare of their family members. Your staff is more likely to be available to respond in emergency situations if they know that their family members are safe. Encourage staff to develop their own personal emergency preparedness plans for their families (see *Planning Guide for Individual and Family Readiness* on pg. 65).

A **training plan** should be developed and implemented for your staff, and address the following:

1. Conducting exercises and unannounced drills of all aspects of the Emergency Operations Plan at least annually.
2. Scheduling employee/volunteer orientation training and in-service training on the content of the Emergency Plan.
3. Ensuring employees/volunteers know their individual responsibilities and roles during an event:
 - a. Train all staff and volunteers in basic emergency preparedness regularly.
 - b. Hold first-aid and CPR classes.
 - c. Include school or childcare staff in emergency/disaster training.
 - d. Prepare alternative staff who could lead in the absence of administrative or leadership staff.
 - e. Encourage and support staff and key volunteers to have family or home emergency plans.
 - f. Ensure all staff members have an opportunity to check on their homes and family members as soon as possible following an emergency.
4. Document all training and testing.
5. Develop procedures for correcting deficiencies noted during exercises.
6. Understand that not all staff will be able to be present during an emergency. Expect for staff levels to be reduced by 20 to 40%.

Training and preparing staff to be a part of your emergency plans can feel a bit overwhelming. However, there are a number of basic and advanced trainings that are available for free online. See the *Core Preparedness Training Recommendations for Emergencies (Including Pandemic Influenza)* tool on pg. 44 for specific training descriptions and websites.

Communication

Emergencies can happen on any day and at any time. Make sure that you have the ability to contact your staff and leadership in the event of an emergency. Maintain a contact list for your essential personnel. On your contact list be sure to have all possible phone numbers, emails, and home addresses (see the *Phone Call Tree* on pg. 47).



Tool: PowerPoint Presentation, "Emergency Preparedness for Leadership and Staff"

Leadership and Staff Presentation on Emergency Preparedness

[Insert your organization title, logo
& name here]

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A Case for Preparing for Emergency vs. Disaster



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Overview

- Definitions and principles
- Hazard Awareness
- Phases of Emergency Planning
- Our Organizational Plans
- Training Resources

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Natural Disasters In Our Area



- Tornadoes
- Winter Storms
- Power Outage
- Floods
- Fires
- Infectious Disease



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Purpose of Planning for an Emergency:

- Minimize damage
- Ensure the safety of staff and clients
- Protect vital records/assets
- Allow for self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours
- Provide for continuity of operations

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Intentional Man-Made Disasters



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Preparing Makes Sense

During an emergency, help may not be available immediately

Community preparedness starts with the individual

Preparing reduces anxiety



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Planning/Preparedness

- Activities that serve to develop the response capabilities
- Includes:
 - Written plan
 - Education/training
 - Practicing the plan
 - Evaluating the plan and modifying it

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Phases of Disaster Preparedness

- Mitigation
- Planning/Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

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Response

- Activities that help reduce casualties and damage, speeding recovery.
- Includes:
 - Activating your organizations Incident Command System (ICS)
 - Activating response activities
 - Providing support
 - Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

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Mitigation

- Acting before disaster strikes to prevent the occurrence of the disaster permanently or to reduce the effects of the disaster when it occurs.
- Entails:
 - Hazard analysis
 - Resource identification

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Recovery

- Activities that provide a return to normalcy
- Includes both short and long term efforts

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National Incident Management System (NIMS)

- Comprehensive, nationwide approach to incident management
- Sets forth common operating principles and organization for all agencies and for all incidents
- Flexible and applicable for all incidents
- Promotes all-hazard preparedness
- NIMS guides the Incident Command System (ICS)

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ICS Job Functions

- **Incident Commander**
 - Leads response, appoints team leaders, approves plans and key actions (CEO, administrator)
- **Operations Team**
 - Handles key actions including first-aid, search and rescue, fire suppression, securing site (office staff, direct care staff)
- **Planning Team**
 - Gathers information, thinks ahead, makes and revises action plans, and keeps all team members informed and communicating

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Incident Command System (ICS)

- Is a standardized management tool used across all organizations and all levels
- May be used for planned events, natural disasters, or acts of terrorism
- Helps to facilitate communication during an incident
- Helps to maintain a manageable span of control
- Upholds the need for planning a response to various incidents

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ICS Job Functions

- **Logistics Team:**
 - Finds, distributes, and stores all necessary resources (maintenance supervisor)
- **Finance Team:**
 - Tracks all expenses, claims, activities and personnel time, and is the record keeper for the incident (office staff, accounts dept, payroll)

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ICS Organizational Chart

{Graphic}

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ICS Job Functions

- **Public Information Officer**
 - Provides reliable information to staff, visitors and families, the news media and concerned others as approved by the Incident Commander.
- **Safety Officer**
 - Ensures safety of staff and clients, monitors and corrects hazardous conditions. Has the authority to halt any activity that poses a threat to life and health.
- **Liaison Officer**
 - The point of contact between the incident commander and partner organizations (partners could include local public health liaison officer, police department, other organizations)

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Disaster Preparedness Committee

Membership of the Disaster Preparedness Committee may include but is not be limited to the:

- Board of Directors
- Managers/leadership
- Maintenance staff
- Receptionist
- Other staff members
- Youth leaders
- Volunteers or clients with experience in engineering, plumbing, construction, informational technologies, education, finance and health professionals

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Family Readiness

- Basic individual and family disaster preparedness is the foundation of all the disaster planning
- Provide this education to your organization and encourage your clients to take some control and function in a disaster
- Planning helps to reduce stress and worry during a disaster event

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Disaster Preparedness Committee

Responsibilities of the Committee:

- Provide education on disaster preparedness to your clients
- Publish Disaster Preparedness Committee meeting minutes
- Publish articles in bulletin or newsletter on disaster preparedness
- Encourage clients, staff/leadership and volunteers to help the entire community
- Get acquainted with the disaster preparedness process
- Assess types of disasters that may be experienced by your organization
- Review difficult events previously experienced by the organization and their response
- Make an emergency preparedness plan or modify an existing one
- Identify programs and outreach activities that could assist the surrounding committee during disasters
- Create a Disaster Response Team (those individuals who will be prepared to help in an emergency)

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Communication

- Must establish a plan for contacting staff and leaders to be able to respond to an emergency
- Maintain a contact list for your essential personnel (phone numbers, emails, and home addresses)
- *Tool: Example Phone Call Tree and Activity: Communication Exercise*

Continuity of Operations Planning

- Planning to continue operations during an emergency helps to identify how you plan on carrying out your job or helping in the event of an emergency (Use Activity: Individual Continuity Planning Questions to help!)
- You should think about:
 - what your specific job functions are,
 - how they are done normally,
 - how they could be performed outside of the norm,
 - how you would communicate with your organization.

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Communication May Be Interrupted



- Land lines may be down
- Cell phone lines may be overwhelmed
- Power outage may impede use of cordless telephone or cell phone
- Back-up methods of communication are critical

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Know the Facility Evacuation Procedure

- Lock the facility (unless fire evacuation)
- Turn off utilities if time permits
- Post a note and/or initiate emergency communication plan
- Go to designated meeting site
- Mark exits
- Post maps in the facility with exit routes indicated

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Caring for Our Clients

- Priorities:
 - Offer support and healing
 - Offer education and encouragement with planning before an emergency
 - Discuss our emergency plans with our clients and volunteers
 - [Enter in any other priorities or planning goals you have set]

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Facility “Sheltering-in-Place”

- Term used by emergency planners
- Occurs following release of biological or infectious disease, or with a natural disaster
- Instruction to shelter-in-place will come from emergency or public health officials
- Usually occurs over a few hours or a day
- Designate a ‘safe place’ in the facility prior to an event
- Due to unpredictability of any emergency situation, it may be beneficial for each staff member to “stockpile” a small bag in your ‘safe place’ with food, water, a change of clothes, first-aid supplies, etc

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In case of disease outbreak: Prevent the Spread of Disease at Work

Hand Hygiene:

- Wash hands frequently
- Wash vigorously for 15-20 seconds
- Use warm water and soap
- Rinse and dry thoroughly
- Use alcohol-based hand rubs if hands are not visibly soiled



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Facility Safety

- What to do in a power outage
- Utility and water shut off
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detector
- How to dial 911
- Learn first aid and CPR
- Use of fire extinguisher

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In Case of Disease Outbreak: Prevent Spread at Work

Respiratory Etiquette:

- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or fabric
- If you use tissues- dispose of after each use
- Keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth



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Prepare to Care for Ill Family & Clients

- Have a thermometer
- Have fever reducing medications appropriate for your family
- Ensure you have liquids on hand to push fluids for fever and dehydration
- Learn fever reduction and dehydration prevention techniques
- Watch for information from the health department in times of community illnesses
- Have family physician and after hours phone numbers readily available

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Training

- **Tool: Core Preparedness Training Recommendations for Emergencies (Including Pandemic Influenza)**
- It is recommended that staff and employees complete training applicable to their responsibilities as described below. While directed towards a response to pandemic, the skills gained from these trainings can be applied to other major incidents.

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Special or Vulnerable Population

- **At a much greater risk of injury or death during a disaster situation**
- We can help by:
 - Conducting a survey of vulnerable clients of your organization and identifying their needs.
 - Including the Special/Vulnerable Needs Population on the organization's telephone tree. (Maintain a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers for vulnerable clients and their caregivers).
 - Pairing vulnerable clients with volunteers or family for on-going communication and monitoring.
 - Assisting the special needs individual in developing a communication and emergency preparedness plan.

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Training

General Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System - Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions - Family and Personal Preparedness 	Supervisors or Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions - Continuity of Operations - FEMA IS 100 - FEMA IS 200
Senior Administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FEMA 700, 100, 200 - Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions - Continuity of Operations 	Specialty Trainings (for staff with specialized response roles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infection control and Personal Protective Equipment - Maintaining crucial work functions - Exercise Training - Radio equipment training

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Our Organization Planning

- [Explain where you currently are in the overall planning process]
- [Explain your partnership with Local Public Health or Emergency Management – emphasize the team effort!]

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Community Response

- [Enter your organization's specific plans – if you have them. See 'Continuity Operations: Prepare to Serve your Community' section of the Toolkit for Ideas]

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Discuss Staff Role in Response

- [Enter your staff's role in planning and responding to the organization's specific plans – if you have them. See 'Continuity Operations: Prepare to Serve your Community' section of the Toolkit for ideas]

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Volunteer, Get Trained

- Organizations can sign-up to help in a disaster
 - Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer (MRC)
www.mnresponds.org
 - Join a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Take classes & workshops:
 - Red Cross
 - Local Public Health Department



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Stay Informed

Know where to go to get emergency information:

- Radio: WCCO 830 AM
- TV: All Major Local Channels
- Local cable stations
- City & Emergency Preparedness Websites

For limited English speakers:

- Watch Minnesota public television channel 17
- Call ECHO phone line #1-888-883-8831 (10 languages) www.echominnesota.org

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Activity

- Take the Self-Assessment Questionnaire to determine your readiness!

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Information Resources

Free Guide: Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness, FEMA, Call for free guide: 1-800-480-2520

Emergency Preparedness Websites

www.ready.gov (Homeland Security)
www.redcross.org or www.mpleredcross.org (phone #: 612-871-7676)
www.hsem.state.mn.us (Minnesota Homeland Security & Emergency Management)

Public Health Emergency Preparedness/Informational Websites

www.health.state.mn.us (Minnesota Department of Health)
www.echominnesota.mn.us (Emergency and Community Health Outreach)
• Website provides monthly TPT 17 program schedule of safety and health topics in six different languages. In an emergency would also have multi-language phone messages.

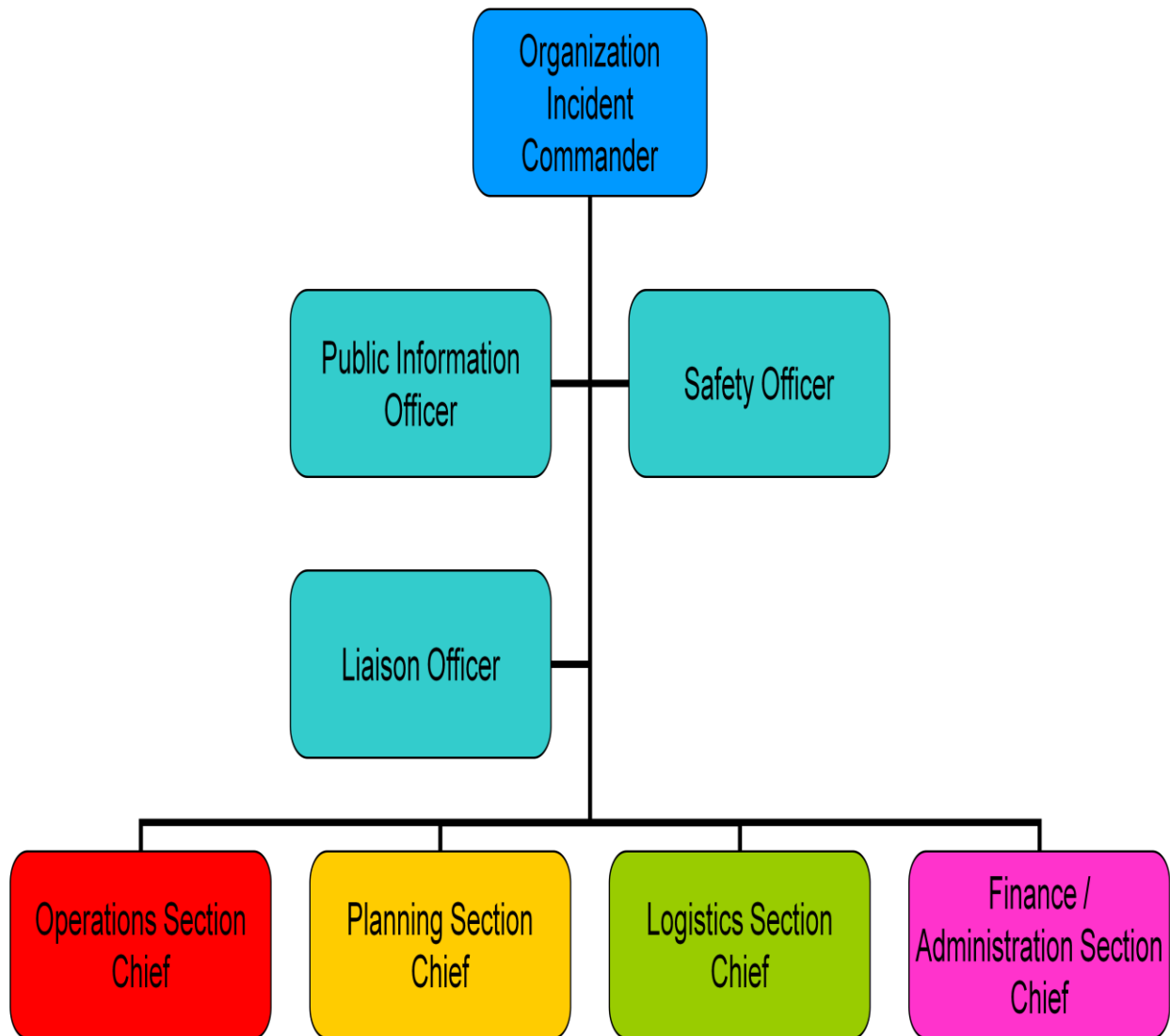
www.pandemicflu.gov (U.S. Health and Human Services)
www.cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

City Websites- [insert your local city website here]

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ICS Organizational Chart





Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Incident Commander (IC)

Reports to: Local Government Incident Commander

Mission: Give overall emergency response direction for the organization.

What to do Immediately:

- Read this entire Job Action Sheet.
- Get a full understanding of what is the emergency or disaster.
- Appoint your staff and team leaders (use your ICS Chart) as needed for this response; distribute their specific Job Action Sheets to them.
- Implement your plan to continue your normal services (if applicable).
- Work as a team to establish priorities or objectives for the response to the emergency.
- Contact relevant external agencies (like the local government or your neighboring partners).

What to do to Respond:

- Authorize resource allocation as needed or requested (use your team to help).
- Schedule routine meetings with your staff and team leaders to receive updates.
- Maintain contact with relevant agencies (like the local government or your neighboring partners).

For an Extended Response:

- Watch your staff for status and signs of stress and take care of any problems immediately.
- Provide rest periods for staff.
- Prepare updates as needed and give them to the local government incident commander.
- Prepare updates for your staff and clients.
- Plan for the possibility of extended response efforts.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Operations Section Chief

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Coordinate the implementation of priorities, goals, and objectives. Direct the preparation of specific emergency response plans and request resources as necessary.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Enlist the help of others to work under you during response efforts. Clearly define their role in helping you do your job so there is no confusion.
- Update your assistants on the situation and the response plan as you learn it from the Incident Commander.
- Identify and report any resources needed for the response effort to Liaison Officer and/or the Logistics Section Chief.

What to do to Respond:

- Brief the Incident Commander routinely on the status of the Operations Section. (How are your response efforts going?)
- Request resources as needed to help with your response effort.

For an Extended Response:

- Maintain documentation of all actions and decisions (this will help with continued response and recovery from the emergency).
- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Plan for the possibility of extended deployment.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Planning Section Chief

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Gather information, think ahead, make and revise actions for response efforts, and keep the team informed and functioning.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Enlist the help of others to work under you during response efforts. Clearly define their role in helping you do your job so there is no confusion.
- Update your assistants on the situation as you learn it from the Incident Commander.
- Work with the Operations Chief to determine how to meet the team's priorities and objectives.
- Identify and establish access to resources as needed.
- Work with the Logistics Section Chief for technical support and supply needs.
- Collect, interpret, and synthesize information regarding status and response of incident and provide reports to the Incident Commander.

What to do to Respond:

- Assemble information from updated reports you receive from the other section chiefs.

For an Extended Response:

- Continue to receive updated reports from section chiefs.
- Maintain documentation of all actions and decisions (this will help with continued response and recovery from the emergency).
- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Prepare end of emergency report and present to Incident Commander or local government, as necessary.
- Plan for the possibility of extended deployment.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Logistics Section Chief

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Find, distribute, and store all necessary resources for the response effort. Act as a maintenance or facility supervisor.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Enlist the help of others to work under you during response efforts. Clearly define their role in helping you do your job so there is no confusion.
- Advise the Incident Commander on current logistical service and support status (especially when working with the local government or neighboring agencies).

What to do to Respond:

- Update Logistics Section staff of new developments and receive status reports.
- Secure areas as needed to limit unauthorized personnel access.
- Obtain information and updates regularly from other leaders and staff.
- Prepare to manage large numbers of potential volunteers.
- Work with Public Information Officer (PIO) to establish areas for non-staff personnel.
- Obtain supplies as requested by Planning or Operations Sections.

For an Extended Response:

- Maintain documentation of all actions and decisions (this will help with continued response and recovery from the emergency).
- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Plan for the possibility of extended deployment.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Finance/Administration Section Chief

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Monitor the utilization of financial assets and human resources: track all expenses, claims, activities, and personnel time. Ensure the documentation of expenditures relevant to the emergency incident. Authorize expenditures to carry out the goals and objectives of the response effort.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Enlist the help of others to work under you during response efforts. Clearly define their role in helping you do your job so there is no confusion.

What to do to Respond:

- Approve a "cost-to-date" incident financial status in agreement with the Incident Commander.
- Summarize financial data as often as required by the nature of the incident, relative to personnel and hours worked, supplies and miscellaneous expenses including facilities and equipment.
- Obtain information and updates regularly from other leaders and staff.
- Authorize utilization or diversion of financial resources.

For an Extended Response:

- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Coordinate response regarding staff work-related issues, assignments and questions, and work with the leadership as appropriate.
- Coordinate injury or incident reporting procedures and protocol with Safety Officer.
- Create an end of incident report for the Incident Commander and the organization.
- Plan for the possibility of extended deployment.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Public Information Officer (PIO)

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Provide reliable information to staff, visitors, and families. Give information regarding the response efforts to the media and your local government (only one PIO is needed).

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.

What to do to Respond:

- Ensure that all information that is distributed has the approval of the Incident Commander and/or your local government's PIO.
- Inform all people who are not part of the response effort of the areas which they may have access to and those which are restricted.
- Work closely with the Safety Officer.
- Work with the Liaison Officer to distribute information that is consistent with neighboring partners and the local government.
- Arrange interviews, teleconferences, video conferences, satellite broadcasts, web site revisions, broadcast faxes, etc., with approval from the Incident Commander.
- Change messages and information as you receive it from reliable sources (i.e. your local government, state government, etc).

For an Extended Response:

- Review updates appropriately.
- Notify local government about your organization's response status.
- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Plan for the possibility of extended deployment.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Safety Officer

Reports to: Incident Commander

Mission: Keep staff, clients, and volunteers safe by monitoring and correcting hazardous conditions and halt them if necessary.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from your Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Establish a “Safety Post” where you will be located and inform others of this location.
- Review your organization’s plan for any safety implications, rules, or suggestions.

What to do to Respond:

- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- Keep all staff alert to the need to identify and report all hazards and unsafe conditions.
- Ensure that all accidents involving staff, volunteers or clients are documented.
- Work with Logistics to secure areas that have limited unauthorized access.
- Tell the Incident Commander and staff immediately of any unsafe or hazardous situation.
- Schedule routine updates with the Incident Commander.

For an Extended Response:

- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report any issues. Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Plan for the possibility of extended response efforts.



Tool: Job Action Sheets for ICS

Liaison Officer

Reports: Incident Commander

Mission: Function as contact person for representatives from other agencies.

What to do Immediately:

- Receive job and Job Action Sheet from Agency Incident Commander.
- Read this entire Job Action Sheet and review organizational chart.
- Get updated on the situation from the Incident Commander.
- Establish contact with other agencies (like your neighboring partners).
- Keep your local government updated on your organization's response efforts.

What to do to Respond:

- Respond to requests and complaints from incident personnel regarding your organization's issues.
- Relay any special information obtained to the right people in your organization so your response can continue (e.g. any special emergency conditions).
- Keep your local government updated on your organization's response efforts.
- Monitor any current or potential inter-organizational problems and report them to the correct people.

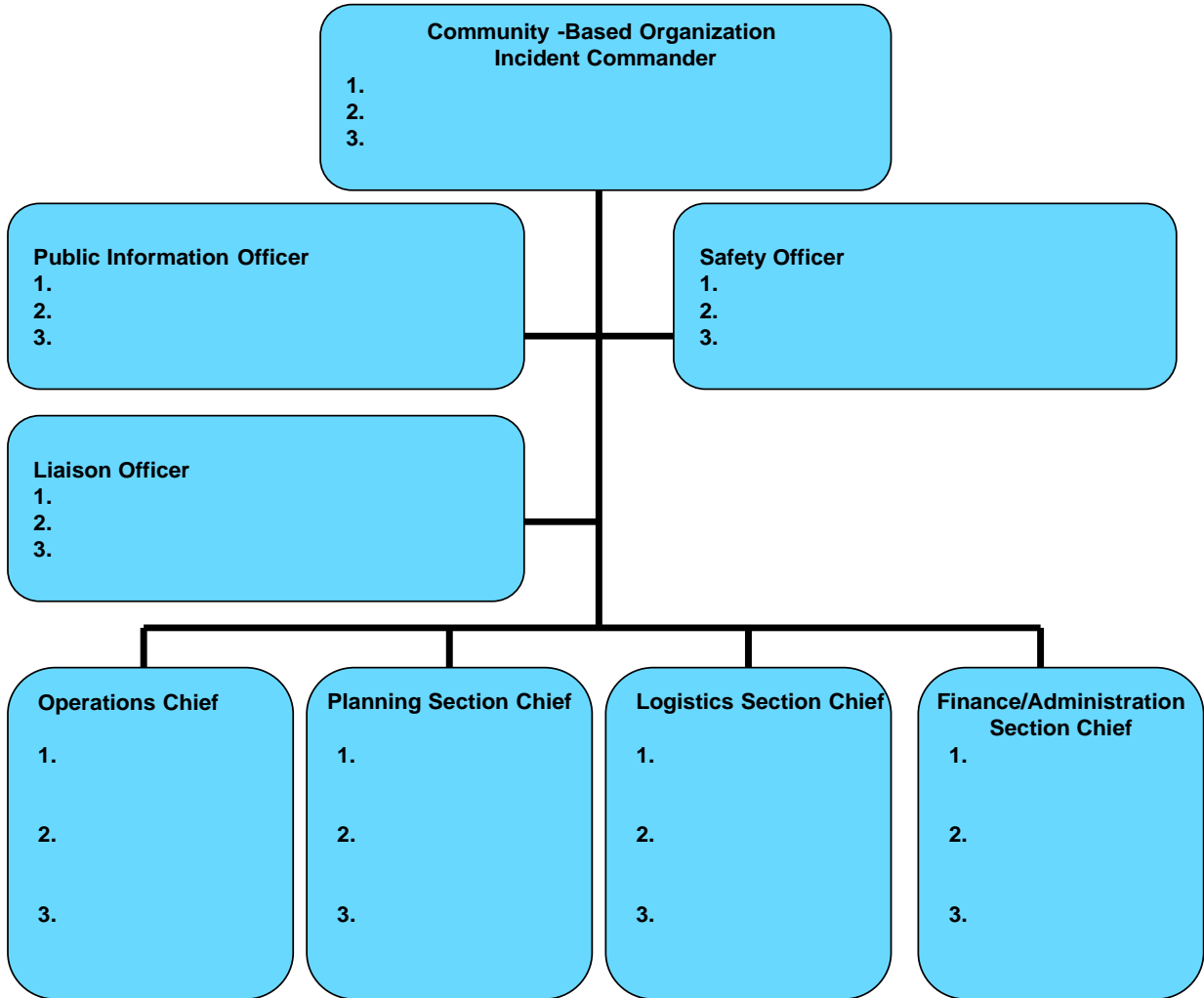
For an Extended Response:

- Maintain a list of all neighboring partners and their available resources.
- Watch all staff for signs of stress. Report issues to the Safety Officer.
- Provide rest periods and relief for staff.
- Plan for the possibility of extended response efforts.



Tool: Fill-In Incident Command System Chart

Fill in the chart with the individuals who may take on these specific roles during an emergency response. It is best to have three potential candidates for each position. Add phone numbers on this sheet to help with the communication process. You may not need all of the jobs for an emergency. Remind individuals that filling this out completely is for “just in case” purposes. Use the *Job Action Sheets* tool in this section for help.





*Tool: Core Preparedness Training Recommendations for Emergencies
(Including Pandemic Influenza)*

It is recommended that staff and volunteers (as appropriate) complete training applicable to their responsibilities as described below. While directed towards a response to a pandemic, the skills gained from these trainings can be applied to other major incidents.

Senior Administrators

- FEMA 700, 100, 200
- Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions
- Continuity of Operations

Supervisors or Managers

- Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions
- Continuity of Operations
- FEMA IS 100
- FEMA IS 200

General Staff

- Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS)
- Pandemic Flu Non-Pharmaceutical & Community Interventions
- Family and Personal Preparedness

Specialty Trainings (for staff with specialized response roles)

- Infection control and Personal Protective Equipment
- Maintaining crucial work functions
- Exercise Training
- Radio equipment training

Trainings	Description	Availability
FEMA IS 700a	NIMS An Introduction	http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700a.asp
FEMA IS 100.b	Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS-100	http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is100b.asp
FEMA IS 200.b	ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents - ICS 200	http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS200b.asp
NIMS/ICS Introduction	Introduction to National Incident Management System and the Incident Command system	http://www.sph.umn.edu/ce/trainings/coursepage.asp?activityId=8187 "The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS): A Primer for Volunteers"
Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation	Planning guidelines that outline steps for organizations in enacting mitigation strategies.	http://www.flu.gov/professional/community/commitigation.html
Family Personal Preparedness (also available in Spanish and Hmong)	Planning steps individuals or families would take to stay safe and healthy in an emergency	www.nursing.umn.edu/MERET/MERET_Courses/PFER_module.html
Continuity of Operations Planning	Introduction to Continuity of Operations Planning (more intensive training: FEMA IS-547a) or Continuity of Operations Planning awareness (less intensive training: FEMA IS-546).	FEMA IS 547: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS547a.asp FEMA IS 546: http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is546.asp
Psychological First Aid	An approach for assisting people in the immediate aftermath of disaster to reduce initial distress, and to foster short and long-term adaptive functioning.	Classroom session – contact Nancy Carlson, MN Department of Health (651-201-5707) or Bloomington Public Health (952-563-8900)

What is a Call down Procedure and Why Is It Useful?

A call down is a series of telephone calls from one person to the next used to relay specific information. An established and exercised call down protocol can be used during emergency situations, such as a flu pandemic, to deliver urgent information to and for communication among clients. This sample call-down procedure is intended to be adapted for use by individual organizations.

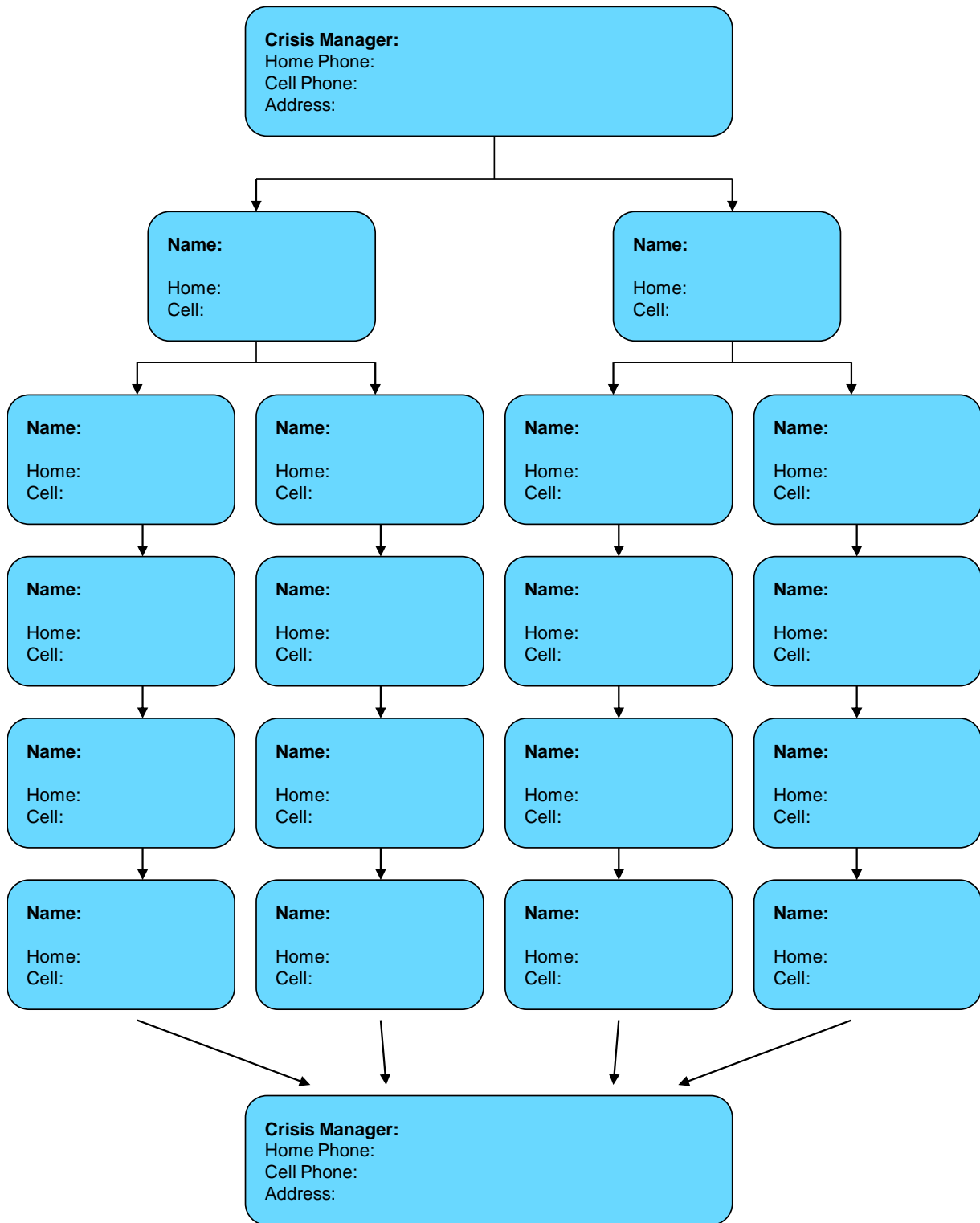
- Using the phone tree system can spread a message quickly and efficiently to a large number of people.
- Hold message drills regularly to test your phone tree for effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. The drill also helps to update phone numbers.

When Calling:

- The person at the top will start the tree. It may be helpful to have a brief script complete with the specific action.
- Ask the person to get paper and pencil to write specifics.
- Give facts about the event.
- Ensure that you have alternative phone numbers, such as work and cell phone numbers, in case the message needs immediate action.
- If nobody answers, leave a message and call the next person. This should ensure that everyone gets the information in a timely fashion.
- Confirm they will be making the next call on the list.
- Prearrange with staff at the end of the list to contact the person at the top once they receive the message. The *LAST* person(s) on the phone tree should *CALL THE FIRST* person to ensure that the tree is completed and that the message was accurate.



Tool: Example Phone Call Tree



C. Preparing for Continuing Operations

Preparing an organization and facility for emergency takes time and discussion. The Emergency Preparedness Committee can prepare and plan for your organization to offer services during an emergency or disaster (see *Section 2: How to Start* on pg. 3 for more information on developing this committee). Your planned response to an emergency should emulate your organization's mission, goals, or objectives.

1. **Prepare to Serve Your Clients** (see the "Preparing your Organization's Clients and Members" section on pg. 56):
 - a. Help your clients learn what to do in an emergency and how to help one another.
 - b. Collect emergency/disaster preparedness items such as flashlights, first-aid kits, blankets, etc.
 - c. Before an emergency establish a list of clients who would be considered "at-risk" due to disabilities, age (very young or elderly), and transportation disadvantages, chronic medical disorders, or non-English speaking. Designate a group to call individuals on this list before a storm/disaster and to follow up afterward. In the event of an evacuation, this group could also call local emergency management to inform them of these individuals or help these individuals get to safety (see the *Survey of Volunteers to Assist during Emergencies* on pg. 51 and *Connecting with Clients* on pg. 50).
 - d. Become familiar with resources within your organization and within your community; identify functions, and know how to use them (see the *Survey of Volunteers to Assist during Emergencies* on pg. 51).
2. **Plan to Resume Services as Soon as Possible:**
 - a. Consider providing supportive services through a number of alternative communication vehicles (internet, telephone, email, etc).
 - b. Prepare to resume essential services immediately, even in temporary or damaged facilities.
 - c. Determine how you will publicize when essential services and crisis care will be offered.
 - d. Determine a suitable alternative facility site (such as a school or nearby church) and get an estimate of what it would cost to rent/use. If possible, get an informal arrangement that would allow your services to relocate quickly. This might be a reciprocal agreement with another local community organization (see *Sample Letter to Partner with a Neighboring Community-based Organization* on pg. 54).
3. **Prepare to Serve Your Community:** Below are ideas on ways you can serve your community in the event of an emergency. These are simply options to think about. It is best to stick with a function that you may already perform or focus on one function and plan for it. Also, use the *Letter of Intent with Local Government* on pg. 52 to let others know about your plans and capabilities.
 - a. Develop a process for raising funds for emergency response and for receiving funds from outside sources.
 - b. Arrange agreements to work with the American Red Cross, other emergency management agencies, and your local (city or county) public health department (see *Resources* on pg. 194).

- c. Become an American Red Cross Emergency Shelter. Before seeking to become a shelter, get the approval of the administrative body of your organization. The American Red Cross may use places community organizations close to the emergency area as a temporary shelter. Prior certification is required. Work with your local American Red Cross chapter to meet requirements for a certified site.
- d. Determine if your facility can be used to house volunteers. Make the decision prior to a disaster/emergency. Plans should be made to care totally for these individuals – thus lessening their impact on the broader systems of food, shelter, water, etc. Inform other communities of your willingness to house volunteers.
- e. Develop a plan to receive, organize, and distribute food and other needed items including cleaning supplies, hygiene supplies, and baby supplies.
- f. Organize workers. Organize volunteer work crews to help in your area in times of disaster/emergency.
- g. Stockpile essential items before an emergency for use during an emergency.
- h. Identify and write down your organization's resources (including human resources) and update this list annually (see the *Survey of Volunteers to Assist During Emergencies* on pg. 51 and *Letter of Intent with Local Government* on pg. 52).
- i. Develop a plan to work with local first responder agencies (i.e. police, fire, EMS) to “adopt” their station to provide collective aide to the station (meals, blankets, clean clothes) or to the first responders' families.



Tool: Connecting with Clients

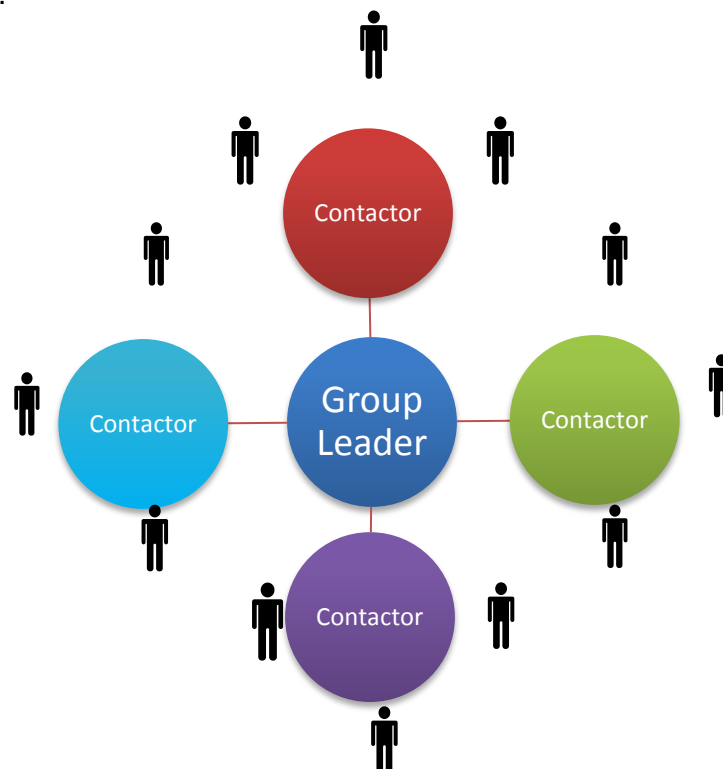
This tool is a guideline and offers some tips on how to connect clients with your organization's volunteers and staff to help maintain contact with your organization's vulnerable or at-risk populations.

Keys to Making Member Connections for Emergency Preparedness:

1. Establish Group Leaders and Connectors to help coordinate connecting volunteers with clients so the program moves smoothly.
2. Organize clients and volunteer contactors by geographical location. Try to group clients and volunteers together who live close to one another so they can get to one another's homes easily if they are unable to drive, or to provide help quickly following an emergency.
3. Don't forget anyone. Include everyone and anyone who wants to be connected to others. Many may simply need a call, while others may need help getting medications, food, water or alternative sheltering arrangements.
4. Make short but frequent contact. The contacts don't have to be long letters, visits or phone calls. Shorter and more frequent "touching" base are probably more productive than long infrequent visits.
5. Get new clients involved in this program as soon as they feel comfortable.

What do the Group Leaders do?

The Group Leader is responsible for checking in with the Contactors/volunteers who will in turn check in with the clients following an emergency or to pass along useful information. They should keep a list of the Contactors' and clients' contact information available at home and at their organization's office so others can access it if necessary. All the participating clients should also have the Contactors' contact information so they can provide updates as necessary. Group Leaders may also want to make calls or touch base with clients if there is an unexpected absence among them.





Tool: Survey for Volunteers to Assist During Emergencies

Local government and public health departments are encouraging community-based organizations to prepare for all types of emergencies including a pandemic influenza outbreak. Community-based organizations will play a critical role in a successful response effort to emergencies and disasters alike. They are often one of the first places community members turn to for support during a time of crisis. In addition, community-based organizations already know who the more vulnerable members of their community are and have the skills required to provide emotional support to those in need. Together, you and your organization can partner to successfully prepare and respond to those in need during an emergency.

This questionnaire is intended to capture your capabilities/willingness to help during an emergency with vulnerable or at-risk individuals. Please keep in mind that there are a number of emergencies we may be impacted by including disease (like the H1N1 flu), tornados, flooding, severe cold and hot weather, and terrorism. Nothing on this document commits you to do this work. This is not a binding agreement, but rather a listing of what you would be willing to try to do to prepare and respond during a local emergency, given your available resources at the time.

Your Information

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone Number (home) _____ (cell) _____

Email _____

In Case of Emergency Contact _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ (Cell or Work) _____

Please list any skills or abilities you possess that you would be willing to use to help [Fill in Community-Based Organization's Name] during the event of an emergency (i.e. medical training, counseling experience, foreign language fluency, tool/equipment operation, military experience):



Tool: Letter of Intent with Local Government

(Adapted from a tool created by the Hennepin County HSPHD Pandemic Influenza Planning Team)

Local government and public health departments are encouraging community organizations to prepare for all types of emergencies, including a pandemic influenza outbreak. Community organizations will play a critical role in a successful response effort to emergencies and disasters alike. They are often the first place that ‘at-risk’ community members turn to for support during a time of crisis. In addition, community organizations already know who the more vulnerable members of their community are and have the skills required to provide services to those in need. Together, local government and community organizations can partner to successfully prepare and respond to our community during an emergency.

To ensure that both local governments and community organizations have documented information about potential roles the community could play during an emergency, this document is intended to capture information that could be accessed during an emergency. Nothing on this document commits the organization to do this work. This is not a binding agreement, but rather a listing of what your organization would be willing to try to do during a significant local emergency, given the available resources of your organization at the time. When you turn this in to your local government, they may elect to place data from this document into a summary document of all community organizations preparedness partners for ease of access during an emergency. Information in this document will be considered private and non-public.

Community Organization Information

Organization Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Fax _____

Organization website (if applicable) _____

Approximate size of congregation _____

Name of person responsible for emergency planning _____

Contact information to reach this person _____

24/7 Contacts

Please list 3 contacts that could be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the event that the Local Public Health agency needs to reach your organization during a significant emergency.

Name & Position	Daytime phone numbers (Office/Home)	Evenings & Weekends Phone Numbers	Email Addresses
1.			
2.			
3.			

Potential support community organizations could provide prior to and during an emergency.

Please read through the list of possible emergency preparedness and response action steps below. Consider whether your organization would be willing to assist other local emergency response efforts. Place a check mark in the appropriate box(es) that represent your organization’s potential assistance. If your organization does not plan to assist in a particular area, please leave the box blank.

Emergency Preparedness Action Steps	For our staff	For our clients	For the greater community
Provide education on Personal & Family Preparedness (prior to an emergency)			
Provide CPR/First-Aid/AED trainings (prior to an emergency)			
Stockpile medical equipment/medications (to care for disabled & elderly)			
Provide familial support for first responders (i.e. adopting a station)			
Store other emergency supplies (food, water, first-aid supplies, batteries, diapers, etc)			
Emergency Response Action Steps			
Offer use of your facility as space for emergency operations			
Operate a food shelf out of your organization			
Cook and distribute meals out of your kitchen			
Check on vulnerable and at-risk people			
Organization’s healthcare professional/healthcare volunteer who commits to check on people’s health (assist with keeping people unnecessarily out of the healthcare system)			
Link available volunteers willing to provide daycare to those in need (during a flu outbreak daycares may close)			
Assist with people who are in Isolation & Quarantine: check on people confined to their homes and help them obtain necessary supplies (food etc)			
Educate and provide accurate emergency information			
Provide emotional support			
Provide grief and loss support			
Use your facility as a shelter (temporary housing)			
Utilize your bus/vehicle for transportation or delivery			
Other (please specify)			
Nothing. (Our plan is to close during such an emergency.)			

Please note: Each of the agreed upon action steps will require further delineation by your organization. For example, if your organization agrees to provide transportation/make deliveries, which vehicle(s) will you use, who will be the drivers, do you have the addresses and contact information of those you will support (if not, where will you get it), for what purposes are you willing to transport, how far are you willing to travel, how will you ensure safe practices and infection control measures are taken, what if there’s a gas shortage, do you have someone that could fix your vehicle if it should break down, etc.

Confidentiality

XXX (Local Government) will not share any identifiable data provided by your organization with other organizations.

Acceptance

The return of one signed copy of this Letter of Understanding constitutes intent by your organization to assist our public health emergency response effort accordingly. Please retain a copy of this Letter of Intent for your records.

Print Name _____ Title/Position _____
 Signature _____ Date _____



Tool: Sample Letter to Partner with a Neighboring Community-based Organization

Dear [Neighboring Community-based Organization Name] Board of Directors,

At [Your Community-based Organization Name], we are working to develop an organizational emergency preparedness plan to be able to help in the event of a major disaster. In the wake of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, emergency preparedness has become a significant issue nationwide. Minnesota is not exempt from these situations, as we remember local tragedies such as the I-35W bridge collapse, Hugo tornado, and flooding in southeast and northwest Minnesota.

Comprehensive preparedness is possible with the collaboration of a number of teams and organizations. However, we feel it is imperative that emergency planning be done with our neighboring community-based organizations to work toward a common goal of enhancing communication, response, and recovery efforts in the event of an emergency. **We would like to establish a reciprocal partnership with your organization to support one another in the event of an emergency.** By having a joint plan to help one another we can minimize damage to our facilities, care for our clients and the community, and remain self-sufficient when others may not be able to.

Emergency planning is an inherent part of our mission. Good emergency planning involves working together before and after an emergency to be able to provide our organizations with care and compassion they will desperately require following a disaster. I would like to see our organizations take greater steps together towards planning and preparing for emergencies. The organization community as a whole needs to be prepared and ready to respond to such events when they impact our community. Please contact me at [phone #] or [email] so we can further discuss this partnership.

Together, we can partner to successfully prepare and respond to our community during an emergency.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Community-based Organization Name

Contact Method

D. Preparing with Neighboring Organizations

Agreements with Close Neighbors

Arrange a reciprocal agreement with another organization as a place to provide client services if your facility sustains major damage or is destroyed (see *Sample Letter to Partner with a Neighboring Community-based Organization* on pg. 54). Develop a plan and coordinate with other organizations in time of emergency to reach out to the most vulnerable people in the community. Develop a plan to receive, organize and distribute food and other needed items including cleaning supplies, hygiene supplies, and baby supplies. You may desire to form an agreement with other community organizations that offer similar services to yours. In the event your organization wants to develop a working relationship with a neighboring organization, try holding “events” together like a food drive or a holiday gathering. Also, you may try pairing with another organization that provides different services. For example, a predominantly housing organization may want to pair with a food shelf group to facilitate more in-depth planning.

Establish Partnerships with Distant Neighbors

Establishing partnerships and planning with distant neighbors is often called a companion organization plan. Designate contact persons in each neighboring organization. The companion organization may provide assistance such as temporary housing or evacuation sites in the event that an emergency affects your organization or geographic area. It is also a source of volunteers and a link to other organization’s sites. It is best to establish these relationships before an emergency strikes (see *Sample Letter to Partner with a Neighboring Community-based Organization* on pg. 54).

How to Assist Neighboring Communities

Before heading off to help in an emergency or before sending items to an emergency site, check with the area’s emergency response coordinator or emergency coordinator to determine what is needed. Unexpected or uncoordinated volunteers only add to the problem. Offer to send volunteer work teams as they are needed and can be scheduled.

Clothing, furniture, and other “stuff” often cause major problems for recovering communities. Make certain you have discussed your collection efforts with on-site emergency managers or volunteer organizations before you attempt to collect goods. If you are asked to send specific items, respond only to the specific request and know how to prepare and ship the goods. Most communities are not equipped with unloading, storage, sorting, and distribution facilities for goods that are shipped in by well-intended groups. Manpower to handle these goods is often very limited. Victims may not have a place to store these goods because their homes have been destroyed. Too often, unsolicited goods end up in a landfill.

Working with your Local Public Health Department

Keep in contact with your local (city or county) public health emergency preparedness team – they will be deeply involved in response efforts. Your local government agency may be able to help you get the resources you need or publicize resources that you are offering. It is imperative that you plan to keep in contact with your local government and that you have a way to communicate with them during a disaster or emergency (see the *Letter of Intent with Local Government* on pg. 52).

