

Guidance for Kiskiminetas Presbytery's Church Sessions in establishing Emergency Operations Plans for their Churches.

Our guidance is simply to keep it simple. We highly suggest that your session review FEMA's Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship, June 2013.

- 1) Each Session should establish an emergency operations plan for their church and ensure it meets their insurance policy requirements. We would also like for you to coordinate your plan with the Presbytery Office.
- 2) In the event of an emergency situation the following sequence may be followed as practical
 - a. When the event occurs, get everyone to move to Safe Zone, or Shelter-in-Place. (Where appropriate, churches should post signs to identify an area as a Safe Zone or Shelter-in-Place location.
 - b. Anyone with knowledge of what is happen should call 911 immediately. (Don't wait for church leaders to make that call.)
 - c. If individuals move to the safe zone outside of the church, an accountability of who was in the building needs to be asses and that information given to first responders. No one should return to an unsafe building; allow professional responders do their job.
 - d. After the danger has passed or eliminated, provide first aid as appropriate, do not move anyone unless there is a threat to their life. (Church should have medical kits and have them clearly marked and labeled and easy to find)
 - e. The clerk of session, or pastor, or another ruling elder will notify the Presbytery as soon as possible. The first call and only call should be to the General Presbyter who will in turn contact the COM chair, and then the district leader for the COM. The Presbytery will make all notification to church agencies that may need to assist in responding.
 - f. All response to public media will be handled by the Presbytery office with assistance from the Office of the General Assembly as appropriate.
- 3) Annual the session should assess what needs are within the church.
 - a. Evacuation:
 - i. Assess which members who attend services on a regular base need help in evacuation the building and identifying individuals who could provide that assistance.
 - ii. Also how children would be evacuated.
 - iii. Determine what evacuation problems does the building inherently have and how can they be removed or mitigated.
 - b. Lockdown:
 - i. Assess how to quickly lock the building down and/or how to lock down sections of the building/rooms.
 - c. Shelter-in-Place
 - i. What medical kits are available? How old are those medical kits? Replace as needed.

- ii. What supplies would be needed such as water.
 - iii. How to care for children not with parent or guardian.
- d. Recovery
 - i. How can we best take care of one another after the crisis?
 - ii. How can the presbytery or other church help and what help could we provide others in need around us
 - 1. Food Bank
 - 2. Critical Incident Stress Management training
 - 3. Counseling Services
 - 4. Training to help others?
- e. Assess the ease of finding fire extinguishers and ensure adequate marking of their location.
- f. Think about providing Red Cross First Aid and CPR training.
- g. Ensure that the Emergency Operation Plan is updated according to the changes within the church over the past year.
- h. Consider cooperating with other churches and local emergency responders such as police and fire department in exercises.

Resources:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/developing_eops_for_houses_of_worship_final.pdf

Help and Hope: Disaster Preparedness and Response Tools for Congregations, Amy Gopp and Brandon Gilvin, editors, Chalice Press, 2014. (A copy of the book is in the Presbytery Resource Center.)