



American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

February 26, 2018

Dear Leader:

We're entering an era that will likely bring more extreme weather and natural disasters, including hurricanes, droughts, wildfires and floods, that will affect our members and the communities they serve. And the risk of terrorism—be it domestic, as in mass shootings, or foreign—remains a constant threat. We must be prepared.

The AFT and our affiliates have responded to numerous calls for help over the years. We have witnessed local affiliates braving disasters big and small. Some of the most effective efforts have come from locals with emergency response plans already in place and negotiated contract language to ensure union involvement with the development and implementation of employer emergency preparedness and response plans. Our locals have developed emergency funds for members needing assistance, have become part of community emergency preparedness and response initiatives, and have forged relationships with important allies.

Every union needs a plan. First and foremost, we must ensure the safety of our members, their families and those we serve, and create a path from relief to recovery to renewal. Our members, students, patients and communities look to us for guidance during emergencies.

A comprehensive union emergency plan takes into account:

- The continuity of your union operations in the event of a crisis or disaster.
- The employer's responsibility to honor the contract and protect the safety and well-being of our members and those they serve during and after the emergency.
- The union's role, from first response to recovery.

We have developed a kit, organized in five sections, to assist you in creating a new emergency plan or improving an existing one. The kit includes:

1. A guide to creating a union emergency preparedness and response plan specific to your own local operations in the event of a disaster or crisis.
2. Information on employer emergency plans, with sample contract language to push for union involvement in employer initiatives.
3. Federal Emergency Management Agency resources.
4. Other key resources to help your union and community recover from a disaster.
5. Health and safety information for specific hazards.

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Nurses and Health  
Professionals

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The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.



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As you pursue your emergency planning, feel free to contact Amy Bahruth, in the AFT's Union Leadership Institute department, at [abahruth@aft.org](mailto:abahruth@aft.org) or 202-879-4731, for assistance in developing your plans.

In solidarity,

Randi Weingarten  
AFT President

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Published on *LeaderNet* (<https://leadernet.aft.org>)

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## Emergency Preparedness

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We're entering an era that will likely bring more extreme weather and natural disasters, including hurricanes, droughts, wildfires and floods that will affect our members and the communities they serve. We must be prepared.

The AFT and our affiliates have responded to numerous calls for help over the years. We have witnessed local affiliates braving disasters big and small. Some of the most effective efforts have come from locals with emergency response plans already in place.

Every union needs a plan. Our members look to us for guidance during emergencies. We have developed a kit, organized in five sections, to assist you in creating a new emergency plan or improving an existing one.

1. A guide to creating your union's **continuity of operations (COOP) plan** in the event of an emergency or disaster.
2. **Information on employer emergency plans**, with sample contract language to push for union involvement in employer initiatives.
3. **Federal Emergency Management Agency** resources.
4. **Other key resources** to help your union and community recover from a disaster, including a guide from the AFL-CIO.
5. Health and safety information.

As you pursue your emergency planning, feel free to contact Amy Bahruth in the AFT's Union Leadership Institute department ([abahruth@aft.org](mailto:abahruth@aft.org)) for assistance in developing your plans.

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### 1. CREATING A UNION EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

It's important for local and state affiliates to have a response plan for their own operations in the event of an emergency or disaster as well. For more information on continuity of operations (COOP) planning for local leaders, see the resources below.

- [Letter from Randi Weingarten to local affiliate leaders](#)
- [AFT continuity plan](#) (customize for your local's needs)
- ["Are You Prepared" checklist](#)

The following sections are available in the Disaster Relief section of our AFT.org website. Please click the links to access that material.

## 2. EMPLOYER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The union can play an active role in employer emergency preparedness and response plans. [\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#).

## 3. FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) RESOURCES

When disasters overwhelm state and local resources, the federal government can step in to help. [\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#).

## 4. POST DISASTER RESOURCES

Resources to help disaster victims get back on their feet. [\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#).

## 5. HEALTH & SAFETY HAZARDS—PROTECTING MEMBERS AFTER DISASTERS

Protecting members' health and safety after a disaster. [\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#).

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Source URL (retrieved on *May 23 2018 - 3:44pm*): [\*\*https://leadernet.aft.org/toolkit/emergency-preparedness\*\*](https://leadernet.aft.org/toolkit/emergency-preparedness)



*A Union of Professionals*

## **Are You Prepared?**

### Emergency preparedness checklist for local affiliates

Please check all that apply:

- Our local has a union emergency preparedness and response plan.
- An officer or staff member is in charge of the union's emergency preparedness and response.
- Officers, staff and members who visit the union office frequently are aware of the plan.
- We have a union communication plan in place to alert and update staff and members in the event of an emergency.
- The union has a negotiated role in the development and implementation of the employer's emergency preparedness and response plan.
- The union has a copy of the employer's emergency preparedness and response plan.
- The union has designated representatives on the employer's emergency preparedness and response plan committee.
- The union receives updated lists of members whom the employer has designated as "essential personnel" in the event of an emergency.
- The employer notifies the union when an emergency has been declared.
- The employer maintains an open line of communication with the union during emergencies.

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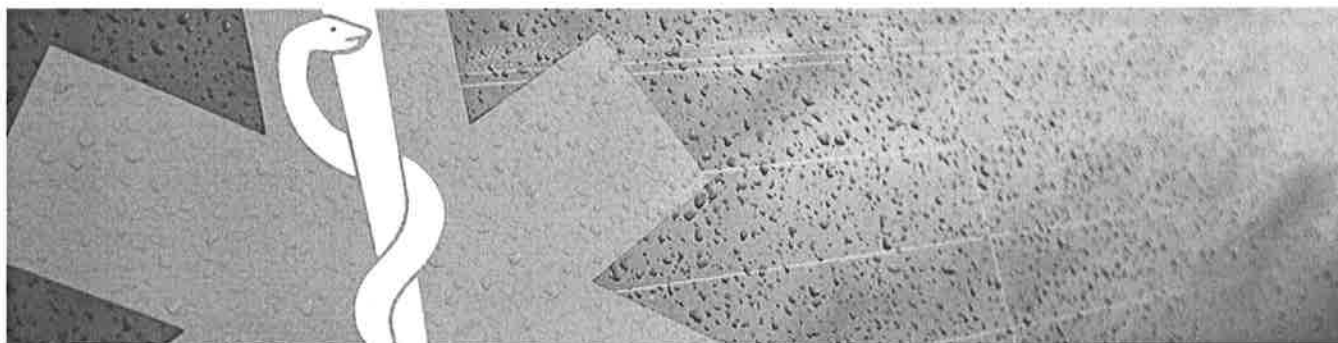




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## Safety Information for Health Care Professionals

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If you're a health care professional helping at an emergency site, here's information that will help you care for survivors.

### Medical Care After a Hurricane

- **Immunizations After a Disaster**  
Find recommendations for vaccinations, tetanus prevention, and the impact of power outages on vaccine storage.
- **Medical Management and Patient Advisement**  
Get information for assisting patients, including pregnant women, and guidelines for treating health risks like diarrhea, injuries, and infectious diseases.
- **Medical Records**  
Learn about "Keep It With You" – a temporary personal medical information form for people who don't have access to their medical records.
- **Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs)**  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/features/pehsu/index.html>)  
Find information from a national network of clinics that offers health professionals free clinical advice about environmental risks for children.
- **Dialysis Care**  
Read about treating people on dialysis when the water supply may be unsafe.

### Health Risks After a Hurricane

- Clinical Guidance for Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning After a Disaster  
([https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/co\\_guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/co_guidance.html))  
Get information about at risk populations, sources of CO poisoning, and how to recognize and treat it.
- Mold After a Disaster  
Find resources about preventing and removing mold and treating mold allergies.
- Health Recommendations for Workers Who Handle Human Remains  
Get advice on protecting yourself from disease during contact with human remains.
- Management of Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations  
(<http://www.paho.org/english/dd/ped/ManejoCadaveres.htm>)  
Consult a manual from the Pan American Health Organization for specialists and authorities managing disaster sites.

## Helping Survivors Cope with Trauma

- Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event  
(<https://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/index.asp>)  
See resources for the public, teachers, responders, and health professionals.
- Health Professionals: Coping with a Traumatic Event  
(<https://emergency.cdc.gov/masscasualties/copingpro.asp>)  
Find advice on how to help patients cope with a traumatic event.
- Tips for Managing Stress: A Guide for Emergency Response and Public Safety Workers  
(<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/KEN01-0098R2/KEN01-0098R2.pdf>)  
Get tips for stress management and prevention advice from SAMHSA.
- Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event ( <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/NMH02-0139/NMH02-0139.pdf>)  
Learn what people should expect to feel after a disaster.
- Coping with Traumatic Events  
(<http://www.samhsa.gov/MentalHealth/TraumaticEvent.aspx>)  
Check out information from SAMHSA about how people react to trauma and when to get help.

## Other Resources

- Surveillance  
Get surveillance forms, community and shelter assessment tools, and other public health assessment (PHA) forms.

- Drug and Medical Device Safety (<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/drugsdevices.html>)  
Find suggestions for medication use, insulin storage, disposal of contaminated devices, and information about using medical devices during and after an emergency.
- Questions About Clinical Investigations Affected by Disasters  
(<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/ucm085247.htm>)  
Get information from the FDA about what to do if a disaster affects your research.
- Reopening Health Care Facilities  
Learn about safety precautions before reopening health care facilities.

You may want to give information to survivors after a hurricane about the risks they might face at home. Visit [Evacuee Educational Materials](#) for free resources.



(<https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics/br-hurricanes.htm>)



(<http://www.ready.gov/>)



(<https://emergency.cdc.gov/socialmedia/index.asp>)

### File Formats Help:

How do I view different file formats (PDF, DOC, PPT, MPEG) on this site?

(<https://www.cdc.gov/Other/plugins/>)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/Other/plugins/#pdf>)

Page last reviewed: August 25, 2017

Page last updated: August 25, 2017

Content source: National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>); Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>); Office of Noncommunicable Diseases, Injury, and Environmental Health (ONDIEH); National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) (<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/>); National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/>)





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## Immunization

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- Immunization Recommendations for Individuals
- **Immunization Recommendations for Responders**

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### Immunization Recommendations for Disaster Responders

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#### Required Immunizations

- **Tetanus:** In accordance with the current CDC guidelines, responders should receive a tetanus booster if they have not been vaccinated for tetanus during the past 10 years. Td (tetanus/diphtheria) or Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis) can be used; getting the Tdap formula for one tetanus booster during adulthood is recommended to maintain protection against pertussis. **While documentation of vaccination is preferred, it should not be a prerequisite to work.**
- **Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B vaccine series for persons who will be performing direct patient care or otherwise expected to have contact with bodily fluids.

#### There is No Indication for the Following Vaccines When Responding to Disasters within the Continental United States

- **Hepatitis A vaccine** (low probability of exposure). Vaccine will take at least one to two weeks to provide substantial immunity.
- **Typhoid vaccine** (low probability of exposure).
- **Cholera vaccine** (low probability of exposure, no licensed cholera vaccine available in the U.S.).
- **Meningococcal vaccine** (no expectation of increased risk of meningococcal disease among emergency responders).
- **Rabies vaccine series** (the full series is required for protection). Persons who are exposed to potentially rabid animals should be evaluated and receive standard post-exposure prophylaxis, as clinically appropriate.

If you are responding to a disaster outside of the continental United States, check [Traveler's Health](#)

(<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>) for current vaccine recommendations.



(<https://www.ready.gov/>)



(<https://emergency.cdc.gov/socialmedia/index.asp>)

Page last reviewed: September 10, 2008

Page last updated: October 5, 2017

Content source: National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/>), Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (OPHPR) (<http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/>)



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## Humanitarian Aid Workers

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If you are traveling overseas to provide aid—such as disaster relief or missionary work—you may face more health risks than regular tourists. You may be more exposed to the local population and have less-secure lodgings. If you are traveling in the aftermath of a natural disaster, you may have to contend with floodwater, debris, or other hazards. However, since you are an aid worker, it is especially critical to protect your health. If you become sick or injured, not only will you be unable to provide aid, you will also add to the burden of the local health care system. With careful preparation, however, you can minimize the risks to your health.

### Pre-Travel Care

As soon as possible, schedule a visit with a travel medicine specialist, who can provide vaccines, medicines, and advice on how to stay safe and healthy while you are traveling. You should also plan a visit with your regular doctor to make sure you're physically fit for the demands of the work. If you'll be gone for a long time, a dental check-up before you leave is a good idea as well.

Aid work can be demanding, and medical facilities in disaster areas are often strained or nonexistent. Therefore, if you have a serious chronic illness, such as heart disease or diabetes, or are pregnant, consider whether there are other ways for you to support the cause.

### Avoiding Injury in a Disaster Area

Injuries and motor vehicle accidents are common risks anywhere in the world, so select safe transportation and always wear a seatbelt. Be sensitive to possible physical dangers, such as debris, unstable buildings, and downed power lines. In a conflict area, be aware of landmines or other explosive hazards.



### What to Pack

Humanitarian aid workers often need to pack more than other travelers, especially if they are going to be in an area where supplies are limited and the water supply is compromised. In addition to your travel health kit, consider whether you might need any of the following:

- First-aid supplies
- Water filter or purification tablets
- Nonperishable food
- Gloves (rubber or leather)
- Bed net (in areas with malaria)
- Extra pair of prescription glasses
- Toilet paper
- Sewing kit
- Laundry detergent
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Candles and matches or lighter
- Zip-top bags
- Safety goggles

Humanitarian aid work is stressful, and taking along a personal item, such as a family photo, can be comforting. You should also bring photocopies of important documents, such as your passport and medical license.

## When You Return

Seek medical care if you were injured during your trip or become ill after returning. Make sure your doctor knows that you recently returned from doing humanitarian aid work overseas. More than 30% of aid workers report depression after returning home, so take time to rest and readjust. If you continue to feel depressed, you may wish to seek counseling.



Page created: April 21, 2013

Page last updated: February 19, 2016

Page last reviewed: August 17, 2015

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/>)

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/index.html>)

Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (DGMQ) (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dgmaq/index.html>)



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## Health Information for Disaster Relief Volunteers

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### How to Volunteer

- [Donate and Volunteer \(http://www.serve.gov/\)](http://www.serve.gov/)  
Information from United We Serve (successor to USA Freedom Corps initiative)

### Before You Go

- [Health Recommendations for Humanitarian Aid Workers \(http://www.cdc.gov/travel/content/ReliefWorkers.aspx\)](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/content/ReliefWorkers.aspx)
- [Immunizations](#)

### Protect Yourself Against Illness and Injury

- [Prevent Illness](#)  
Infectious disease, carbon monoxide poisoning, hand hygiene.
- [Prevent Injury](#)  
Electrical hazards, emergency wound care after a natural disaster.
- [Wound Management for Healthcare Pros](#)
- [Keep Food and Water Safe](#)
- [Extreme Heat](#)

### Coping With a Disaster

- [Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself \(https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp\)](https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp)

### Additional Information

- [Safety for Workers at Disaster Sites](#)
- [Safety Information for Health Care Professionals](#)
- [Information for Disaster Evacuation Centers](#)



(<https://www.ready.gov/>)



(<https://emergency.cdc.gov/socialmedia/index.asp>)

Page last reviewed: June 20, 2014

Page last updated: June 20, 2014

Content source: National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/>)



## Tips for Disaster Responders: PREVENTING AND MANAGING STRESS

Responding to disasters and other emergencies is critically important, and while personally rewarding, it also carries the potential for affecting responders in harmful ways. Dealing with persons affected by natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, earthquakes) is challenging. Disasters that are “human-caused” have the potential to produce even more negative mental health outcomes, whether harm is unintentional (e.g., industrial accidents, oil spill) or intentional (e.g., mass shootings, arson, acts of terrorism).

Engaging in disaster and emergency response work is stressful for both traditional first responders (e.g., fire, rescue, emergency medical services, law enforcement, emergency management personnel) and non-traditional first responders (e.g., substance abuse, public health, and mental health professionals; paid and volunteer staff of community and faith-based organizations active in disasters).

Depending on the nature of the event, sources of stress may include exposure to scenes of human suffering and massive destruction, risk for personal harm, life-and-death decision making, intense workloads, limited resources, and separation from family members who may also be in harm's way.

Responders can take actions to protect themselves and to manage stress before a disaster or other traumatic event, as well as during the response and recovery phases. These actions can also help once the responder returns home after deployment or a particularly traumatic shift.

### Introduction

Stress prevention and management begin long before you are called upon to respond to an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet presents a series of personal stress prevention and management skills that you can learn and practice *before* you are called upon to respond, as well as approaches you can apply to manage stress *during* your deployment. You can also download SAMHSA's new Disaster Behavioral Health App and access resources specific to pre- and post-deployment (for responders, supervisors, and family members).

### Stress Prevention and Management

#### PREPARING FOR YOUR DISASTER ASSIGNMENT

The ideal time for taking actions to prevent stress and to strengthen your stress management skills is *before* your disaster assignment. Responder stress can be diminished by practicing for the disaster role, developing a personal toolkit of stress management skills, and preparing yourself and your loved ones.

#### **Practice for the Disaster Role: Know Your Job**

- *Train hard and know your job well.* You will perform at peak capacity, with more confidence and less stress, if you know you are as ready as you can be.



- *Participate in exercises and simulations* that expose you to disaster stressors. This will strengthen your skills and prepare you to deal with the unexpected.
- *Keep a freshly stocked Go-Kit* in your car or at your worksite and make sure to include your top choices for stress reducers.
- *Know the Incident Command System* so that you understand the language, the lines of reporting, and ways to work effectively with responders from other units.
- *Live the “disaster-ready” healthy lifestyle:* regular physical activity, healthy diet, and emotional stability. Clear thinking will make you a valuable team member—while decreasing your personal risk for harm.

**Practice Stress Management:  
Make Stress Management #1 on Your List**

- *Know your personal signs of stress.* Include coworkers in your stress control plan; they can tip you off when they see your stress signs “showing.”
- *Identify the major stressors* associated with disasters to which you may respond, and plan how you will address them.
- *Create a team culture and a buddy system* where you can choose to spend off-duty time exercising, relaxing, or talking together.
- *Take time for yourself.* Mentally disconnect from the disaster scene as completely as possible during down time.
- *Select and practice constructive ways to release stress,* such as the following:
  - Choose physical activity that can be done safely while on deployment, like walking, stretching, and taking deep breaths.
  - Read or listen to music that is timed to your breath.
- *Practice healthy sleep behaviors.* Train your body to downshift by getting into a routine sleep pattern.

**Prepare and Plan With Your Loved Ones**

- *Reduce your concerns* by preparing your loved ones and protecting your home and your possessions for possible emergencies.
- *Create a communication plan* that allows you to stay connected to your loved ones, whether you are responding to a disaster close to or away from home.
- *Develop a home disaster plan for you and your loved ones,* being sure to actively involve all members in the process. Conduct disaster drills to test and improve your plan.
- *Prepare emergency supplies for sheltering* at home and Go-Kits for your loved ones in case they need to evacuate.
- *Consider declining the next disaster assignment* opportunity if you have had a recent death or trauma in your own family.

**DURING YOUR DISASTER ASSIGNMENT**

During the impact phase of a disaster or emergency event, the focus of stress management shifts to handling the real-time stressors of the rescue and recovery mission.

**Set Your Personal Disaster Plan in Motion**

- *Activate your personal disaster plan* and include loved ones who may be directly affected by the event.
- *Review your communication plan.* Know where each family member and/or loved one will be located and at what times each day you will be checking in with each other.
- *Double check your response “gear,”* including your Go-Kit and your communication equipment.

**Take Stress-Reducing Precautions While on Duty**

- *Make sure you are briefed and updated* regularly on the specifics of the event and the hazards.
- *Safeguard yourself* by always wearing the personal protective equipment recommended for use in the incident.

- *Verify your response duties* and reporting lines at the start of your assignment daily.
- *Mentally rehearse* your disaster response role as you approach each scene.
- *Communicate and check in* with your buddy, teammates, and supervisors regularly.
- *Take breaks* regularly. Pace yourself.
- *Limit time* spent working in very high-intensity settings (e.g., “ground zero,” “hot zone”).

### Set Your Self-Care Plan in Motion

- *Try to eat nutritiously* and avoid excessive junk food (especially foods high in sugar), caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.
- *Maintain contact* with family and other social supports during off-duty hours.
- *Get enough rest and sleep*, especially on long assignments.

### Implement Stress Management Techniques

- *Reduce physical tension* by exercising, stretching, taking deep breaths, and walking.
- *Use time off* for reading, listening to music, talking with family, and thinking calmly.
- *Talk with teammates* about reactions and emotions as appropriate.

### Practice Self-Awareness

- *Recognize* your personal stress signs—and those of your teammates. Agree with your buddies that you will accept each other’s instruction when signaled to stop and take a “stress break” to calm down.
- *Avoid over-identifying* with survivors’ grief and trauma. For example, remind yourself this is not happening to you or your loved ones.
- *Be aware* that some responders reach a limit in their abilities to continually provide care and empathy to survivors. This is known as “compassion fatigue.” Accept when you need to end direct contact with survivors and alert your team leader for support.

### AFTER YOUR RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT

#### Stress Management When Response Extends Into the Recovery Phase

In the recovery phase, stress management techniques must also take into account your exposure to disaster survivors who may be experiencing severe hardships.

- *Recognize* that when you are working at a disaster scene with severely limited resources, your personal stress may increase.
- *Know where to refer survivors* so you can connect them to the services they need.
- *Conserve energy.* You will need to recognize the fatigue effects of long-term deployment and know when to conserve your energy.
- *Take time away from the scene.* Alternate between on-scene and off-scene duty, and between time spent doing physically exhausting work or working with highly stressed survivors and time on less stressful tasks.
- *Use stress management skills* like deep breathing as often as you can.
- *Focus on reintegration* with friends, loved ones, and coworkers who did not share the experience with you. Pay extra attention to rekindling relationships.



## Signs of Stress

What are common signs that you may be experiencing stress? And how do you know when your stress level is becoming harmful? *Hint: You may be able to "see" these stress signs better in your teammates than in yourself.*

- **Bodily sensations and physical effects**  
Rapid heart rate, palpitations, muscle tension, headaches, tremors, gastrointestinal distress, nausea, inability to relax when off duty, trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, nightmares or flashbacks
- **Strong negative feelings**  
Fear or terror in life-threatening situations or perceived danger, anger, frustration, argumentativeness, irritability, deep sadness, difficulty maintaining emotional balance
- **Difficulty thinking clearly**  
Disorientation or confusion, difficulty problem-solving and making decisions, difficulty remembering instructions, inability to see situations clearly, distortion and misinterpretation of comments and events
- **Problematic or risky behaviors**  
Unnecessary risk-taking, failure to use personal protective equipment, refusal to follow orders or leave the scene, endangerment of team members, increased use or misuse of prescription drugs or alcohol
- **Social conflicts**  
Irritability, anger and hostility, blaming, reduced ability to support teammates, conflicts with peers or family, withdrawal, isolation

## Helpful Resources

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Technical Assistance Center (SAMHSA DTAC)**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

**SAMHSA Behavioral Health Disaster Response Mobile App**  
Website: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/PEP13-DKAPP-1>

**Administration for Children and Families\***  
Website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov>

**Department of Veterans Affairs\***  
**National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**  
PTSD Information Voicemail: 1-802-296-6300  
Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

### Treatment Locators

**Mental Health Treatment Facility Locator**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-789-2647 (English and español)  
TDD: 1-866-889-2647  
Website: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator>

**MentalHealth.gov**  
Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov>  
*MentalHealth.gov provides U.S. government information and resources on mental health.*

**Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)  
(24/7 English and español); TDD: 1-800-487-4889  
Website: <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

### Hotlines

**Disaster Distress Helpline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990  
Text: "TalkWithUs" to 66746  
Website: <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)  
TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov>  
*This resource can be found by accessing the Suicide Prevention Lifeline box once on the SAMHSA website.*

**National Domestic Violence Hotline\***  
Toll-Free: 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)  
TTY: 1-800-787-3224

\*Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



HHS Publication No. SMA-14-4873  
(Revised 2014; previously KEN01-0098R2)



# Tips for Disaster Responders:

## RETURNING TO WORK

### INTRODUCTION

Disaster responders make valuable contributions to communities across the nation. Whether you work on the front lines or behind the scenes during a disaster response assignment, you provide essential services to those who need them. Disaster response work is both stressful and rewarding, and it provides a unique perspective for everyone involved. The stress created by this experience can sometimes cause adjustment difficulties for disaster responders returning to work. This tip sheet can help ease your transition back to routine work.

### STRESS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

#### Strengthening Stress Management Skills

While it is a good idea to take some time to reorient yourself and get sufficient sleep after a disaster assignment, some experts suggest that responders first go back to work for a day or two to get reacquainted with their colleagues and responsibilities, and then take some personal time off. This may help ease any anxiety about possible unknowns awaiting you at work. The flexibility and amount of personal time varies by employer, so check the policies

of your workplace or consult with your human resources representative for guidance.

Because work conditions in disaster response are not ideal, you may have difficulty taking proper care of yourself during this time. When your disaster response assignment is over, it is especially important to focus on addressing your basic needs. For example, ensuring that you are physically healthy can increase your resilience and decrease the effects of trauma exposure. To prevent and manage your stress, practice the following self-care tips:

- Maintain a healthy diet, and get routine exercise and adequate rest.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Pay attention to health concerns.
- Catch up on neglected personal tasks (e.g., check mail, pay bills, mow the lawn, shop for groceries).
- Reflect upon what the experience has meant personally and professionally, for both you and your loved ones.
- Make sure you and your loved ones have a preparedness plan.

## Expecting the Unexpected—Common Difficulties and Tips for Coping With Them

When transitioning from your disaster assignment to your routine duties, you may notice changes in yourself, your coworkers, or your work environment. A few potential difficulties are described below, along with some tips on how to overcome them.

**Pace change.** The disaster response environment often moves at a pace much faster than that of the normal workplace, and you may find that you have grown accustomed to this rapid pace. When returning to your routine work, it may appear as though people are moving at a much slower pace than you remember. It is easy to misinterpret this behavior. Remember, it is probably you who have changed, not your colleagues. **Try to refrain from judging, criticizing, or making assumptions about your colleagues' work pace.**

**Unrelenting fatigue.** Sometimes excessive stress results in never feeling rested. You often experience extreme fatigue when you first return from your assignment, even if you feel like you are getting a sufficient amount of sleep. This may be a result of several factors, such as the stress hormones moving out of your body and allowing



you to relax, or your body trying to recover. **You may need more rest than you realize.** If extreme fatigue persists for more than 2 weeks, consider seeing a physician. See the **Helpful Resources** section of this tip sheet for more information on finding support and services.

**Cynicism.** During disaster work you often see the worst in individuals and systems, and it is easy to become cynical. These feelings are expected and usually diminish over time. **Review the successes and positive results from your assignment, and try to focus on seeing the best in individuals and systems. Over time, this perspective will help you maintain a more optimistic outlook.**

**Dissatisfaction with routine work.** Saving lives and protecting our fellow citizens' health and safety can be rewarding and energizing, and most work does not provide such dramatic and immediate reinforcement. When you first return to your regular job, you might feel as though your daily work lacks the same level of meaning and satisfaction. These feelings are common among those who alternate between high-stress environments, such as disaster work, and more traditional professional settings. To counter these feelings, incorporate the positive things you have learned during disaster response into your personal and professional life. **Recognize that everyone has a job to do and that even the smallest effort contributes to our well-being. Learn to appreciate your routine work as well as everyone else's.**

**Easily evoked emotions.** Sometimes the combination of intense experiences, fatigue, and stress leaves you vulnerable to unexpected emotions. For example, you may cry more easily than before, be quick to anger, or experience

dramatic mood swings. These are fairly common reactions among disaster responders that typically subside over time. ***In the meantime, be aware of your reactions; discuss your experiences with trusted coworkers, friends, and loved ones; and try to limit comments that might be hurtful or upsetting to others.***

**Relating your experiences.** While you may want to share your experiences with others, some information may be too difficult for others to hear. ***Exercise care when discussing your disaster response experiences and know that it can be harmful to others to hear you describe disturbing scenes.*** Make sure to refrain from talking about the negative aspects of the work while in the presence of children or others who are emotionally vulnerable. Children are also strongly affected by how their parents cope with traumatic stress. The better you are able to use positive coping skills and address your experiences in a positive manner, the more likely your family will do so as well.

**Difficulties with colleagues and supervisors.** You may not experience a “welcome back” from your colleagues and supervisors that meets your expectations. Your coworkers may resent the additional workloads they had in your absence or not understand the difficult nature of the work you did. They also may resent the recognition that you are receiving as a responder. ***To cope with any negative feelings you may have about your colleagues, try to express appreciation for their support during your assignment, and take care in relating your experiences.***

**Cultural differences.** Culture affects how an individual reacts to intense experiences. Some colleagues may want to celebrate you, others may feel you need caretaking, and others may decide that you need time on your own. ***Find***



***ways to express your needs so that you are true to yourself but also sensitive to your team members' efforts to be supportive.***

## When To Seek Help

Stress is an anticipated reaction to situations like disasters and other traumatic events. Sometimes it may be difficult to determine whether your symptoms are a result of a physical illness, stress, or a combination of the two. You may need more support, however, if you experience any of the symptoms below or have other concerns that persist for more than 2 weeks:

- Disorientation (e.g., appearing dazed, experiencing memory loss, being unable to give the date or time or recall recent events)

**RETURNING TO WORK**

- Depression (e.g., continuing sadness, withdrawing from others)
- Anxiety (e.g., feeling constantly on edge or restless; having obsessive fear of another disaster)
- Acute psychiatric symptoms (e.g., hearing voices, experiencing delusional thinking)
- Inability to care for oneself (e.g., not eating, bathing, or handling day-to-day life tasks)
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans; pervasive feelings of hopelessness or despair
- Problematic use or misuse of alcohol, prescription medication, or other drugs
- Domestic violence, child abuse, or elder abuse

If you are experiencing consistent or severe stress, there are several things you can do. You can check to see if your employer provides access to an Employee Assistance Program (or “EAP”). You may also choose to contact your primary care physician who can help to rule out a medical problem or provide a referral to a licensed mental health professional. You can also download SAMHSA’s new Disaster Behavioral Health App and access resources specific to the post-deployment phase, including tips for re-entry (for responders, supervisors, and family members). Additional supports and services can be found in the **Helpful Resources** section below.

## Helpful Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Technical Assistance Center (SAMHSA DTAC)  
Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

SAMHSA Behavioral Health Disaster Response Mobile App  
Website: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/PEP13-DKAPP-1>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs\*  
National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
PTSD Information Voicemail: 1-802-296-6300  
Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: FirstResponder.gov\*  
Website: <http://www.firstresponder.gov>

Federal Occupational Health\*  
Employee Assistance Program for Federal and Federalized Employees  
Toll-Free: 1-800-222-0364  
TTY: 1-888-262-7848  
Website: <http://www.foh.hhs.gov/>

*\*Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

### Treatment Locators

Mental Health Treatment Facility Locator  
Toll-Free: 1-800-789-2647 (English and español)  
TDD: 1-866-889-2647  
Website: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator>

MentalHealth.gov  
Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov>  
*MentalHealth.gov provides U.S. government information and resources on mental health.*

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator  
Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)  
(24/7 English and español); TDD: 1-800-487-4889  
Website: <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

### Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)  
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Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov>  
*This resource can be found by accessing the Suicide Prevention Lifeline box once on the SAMHSA website.*

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline  
Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 Text “TalkWithUs” to 66746  
Website: <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>



HHS Publication No. SMA-14-4870  
(Revised 2014; previously NMH05-0219)



## Tips for Disaster Responders:

### UNDERSTANDING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Disaster behavioral health response work can be very satisfying, but it can also take its toll on you. In this tip sheet, you will learn about the causes and signs of compassion fatigue (CF) and tips for how to prevent it from happening to you.

Research indicates that CF is made up of two main components: burnout and secondary traumatic stress.<sup>1</sup> When experiencing burnout, you may feel exhausted and overwhelmed, like nothing you do will help make the situation better. For some responders, the negative effects of this work can make them feel like the trauma of the people they are helping is happening to them or the people they love. This is called secondary traumatic stress. When these feelings go on for a long time, they can develop into “vicarious trauma.” This type of trauma is rare but can be so distressing that the way a person views the world changes for the worse.

### The Risks of Being a Disaster Behavioral Health Responder

Willingness to be in the trenches when responding to a disaster is one of the things that makes you credible and trustworthy to survivors. This usually means you live in conditions similar to those of disaster survivors. For example, you may have trouble finding enough food, let alone

nutritious food. You may struggle with lack of personal space and privacy. You are likely to experience disruptions in sleep due to hectic work schedules or surrounding noise. These things can wear you down behaviorally, cognitively, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. You may also become more vulnerable to feeling the acute traumatic stress, sorrow, and anger of the people you help. You may even experience feelings of guilt for surviving the disaster. When this happens, you may have trouble understanding the risks to your own health and safety.

### Signs of Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of your skills and your own personal risks (such as a history of trauma) and other negative aspects of the disaster response experience (e.g., gruesome scenes or intense grieving) so that you recognize how they may be affecting your feelings as well as your behavior. Some responders may experience several of the following signs of burnout and the more serious component of CF, secondary traumatic stress. Remember, not all disaster behavioral health responders will experience every symptom.

<sup>1</sup> Huggard, P., Stamm, B.H. & Pearlman, P.A. (in press). Physician stress: Compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization. In C.R. Figley & P. Huggard (Eds.), *First do no self-harm: Understanding and promoting physician stress resilience*. USA: Oxford University Press.



When you experience burnout, a symptom of CF, you may have some of the following feelings:

- As if nothing you can do will help
- Tired—even exhausted—and overwhelmed
- Like a failure
- As though you are not doing your job well
- Frustrated
- Cynical
- Disconnected from others, lacking feelings, indifferent
- Depressed
- As if you need to use alcohol or other mind-altering substances to cope

Signs of secondary traumatic stress, a more serious component of CF, may include the following:

- Fear in situations that others would not think were frightening
- Excessive worry that something bad will happen to you, your loved ones, or colleagues
- Easily startled, feeling “jumpy” or “on guard” all of the time
- Wary of every situation, expecting a traumatic outcome
- Physical signs like a racing heart, shortness of breath, and increased tension headaches
- Sense of being haunted by the troubles you see and hear from others and not being able to make them go away
- The feeling that others’ trauma is yours

If you are experiencing any of these signs of stress, talk with a friend or colleague, seek wise counsel from a trusted mentor, or ask your

supervisor to help you determine a course of action. You may also consider seeking help from a qualified mental health professional.

## Tips for Coping With Compassion Fatigue

Traditionally, disaster workers have been trained to screen survivors for negative behavioral health effects. More recently, the field is also focusing on identifying survivor resilience, fostering strengths, and encouraging self-care. Just as you assist survivors in this process, you can apply this approach to yourself on a routine basis—even when not on a disaster assignment—to avoid CF. By focusing on building your strengths and carrying out self-care activities, you are contributing to your behavioral, cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional resilience. The following strategies can help you do just that:

- Focus on the four core components of resilience: adequate sleep, good nutrition, regular physical activity, and active relaxation (e.g., yoga or meditation).
- Get enough sleep or at least rest. This is of great importance, as it affects all other aspects of your work—your physical strength, your decision making, your temperament.
- Drink enough fluids to stay hydrated, and eat the best quality food that you can access.
- Complete basic hygiene tasks like combing your hair, brushing your teeth, and changing clothes when possible. Wearing clean clothes can make you feel better.
- Try to wash up, even just your hands and face, after you leave your work shift. Think of it as a symbolic “washing away” of the hardness of the day.

- Make time to learn about the people with whom you work. Taking time for conversations will help foster feelings of positive regard toward yourself and others.
- Engage with your fellow workers to celebrate successes and mourn sorrows as a group.
- Take time to be alone so you can think, meditate, and rest.
- Practice your spiritual beliefs or reach out to a faith leader for support.
- Take time away from the work when possible. Removing yourself from the disaster area can help you remember that not every place is so troubled.
- Try to find things to look forward to.
- Communicate with friends and family as best you can. If you do not have Internet or cell phone access or ways to mail letters, write to loved ones anyway and send the letters later.
- Create individual ceremonies or rituals. For example, write down something that bothers you and then burn it as a symbolic goodbye. Focus your thoughts on letting go of stress or anger or on honoring the memory, depending on the situation.

## Prevention

When combined, the self-care practices mentioned above can help prevent the development of CF. Once you begin to routinely practice these healthy habits, they become part of your overall prevention plan. Not only do healthy habits strengthen your ability to cope while in the moment, they can help your body remember how to bounce back to a healthier state. Remember, prevention is part of a good preparedness plan.

## Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction (CS) refers to the sense of fulfillment you feel for the work you do. It can be a source of hope, strength, and ultimately resilience. This satisfaction with your work is also what allows you to face another day, another disaster, another tragedy. It is the quiet knowledge that what you do makes a difference, and that you possess the same strengths you see and support in the survivors with whom you work. Appreciating each encounter with a disaster survivor can add to your CS and help protect you from CF. Even when things do not go as well as you had hoped, you can try to appreciate these encounters, knowing that you took action and extended yourself to others. In these ways, CS can serve as a natural, protective tool against the negative aspects of disaster response work. By noticing, acknowledging, and appreciating the work you do, you can build CS in yourself and encourage it in your colleagues.



## When To Get Help

Regular meetings with your supervisor and peer support group during and after a disaster assignment can be a significant help in managing stress and CF. But when signs and symptoms continue for more than 2 weeks or are truly

bothersome at any point, seek out professional help. You can start by contacting your employee assistance program or a primary care physician, who may be able to rule out any physical concerns and recommend a counselor or therapist familiar with traumatic stress. You can also download the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Disaster Response Mobile App and access a directory of behavioral health service providers in your area. Additional information is provided in the **Helpful Resources** section below.



## Helpful Resources

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Technical Assistance Center (SAMHSA DTAC)**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

**SAMHSA's National Recovery Month**  
Website: <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>

**SAMHSA Behavioral Health Disaster Response Mobile App**  
Website: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/PEP13-DKAPP-1>

**Federal Employee Assistance Program**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-222-0364  
TTY: 1-888-262-7848  
Website: <http://foh.hhs.gov/services/EAP/EAP.asp>

**National Institute on Drug Abuse**  
Website: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/seeking-drug-abuse-treatment>

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security: FirstResponder.gov\***  
Website: <http://www.firstresponder.gov>

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs\***  
National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
PTSD Information Voicemail: 1-802-296-6300  
Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

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Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)  
(24/7 English and español); TDD: 1-800-487-4889  
Website: <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

## Hotlines

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TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov>  
*This resource can be found by accessing the Suicide Prevention Lifeline box once on the SAMHSA website.*

**Workplace Helpline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-WORKPLACE (1-800-967-5752)  
Website: <http://workplace.samhsa.gov>



HHS Publication No. SMA-14-4869  
(2014)

# Emergency Preparedness Toolkit: Employer Emergency Preparedness

Disasters and unplanned emergencies affect not only where we live but also where we work. Most school districts, hospitals, state agencies and other AFT employers do have emergency preparedness and response plans in place, but far too few develop and implement these plans with input from our members. In many cases, local leaders never even see their employer's plan until a disaster strikes.

When it comes to emergency preparedness, every employee should know what role he or she is expected to play. Our voices are needed and must be included in all levels of planning to protect our members and ensure employer policies, such as how "essential personnel" are defined during an emergency, do not violate our contract.

The union can play an active role in employer emergency preparedness and response plans by:

Designating union representatives to be part of any employer emergency preparedness and response committees.

Proposing [contract language](#)

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept\\_sect2\\_contract-lang.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_contract-lang.pdf) on emergency preparedness and response.

Making sure the employer alerts the union, first responders, parents and other stakeholders as soon as an emergency event is declared or has occurred.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognize that

commitment and support from employees are critical to the plan's success.

**Please note:** These plans can be challenging to obtain from the employer if the union does not directly have members serving on a joint planning committee. Without a committee in place, an employer may say the information is "confidential" or may decide not to develop a plan. If either of these are the case, you can use the documents below to demonstrate that the employer should have a plan in place and that the union should play an active role in its development, practice and revisions.

[How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3088.pdf)  
(<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3088.pdf>) (Department of Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2001).

This document is designed to help the employer plan for emergencies through the development of a well-thought-out emergency action plan. It stresses the importance of having a plan in place and worker participation in the development of the plan.

## Healthcare Resources

[OSHA Best Practices for Hospital-Based First Receivers of Victims from Mass Casualty Incidents Involving the Release of Hazardous Substances](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_osh_first-receivers.pdf) ([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept\\_sect2\\_osh\\_first-receivers.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_osh_first-receivers.pdf)) (Occupational Safety and Health Administration 2005)

In this best practices document, OSHA provides practical information to help hospitals address employee protection and training as part of emergency planning for mass casualty incidents involving hazardous substances. OSHA considers sound planning the first line of defense in all types of emergencies (including emergencies involving chemical, biological or radiological substances).

[Adapting Standard of Care under Extreme Conditions: Guidance for Professionals during Disasters, Pandemics, and Other Extreme Emergencies](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_ana-care-standards.pdf) ([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept\\_sect2\\_ana-care-standards.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_ana-care-standards.pdf)) (American Nurses Association, 2008)

This document speaks primarily to the individual professional in a caregiver or service provider role, whether:

- at the immediate site of a disastrous event when it happens,
- at the usual place of work when it is affected by the disaster, or
- at some other site because of relocation of usual place of work or work in a volunteer program or unit.

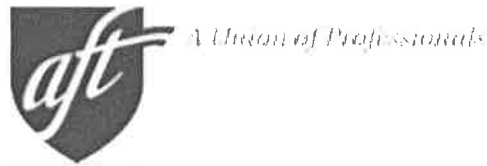
Beyond individual practitioners, this document can provide valuable guidance to a wide range of health professionals, including employees of health organizations (e.g., hospitals, community-based clinics, public health agencies), emergency planners, other public health partners (public health advisers, public health educators) and health profession educators.

[Kaiser Permanente's hazard vulnerability analysis risk assessment tool \(//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/untitled.xls\)](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/untitled.xls) is a good instrument to assess the risk of certain emergency events and disasters that may have an impact on healthcare delivery.

## Public Employees Draft Policy

[Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's 2013 Emergency Action Plan \(//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept\\_sect2\\_otda\\_action-plan.pdf\)](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ept_sect2_otda_action-plan.pdf)

This is a sample policy for public employees from the state of New York's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The plan details what to do during an evacuation of a building, contains the fire prevention plan and provides specific responses to a variety of other possible hazards, including explosions, threats of violence, power failures, flooding/water damage and weather emergencies.



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## Emergency Preparedness Toolkit: Post-Disaster Resources

After a disaster or crisis, people may feel alone and isolated. There are numerous resources available to help people through difficult times, including community programs and religious organizations that help people in need. Some things to consider:

You may have members who are involved with these types of organizations and who can act as liaisons for communication and support activities.

Your union could establish more formal relationships with these groups to build solidarity and fellowship with each other.

### Resources to help disaster victims get back on their feet

[2-1-1 Disaster and Emergency Assistance \(http://www.211.org\)](http://www.211.org): Many 2-1-1 locations partner with the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and community emergency management



programs to provide answers, services and relief in times of natural or man-made disasters.

2-1-1 offers up-to-date information on road closures, evacuation routes, shelters, disaster relief assistance and recovery resources. It also may provide information on disaster-related volunteer opportunities and relief efforts so you can put your time and talent to work in the areas where they're needed most.

Aside from disaster assistance, 2-1-1 offers information on crisis and emergency resources on emotionally abusive or physically dangerous relationships, bullying, sexual assault, alcohol abuse and suicide prevention; food resources that can connect you with information about school lunch programs and summer food service programs for children; health information about healthcare services for infants and new parents, and child care services for working parents; housing and utilities resources to find emergency shelters for individuals and families in crisis and other important social service needs.

#### National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

(<https://www.nvoad.org/>): Member organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities. All organizations have service-oriented missions and include volunteer engagement as a key component of their operations.

#### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/>): SAMHSA has a hotline for disaster distress information. **Call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746** to connect with a trained crisis counselor. For those who are deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service to call 800-985-5990. Spanish services are also available.

Additionally, SAMHSA's Coping Tips for Traumatic Events and Disasters

(<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips>) webpage includes:

Resources on taking care of yourself and your loved ones.

General disaster response and recovery information.

Information on incidents of mass violence.

Resources for disaster responders.

Traumatic stress and re-traumatization resources.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network resources.

#### Department of Veterans Affairs

(<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/materials/manuals/psych-first-aid.asp>): The VA's Psychological First Aid program, developed with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, assists people in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism to reduce initial distress and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning.

It is for use by first responders, incident command systems, primary and emergency healthcare providers, school crisis response teams, faith-based organizations, disaster relief organizations, Community Emergency Response Teams, the Medical Reserve Corps and the Citizen Corps.

#### "Action in the

Aftermath" ([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/emergprep\\_aftermath\\_aflcio.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/emergprep_aftermath_aflcio.pdf)):

An AFL-CIO disaster preparedness and response manual for unions and working families that is intended to guide future disaster preparedness and response.

#### **The AFL-CIO is:**

Mobilizing union resources, both human and monetary, to help meet the human service needs of households impacted by disasters.

Working through partnerships with national and community-based allies to maximize public and voluntary agency response and to ensure that resources and services to victims are provided in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner.

Working in appropriate ways to ensure that union disaster response activities dovetail with union member participation in the AFL-CIO

political action, organizing and [Voice@Work](mailto:Voice@Work) (mailto:Voice@Work) programs.

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[Previous section \(//www.aft.org/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-fema\)](http://www.aft.org/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-fema) | [Next section](#)

## OUR COMMUNITY

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[We care. We fight. We show up. \(/our-community/we-care-we-fight-we-show\)](/our-community/we-care-we-fight-we-show)

[Disasters & emergencies \(/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness\)](/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness)

[Disaster relief: 2017 hurricanes \(/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/disaster-relief-2017-hurricanes\)](/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/disaster-relief-2017-hurricanes)

[Emergency preparedness \(/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness#emergprep\)](/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness#emergprep)

[Community partners \(/our-community\)](/our-community)

## RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- [Colorin Colorado \(http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/helping-children-after-natural-disaster\)](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/helping-children-after-natural-disaster) has information on how to help immigrant students and families understand and cope with natural disasters.
- [Share My Lesson \(https://sharemylesson.com/collections/coping-natural-disasters\)](https://sharemylesson.com/collections/coping-natural-disasters) has lesson plans to help educators and students understand and cope with natural disasters.
- [National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement \(https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/\)](https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/) has a helpful resource page on how school professionals can help support students in the aftermath of disasters.
- [Food Research & Action Center \(http://www.frac.org/hunger-natural-disasters\)](http://www.frac.org/hunger-natural-disasters) has information on how federal nutrition programs are responding to meet the needs of those affected by natural disasters.

*More*  
**Information**

We offer additional information on continuity of operations plans for local affiliate leaders. To learn more, or for other questions, please contact:

Amy Bahruth

[abahruth@aft.org](mailto:abahruth@aft.org) (<mailto:abahruth@aft.org>)

# Emergency Preparedness Toolkit: FEMA resources

All emergencies and disasters are local in nature, but sometimes emergencies and disasters overwhelm state and local capacity to respond, and the federal government is called in to help. In those cases, the Federal Emergency Management Agency steps in to support people in need and first responders.

Navigating FEMA can be overwhelming and frustrating, and members may call on their union for help. Unions need to know how to work with FEMA and what resources it provides to those responding to and recovering from a disaster.

Below are links to useful resources that you can provide to your members in the event of an emergency or disaster declaration.

## **FEMA Fact Sheets**

### Disaster Recovery Steps

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_disasterrecoverysteps2017.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs_disasterrecoverysteps2017.pdf)):

Things to consider before entering your home after a disaster, especially around flooded conditions.

### Disaster Survivor's Checklist

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_disaster-survivor-checklist.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_disaster-survivor-checklist.pdf)):

Reference guide on what to do after a FEMA-declared disaster.

### FEMA Questions and Answers

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_disaster-qa.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_disaster-qa.pdf)): Common questions related to filing a claim with FEMA.

### Help after a Disaster: FEMA Individual Assistance Can Help You

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_help-after-disaster\\_100817.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_help-after-disaster_100817.pdf)): FEMA informational brochure ([English](#)

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_help-after-disaster\\_100817.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_help-after-disaster_100817.pdf))  
and [Spanish](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_ayuda-despues-desastre_sp_100817.pdf) ([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_ayuda-despues-desastre\\_sp\\_100817.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_ayuda-despues-desastre_sp_100817.pdf))).

[What Happens at the Inspection](#)

([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_inspection-info.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_inspection-info.pdf)): What to expect after filing a FEMA claim.

[Replacing Personal Documents](#)

([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_replacingpersonaldocuments\\_2017.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs_replacingpersonaldocuments_2017.pdf)):

Assistance with replacing personal documents lost in a disaster

([English](#)

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_replacingpersonaldocuments\\_2017.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs_replacingpersonaldocuments_2017.pdf))

and [Spanish](#)

([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_replacingpersonaldocuments2017\\_spanish.p](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs_replacingpersonaldocuments2017_spanish.p)

## **Additional FEMA Resources**

[Declaring an Emergency or Disaster](#)

([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema\\_disaster-declaration-guide.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fema_disaster-declaration-guide.pdf)):

This fact sheet outlines the process by which an emergency or disaster is declared. Before FEMA resources can be allocated, the governor has to declare a state of emergency, which will activate the state's Emergency Operations Plan. The state can then send a request for federal assistance to the president.

For more information, see FEMA's [Individual Disaster Assistance webpage](#) (<https://www.fema.gov/individual-disaster-assistance>).

**National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System:** FEMA's NEFRLS program is activated following a presidentially declared disaster to reunite families that have become separated as a result of the disaster. When activated, individuals and families can register at [FEMA.gov](http://FEMA.gov) (<https://www.fema.gov/>) or 800-588-9822.

[Other Federal Resources](#) (<https://www.fema.gov/disaster-support-resources-post-disaster>)

**Small Business Administration:** After you file a FEMA claim, you may be referred to the Small Business Administration (<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>) for information about a low-interest loan. The SBA is the primary source of federal funds for long-term recovery assistance.

**Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:** You may be eligible for disaster relief food assistance (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/disaster-assistance>).

**Department of Justice:** Members of the public can report disaster relief fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement at [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov) (<mailto:disaster@leo.gov>) or 866-720-5721. Individuals can also report criminal activity to the FBI at 800-CALL-FBI.

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (<https://www.nvoad.org/>): This website provides information on the National VOAD's member organizations, which share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities. All organizations have service-oriented missions and include volunteer engagement as a key component of their operations.



[Member Benefits](#)

[Find your Local](#)

[How to Join](#)

[En Español](#)

Search

# Emergency Preparedness Toolkit: Health and Safety Hazards

## Protecting Members after Disasters

Recovering from disaster is usually a gradual process. After a disaster, the first concern is everyone's health and safety. It's important to think about possible safety issues that members, co-workers and others may face. In addition, take time to monitor their health and well-being. Your members and employees will need lots of support and help with recovery at home as well as at work.

## Health and Safety

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html>) has an excellent health and safety section on natural disasters and severe weather, including earthquakes, extreme heat, landslides and mudslides, lightning, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanoes, wildfires and winter weather.



In particular, visit the section on floods (<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/index.html>). Included are resources on what to do after a storm, covering topics like hygiene, re-entering your home and more.

Ready.gov (<https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>) also has a vast section on all types of possible emergencies, such as active shooter situations, bioterrorism, chemical emergencies, cybersecurity, drought, earthquakes, explosions, extreme heat, floods, hazardous materials incidents, home fires, household chemical emergencies, hurricanes, landslides and debris flow, nuclear blast/power plants, pandemics, power outages, radiological dispersion devices, severe weather, snowstorms and extreme cold, space weather, thunderstorms and lightning, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanoes and wildfires.

Know what disasters could affect your area, how to get emergency alerts (<https://www.ready.gov/alerts>), and where you would go if you and your family need to evacuate.

## Resources

Protecting Yourself While Helping Others (<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/nieh-environmental-health-sciences-protecting-yourself-while-helping-others.pdf>)

En español (<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/nieh-protecting-yourself-while-removing-post-disaster-debris-from-your-home-or-business-a-primer-on-best-practices-for-cleaning-up-after-a-disaster-from-the-national-institute-of-environmental-health-sciences.pdf>)

En español (<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/nieh-debris-hand-hygiene-in-emergency-situations.pdf>)

En español (<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs-hand-hygiene-emergencies-spanish.pdf>)

## Mold and Water Damage

One of the worst effects of water damage comes in the form of mold, which causes serious health problems.

## Resources

[CDC \(https://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm\)](https://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm) information on mold and health, indoor air quality programs, cleanup efforts and mold prevention.

[Environmental Protection Agency \(https://www.epa.gov/mold\)](https://www.epa.gov/mold) information for your home and workplace, as well as resources for health professionals.

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

[Disaster Recovery Steps](#)

[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_disasterrecoverysteps2017.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs_disasterrecoverysteps2017.pdf)

[En español \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_disasterrecoverysteps2017\\_spa\)](#)  
[Cleaning Up After a Major Storm \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_cleaningup\)](#)

[En español \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_cleaningupafterstorm2017\\_spa\)](#)  
[Cleaning Flood-Damaged Carpets and Rugs \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_](#)

[or Call a Professional](#)

[damage-](#)

[En español \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fs\\_flood-](#)

[Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup after Disasters \(http://www.](#)

[multi-agency resource guide developed by the Hurricane Sandy 08/document](#)  
[Rebuilding Task Force. spanish.pdf\)](#)

[En español \(https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-](#)

[Mold Clean-up and Treatment: Health and Safety Essentials for](#)  
[Workers, Volunteers, and Homeowners \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/niehs\\_r](#)

[A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home \(http://www.aft.org/sites/default/fil](#)

[En español \(https://espanol.epa.gov/cai/una-](#)

[breve-](#)

[guide-](#)

## AFT Member Benefits Assistance

[para-](#)

Member Benefits assistance after a disaster is limited to AFT credit card holders and mortgage program participants. The assistance takes the form of a modest grant (usually about \$500). To be eligible, the member must:

1-

Have had the AFT credit card for at least three months or a Union Plus mortgage for at least 12 months.

Have experienced a significant income or property loss within the past six months as a result of a Federal Emergency Management Agency-

declared natural disaster or emergency in counties or parishes designated by FEMA as qualifying for individual assistance. Not have received an AFT disaster relief grant in the past.

For more information, visit [Union Plus](https://www.unionplus.org/hardship-help/disaster-relief-grants) (<https://www.unionplus.org/hardship-help/disaster-relief-grants>).

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[Previous section \(/www.aft.org/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-post\)](https://www.aft.org/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-post)

## OUR COMMUNITY

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[Immigration \(/our-community/immigration\)](/our-community/immigration)

[We care. We fight. We show up. \(/our-community/we-care-we-fight-we-show\)](/our-community/we-care-we-fight-we-show)

[Disasters & emergencies \(/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness\)](/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness)

[Disaster relief: 2017 hurricanes \(/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/disaster-relief-2017-hurricanes\)](/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness/disaster-relief-2017-hurricanes)

[Emergency preparedness \(/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness#emergprep\)](/our-community/disaster-relief-emergency-preparedness#emergprep)

[Community partners \(/our-community\)](/our-community)

## *More* Information

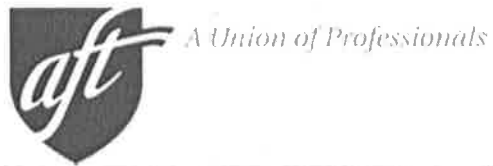
We offer additional information on continuity of operations plans for local affiliate leaders. To learn more, or for other questions, please contact:

Amy Bahruth

[abahruth@aft.org](mailto:abahruth@aft.org) (<mailto:abahruth@aft.org>)

### **FIRST AID TRAINING**

During a disaster, it is beneficial to have staff who are trained in first aid. The AFT provides a first aid, CPR and AED (automated external defibrillator) training for members who want to be certified to train their colleagues. For more information, contact Mike Lohman at [mlohman@aft.org](mailto:mlohman@aft.org) (<mailto:mlohman@aft.org>).



**AFT Local \_\_\_\_\_**

**Emergency Preparedness and  
Response: Union Continuity  
Plan for Local Leaders**

**Address:**

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# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## Continuity Plan for Local Leaders

The AFT has a lot of experience responding to help our members after natural disasters—recent history includes Hurricane Sandy, the wildfires in California, and the summer 2017 hurricanes in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. But over the years, many AFT affiliates and locals have been touched by disasters as well, limiting their ability to maintain operations.

Recent hurricanes in Florida, for example, have halted operations in Broward County, Miami, St. Johns and Volusia. Hurricane Sandy hit our local's office in Suffolk County, N.Y., and recent floods in Louisiana have limited the ability of a number of locals to function.

The impact of disasters can be long-lasting, especially if a local is shut down, so it's important for locals to have an emergency plan in place that includes the following elements:

- Primary and secondary crisis manager (the person who is in charge during a disaster).
- Evacuation and shelter plan.
- Emergency supplies (water, flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, etc.).
- Crisis communication plan (how you will communicate with members during and after a disaster).
- Prioritized list of critical operations needed to be maintained, and the staff members responsible for them, while recovering from the disaster.
- Backup copies of important records (membership and employee lists and contact information, businesses and vendors, accounting and payroll, etc.).
- Backup office location, if current office is inaccessible.
- Backup for utility disruptions; plan to protect computer hardware.
- Plan to support employees and their health needs after a disaster.





AFT/A Union of Professionals: UNION CONTINUITY PLAN

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## Section 1 - Introduction

### 1.1. PLAN SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

The scope of this union continuity plan covers [Insert AFT Affiliate Name]. The plan should be applicable in the event that 1) the union office is physically inaccessible, 2) employer facilities are inaccessible/closed, and/or 3) a response to regional interruptions in the area is necessary.

### 1.2. PLAN OBJECTIVES

The objective of this plan is to facilitate the resumption of critical operations, functions and technology in a timely and organized manner so that [Insert AFT Affiliate Name] can continue as a viable and stable organization.

The primary objectives of the plan are to ensure that:

- **Our union's key operations and functions are maintained.**
- **An alternate facility is in place for officers and staff.**

### 1.3. PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made when creating this plan:

- An event has occurred that affects normal operations.
- There may be no access to the affected facility.
- All documents and equipment within the facility are inaccessible and may be permanently lost.
- The officers and designated staff are available to continue operations.
- For rented space, the owner's obligations in the event of an emergency are clear.
- The union has adequate insurance to address recovery plans (for more on insurance, see Section 8: Insurance Considerations).

### 1.4. UNION-EMPLOYER EMERGENCY COORDINATION

Ideally, the union will be involved in the development of the employer's emergency preparedness and response plan.

- Emergency preparedness and response language in the collective bargaining contract (cite clauses):
- Does the union have access to a copy of the employer's emergency preparedness and response plan?

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

---

## Section 1 - Introduction

- Union representatives involved in the development of the employer's plan:
  - Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact info \_\_\_\_\_
  - Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact info \_\_\_\_\_
  - Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact info \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Union members who are designated as "essential personnel" by the employer in the event of an emergency (list names, job titles and roles/responsibilities of essential personnel):
  
- Do essential personnel understand their roles and responsibilities?
  
- Management contact in the event of an emergency:
  
- When and how will the union be notified of worksite operating status changes?
  
- When and how will the union be notified of the resumption of normal operations?

# Union Continuity Responsibilities

Edit and Revise as Necessary

Position	Responsibilities
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strategic leadership and direction for the continuity plan</li> <li>• Serve as incident commander</li> <li>• Update and promulgate orders of succession and delegations of authority</li> <li>• Update continuity plan annually</li> <li>• Designated to be notified by the employer of worksite operating status changes</li> <li>• Maintain contact with community first responders</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>
Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second in command, in case president is not available</li> <li>• Implement continuity plan</li> <li>• Ensure all officers and staff are aware of the plan and their roles</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>
Officers	
Staff	

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

## Risk Assessment

(Update as necessary)

Hazard	Probability	Magnitude	Warning (Hours)	Duration (Hours)	Risk Priority
Flooding	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Coastal Hazard (e.g., Hurricane, Tsunami, Tropical Storm, Nor'easter)	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Thunderstorm / Lightning/Hail	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Tornado	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Winter Storm/ Ice Storm	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Human Caused (Civil Unrest/ Terrorism)	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

Risk Assessment - Edit and Revise as Necessary

Hazard	Probability	Magnitude	Warning (Hours)	Duration (Hours)	Risk Priority
High Winds	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Wildfire	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Landslide	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Earthquake	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

*\*Note: The impact and duration of hazards for your union may differ from this table.*

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

Risk Assessment - Edit and Revise as Necessary

Other Hazards	Probability	Magnitude	Warning (Hours)	Duration (Hours)	Risk Priority
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	4. Highly Likely 3. Likely 2. Possible 1. Unlikely	4. Catastrophic 3. Critical 2. Limited 1. Negligible	4. Minimal 3. 6-12 2. 12-24 1. 24+	4. 12+ 3. 6-12 2. 3-6 1. <3	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

# Critical Union Functions

Critical union functions are the responsibilities and tasks that need to be completed in order for your union to be considered operational. For help filling out the table below, see the instructions in the next section.

#	Function	Criticality	Maximum Downtime	Role/Team	Required Resources	Process to Complete Function
1					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
2					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
3					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
4					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
5					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	



# Critical Union Functions

#	Function	Criticality	Maximum Downtime	Role/Team	Required Resources	Process to Complete Function
6					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
7					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
8					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
9					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	
10					People: Equipment: Supplies: Technology: Interdependencies:	

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## How to Complete a Critical Union Function Table

### 1.5. HOW TO COMPLETE A CRITICAL UNION FUNCTION TABLE

#### 1.5.1. Function

Enter the specific function to be maintained/resumed.

#### 1.5.2. Criticality

Enter "High," "Medium" or "Low" depending on how critical the function is to the operations of your union. When determining criticality, consider:

- What union objective/goal does this function support?
- How essential is this function to support members?
- How often does this function occur?
- How many staff members or officers perform this function?
- Does the successful completion of this function depend on any other functions?
- Are other functions dependent on this function?
- Is there a potential for revenue loss if this function is not completed?
- Does this function directly impact the union's image?
- Compared with other critical functions, what priority ranking would you give this function?

#### 1.5.3. Maximum Downtime

Identify how much time your union could afford to go without the function before it causes the union serious harm. Consider using the following options:

- Less than 24 hours
- 1 day to 1 week
- 1 to 2 weeks
- 2 to 4 weeks
- 30 days or greater

#### 1.5.4. Staff/Team

Identify the staff member(s) or team(s) responsible for the operation of this function. Include specific knowledge, training, certifications or licenses required to conduct this function. For each function, it is recommended that you identify at least one alternate staff member.

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## How to Complete a Critical Union Function Table

### 1.5.5. Required Resources

- *People:* Identify the number of staff or officers required for this function. Also identify if a staggered resumption of staff is an option.
- *Equipment:* Identify the type of equipment (and quantity) required in order to get this function back in operation.
- *Supplies:* Identify any unique supplies required for this function, such as paper forms or documents (do not list items that could be easily purchased from an office supply store).
- *Technology:* Identify software (e.g., Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, a point-of-sale system), systems, applications and electronic documentation needed to complete the function.
- *Interdependencies:* List other union functions that this function relies on in order to be operational.

### 1.5.6. Process to Complete Function

Write a description of the function process. Include any specific forms or systems that may be needed.

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

## Section 2 – Plan Activation and Communication Procedures

### 2. PLAN ACTIVATION AND COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

#### 2.1. PLAN ACTIVATION DURING NORMAL UNION HOURS

If a crisis occurs during normal business hours, it may be necessary for all staff, officers, members and visitors at the office to evacuate the building and proceed to a predetermined assembly point.

Once at the assembly point:

- Initiate a head count and make note of missing and/or injured staff and officers.
- Report missing and/or injured staff to the designated person in charge.

If it is determined that the office cannot be re-entered, the person in charge will inform staff what to do. The staff may be instructed to go home to await further instructions or to activate the union continuity plan. Further communications, such as instructions on when and where to report for work, will follow the internal communication procedures detailed below.

#### 2.2. PLAN ACTIVATION OUTSIDE NORMAL UNION HOURS

If a crisis occurs outside normal business hours, the designated person will activate the union continuity plan using the internal communication procedures detailed below.

#### 2.3. ACTIONS UPON ACTIVATION

Upon activation of the union continuity plan, the designated person is responsible for notifying the alternate site of the union's impending arrival.

#### 2.4. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

The designated person should determine the best methods for disseminating communications to staff (for contact information, see Section 6, Employee Contact List).

Employee Communication Methods	
1	
2	
3	

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

## Section 3 – Resumption Strategies

### 3. RESUMPTION STRATEGIES

- Resume union functions in priority order.
- Purchase equipment and supplies and make any necessary travel arrangements for the resumption efforts.
- Temporarily suspend non-critical functions, as necessary, to support the resumption efforts.
- As applicable, utilize personnel from other sites to support the resumption efforts.

#### 3.1. ALTERNATE SITE/RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT

In the event the union office is destroyed or inaccessible, union operations may be transferred to an alternate site (or your home).

If the alternate site is inaccessible, operations may be temporarily relocated to a union partner providing space for your staff through a reciprocal agreement.

#	Site	Contact Information	Alternate/Reciprocal
1			
2			
3			
4			

# Union Function Resumption Table

## 3.2. UNION FUNCTION RESUMPTION TABLE

#	Function	Required Resources	Resumption Procedures
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

# Union Function Resumption Table

#	Function	Required Resources	Resumption Procedures
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## Section 3 – How to Complete a Union Function Resumption Table

### 3.3. HOW TO COMPLETE A UNION FUNCTION RESUMPTION TABLE

#### 3.3.1. Function and Required Resources

In the "Function" and "Required Resources" columns, copy the information from your Critical Union Function Table.

List the functions in priority order based on the following criteria:

- Criticality
- Maximum downtime
- Interdependencies

#### 3.3.2. Resumption Procedures

Explain how the function will be carried out at the alternate or partner site (e.g., redirect mail to home address or save document on a file-sharing service).





# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## Section 5 – Family Emergency Plan

### 5. FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

Many large-scale events—like hurricanes, earthquakes, regional blackouts, transit problems and pandemics—can impact not only your staff members' jobs but also their families, homes and lives outside of work.

In order to improve the safety and security of all staff and their families, discuss with them the following basic steps they can take to protect their loved ones, homes and possessions in the event of an emergency.

Every household should have an emergency plan, which should include:

- A home evacuation and reunification plan that is shared with every member of the family (e.g., how to evacuate from each room/floor during a fire).
- A predetermined meeting location in the neighborhood should the family get separated.
- An emergency contact list with phone numbers and websites.
- A place where flammable and hazardous substances—and potentially dangerous objects like tools, equipment and firearms—can be properly stored and secured out of the reach of children and pets.
- A list of safety practices to follow, such as keeping doors, windows and garages locked.

Each household should also have the following emergency supplies:

- Fire extinguishers (especially near the kitchen, basement, garage and/or workshop).
- A family emergency kit with several days' worth of food, medications and supplies.

For additional resources, visit the following websites:

- American Red Cross planning tool: [www.arcbrcr.org](http://www.arcbrcr.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention emergency planning guide: [www.emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness](http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness)
- Ready.gov emergency planning tips: [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan)
- Stanford University disaster preparedness information: [www.med.stanford.edu/somsafety/forms/EP\\_Home.pdf](http://www.med.stanford.edu/somsafety/forms/EP_Home.pdf)
- The Weather Channel's safety and preparedness guide: [www.weather.com/safety](http://www.weather.com/safety)

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

## Section 6 – Insurance Considerations

### 6. INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS

#### 1. Do you have flood insurance?

Flood insurance can be purchased through the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides up to \$500,000 for building coverage and up to \$500,000 for contents coverage. Flood coverage for union interruption is not available through NFIP but can be obtained from a commercial insurer.

#### 2. If you are located near a coast or river, is “storm surge” classified as a “flood” or as a “windstorm”?

In some cases, the storm surge that occurs as a result of a hurricane is classified as a flood, but in other cases it is classified as a windstorm. After Hurricane Sandy, many policyholders found themselves underinsured because the storm surge was classified as a flood; many had adequate windstorm coverage but inadequate flood coverage.

#### 3. Do you have coverage for union interruption?

Union interruption insurance covers policyholders for lost profits and continuing expenses after an insured loss. This is important coverage, subject to specific limits in the policy.

#### 4. Do you have coverage for service interruption?

Service interruption insurance covers lost power. However, coverage is often excluded if the loss of power is caused by damage to overhead power lines within a certain distance from the insured property.

#### 5. Do you have coverage for civil authority?

Civil authority insurance covers union interruption losses should your union be impacted by a government action that restricts access to your location. Be mindful, however, that this coverage has specific restrictions. Make sure to read your policy carefully.

#### 6. Are the limits under your policy sufficient?

All insurance policies have overall policy limits and specific limits for different types of coverage. Review your policy carefully to make sure your coverage is reasonable.

#### 7. What is the deductible under your windstorm and/or flood policy?

Insurance policies often have a deductible (e.g., \$25,000 per occurrence) for most losses. However, some policies have specific deductibles for high-risk types of losses. For example, if you are in a high-risk hurricane zone, you may have a substantial deductible. Check your policy carefully and make sure you understand the deductible.

# Emergency Preparedness and Response

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## Section 6 – Insurance Considerations

**8. If you have any key customers or suppliers, do you have contingent union interruption coverage?**

What would the impact to your union be if one of your key suppliers is impacted by a significant incident, such as a hurricane, fire or explosion?

**9. Do you have any assets that may take significant time to replace should a loss occur?**

If any key assets would take a long time to replace, consider purchasing spares or having vendors ready to execute a purchase order should a loss occur.

**10. If you have more than one location, have you considered how an incident at one location would impact the other locations?**

For some unions, significant losses at one location may result in additional losses to other locations due to interdependencies. For other unions, losses at one location can be mitigated by shifting staff and resources at other locations. It is helpful to think through how a catastrophic loss at one location would impact other locations.

***Contact your insurance agent or broker to discuss these and other questions about your union insurance coverage and needs!***