

Church Name:

Church Address:

Disaster Preparedness & Response Plan



Date plan was completed/updated:

Contents

- I. Introduction (p. 3)
 - A. Tips for Using this Guide (a-e)
 - B. Goals of Disaster Plan
 - C. Structure of the Guide
 - D. What is a Disaster?
 - E. Local Reflection of Disaster Experiences
 - F. Phases of Disaster Planning
- II. Church Leadership for Disaster Planning (p. 6)
 - A. TASK ONE: Build a Church Disaster Team
- III. Assessment of Church Spaces & Resources (p. 8)
 - A. TASK TWO: Inventory Your Church Space & Resources
 - B. TASK THREE: Make a Church Emergency Resources Map
- IV. Assessment of Relationships & Communication (p. 10)
 - A. TASK FOUR: Identify Common resources and Foster Relationships
 - B. TASK FIVE: Develop a Communication Plan for Enacting a Response
 - C. TASK SIX: Develop an Alternative Worship Plan
- V. Planning a Disaster Response for All Local Hazards (p. 13)
 - A. TASK SEVEN: Identify Disaster Risks & Make a Plan for Each Hazard
- VI. General Advice for Disaster Immediate Response (p. 14)
- VII. Tornado Response Plan (p. 15)
- VIII. Fire Response and Evacuation Plan (p. 17)
- IX. Heat Wave (p. 19)
- X. Wildfire (p. 20)
- XI. Winter Storms (p. 22)
- XII. Hydroplaning & Flooding (p. 24)
- XIII. Medical Response Plan (p. 25)
- XIV. Church Safety & Security Preparedness & Leader Training (p. 26)
- XV. Congregational Care as Disaster Response (p. 30)
- XVI. Individual/Family Disaster Preparedness (p. 31)
- XVII. Disaster Outreach: Hygiene Kit (p. 33)
- XVIII. Disaster Outreach: Menstruation Kit (p. 34)
- XIX. Disaster Outreach: Clean-Up Bucket (p. 35)
- XX. Saving Important Information (p. 36)
 - A. TASK EIGHT: Save Disaster Plans, Important Documents, & Contact Lists in Multiple Ways
- XXI. Disaster Preparedness Education (p. 37)
 - A. TASK NINE: Educate Your Leaders & Congregation
 - B. TASK TEN: Train Your Ushers/Greeters/Safety Team
 - a) Safety Scenarios: Tornado, Fire, Medical Emergency, Intruder/Active Shooter
 - b) Greeter/Security Team Position Description

I. Introduction

This document contains information and protocols for disaster preparation and response at [church name]. This starting resource is distributed as a template that may be modified by a church session to best meet a congregation's unique needs and context.

A. Tips for using this Guide:

- **Take a breath.** Every step forward counts in preparedness. Your church can do this!
- **You're not alone.** Take comfort in your church's care for one another, and the knowledge that other churches are also taking these steps too.
- **Ask for help.** Contact your presbytery leader, your Presbytery Disaster Team, or the Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery if you have any questions or need help getting started.
- **Local Knowledge helps.** Follow your city or county Emergency Management social media to receive more disaster preparedness and response information. The more you listen for these updates, the more familiar with disaster preparedness you will eventually become. We are always learning!
- **This is *your* plan** – Add or remove any elements to best meet your church's needs and context.

B. Goals of this Disaster Plan

- a. Encourage clear communication
- b. Develop actionable plans to guide our preparation and response
- c. Prioritize congregational safety
- d. Protect our continued ability to minister to our members and greater community

C. Structure of this Guide

- a. **Tasks:** Once a team is built, they can take on a series of disaster planning Tasks, either altogether as a committee, session by session, or delegate leadership of tasks to different leadership team members.
- b. **Discussion:** Recommended discussion questions are included throughout the guide to encourage leaders to reflect on the church's local needs and context in order to make a plan that can be added into this guide.
- c. **Resources and Examples** are included throughout the guide, to be helpful as needed. Educational components from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration), NWS (the National Weather Service), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance training guides, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), and state and local Emergency Management guides, have been sources of information. This plan was adapted from the First Presbyterian Church of Copperas Cove's disaster plan.

D. What is a Disaster?

“**Disasters**” are sudden calamitous situations that overwhelm a church community, causing widespread destruction and severe disruption to social economic functioning, requiring external aid for recovery.

“**Emergencies**” are urgent situations requiring activation of preparedness protocols.

Examples of emergencies and disasters a church may encounter include:

- **Medical Emergencies:** requiring First Aid, CPR, AED, or other medical care
- **Church Safety & Security Event:** such as theft, arson, or an active shooter situation
- **Fire:** within a building, or a wildfire
- **Building Damage:** perhaps not covered by insurance, or uninsured facilities
- **Tornadoes, Windstorms, or Dust storms**
- **Freezes & Winter Storms**
- **Extreme Heat**
- **Flooding & Hydroplane conditions**
- **Hurricanes and Tropical Storms**
- **Pandemics**
- **Public policy changes that impact church members’ access to government services or willingness to travel or gather in-person**

E. Local Reflection of Disaster Experiences

➤ The disasters most prevalent in our church location are: _____

➤ Our church community has a history of emergencies or disasters, such as: _____

○ What disaster-related losses might your community still be grieving? _____

F. Phases of Disaster Planning

Disaster planning covers three distinct phases: preparation, immediate response, and recovery.

a. Preparation

- i. Communicating – relationship building with local & updating contact information
- ii. Planning – delegating, & assessing resources,
- iii. Mobilizing – training, organizing, stocking emergency supplies, etc.
- iv. Developing this Disaster Plan is preparation!

b. [The Disaster Happens Here – perhaps with little to no warning]

c. Immediate Response

- i. Communicating with church members and presbytery about what happened and checking that people are safe.
- ii. Taking pictures of property damage for insurance & FEMA assistance claims
- iii. Assessing church damage & listening for community updates
 - Check City/County Emergency Manager Website & Facebook updates
- iv. Discerning what is needed & requesting needed resources
- v. Holding worship & community spaces for emotional & spiritual care

d. Long-Term Recovery

- A. Partnering with local organizations to share resources, navigate processes, & meet unmet needs
- B. Request resources & grants for long-term recovery needs
- C. Attend to spiritual & emotional care needs, as recovery may take months or years

II. Church Leadership for Disaster Planning

A. TASK ONE: Build a Church Disaster Team

☐ Session designates a Disaster Coordinator: _____

☐ The Disaster Coordinator recruits the Church Disaster Team
Leadership structures may vary based on church size, staffing, and capacity.

The Church Disaster Team should include any of the following leaders:

- 1. A primary Disaster Coordinator (elected by Session)**
- 2. Ruling or Teaching Elders from the Session**
- 3. A person who maintains Buildings & Grounds**
- 4. Ushers/Greeters**
- 5. Deacons or those who provide Congregational Care**
- 6. Church administrator/communications person**
- 7. Family or childcare leaders**
- 8. Mission & Outreach leaders**

Each person plays a particular role in disaster preparation and response.

What kinds of people might you contact?

- Recently retired members interested in community engagement
- First responders, teachers, social workers, medical workers, or other trained leaders
- People who like to plan ahead or organize
- People who are compassionate and likely to call to check on others
- People who like to learn!

The Disaster Team can help connect the local church people & resources with denominational resources (presbytery, synod, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance national resources), as well as community partners and local/county/state/federal emergency management response efforts.

Remember –

- **Everyone in a congregation has a role to play in disaster preparedness.**
If the congregation doesn't know what to do during an emergency, more loss, damage, and chaos may occur.
- **Educating your congregation in basic safety procedures is important!**
Plan a brief session to educate your congregation twice a year, during congregational meetings.
[see example 8-minute Disaster Brief PowerPoint]

Church Disaster Team Contacts

Disaster Response Team Role	Name	Phone Number	E-Mail Address
Disaster Response Coordinator			
SESSION/DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM			
Pastor			
Clerk of Session			
Treasurer			
Worship Team Elder			
Property Team Elder			
Administration Team Elder			
Discipleship Elder			
Church Life Elder			
Mission and Outreach Elder			
OTHER DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS			
Team member/Chair			
Team member			
Team member			
Team member			
Team member			
Team member			

☐ **Set meeting dates** for this team to reconvene to review each section of this plan together.

III. Assessment of Church Spaces & Resources

A. TASK TWO: Inventory Your Church Building Resources

- ☐ **Document Facility Contractor Emergency Contacts**

Facility Contractor Emergency Contacts

	Contact	Phone
Building		
Electric power		
Electrician		
Gas		
Water		
Plumbing		
Insurance		
Air Conditioning and Heating		
Phone & Internet Service		
Alarm Security		
Other Common Contacts		
Pest Control		
Computer-Savvy Person		

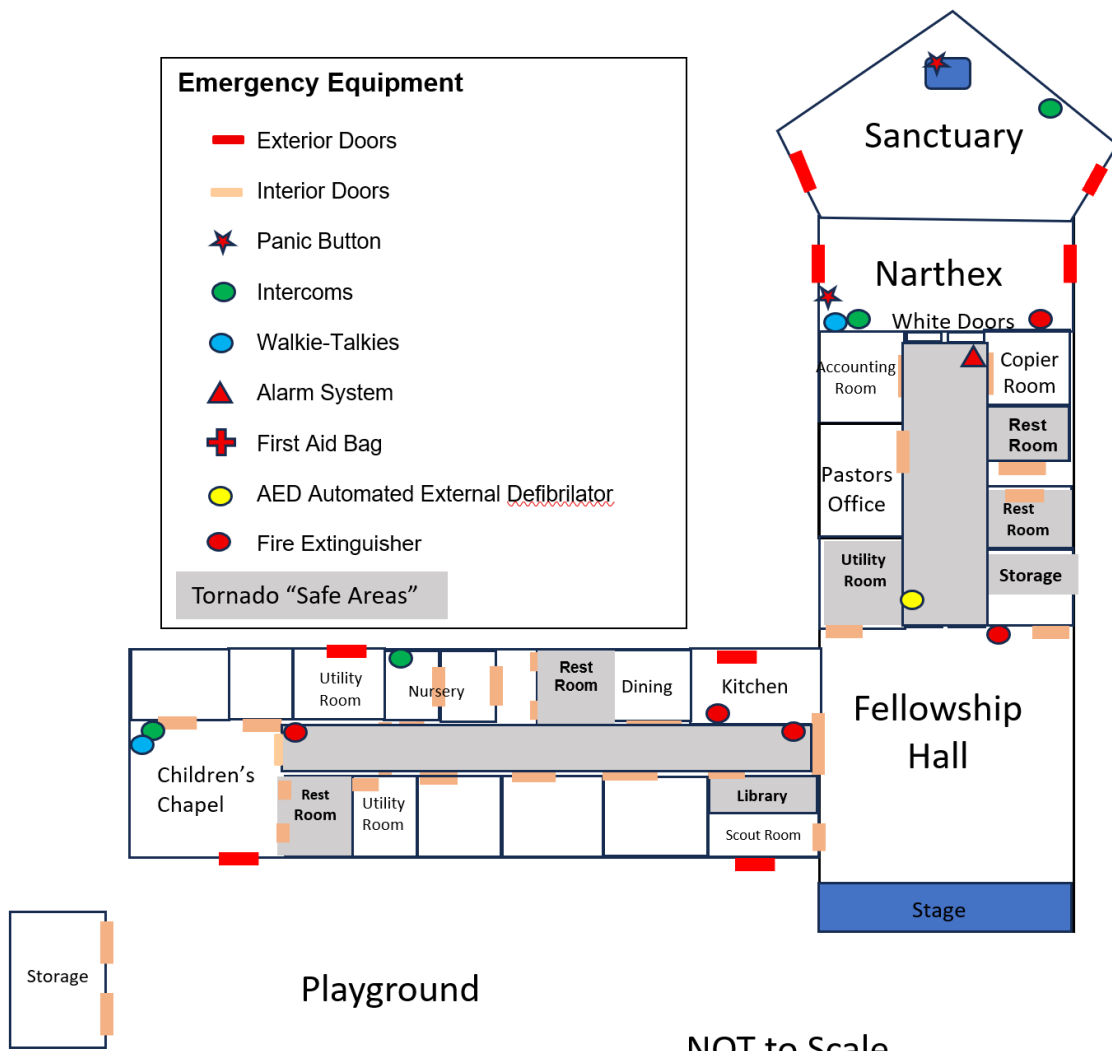
- ☐ **Take photos of each room, closet, and cabinet in the church, especially noting equipment.**
These photos are important for insurance claims, in the event of severe damage or total loss.
- ☐ **Create an Inventory of Building Items, including proof of purchase, if possible:**
- Equipment, including computers, printers, sound equipment, etc.
 - Furniture
 - Appliances
 - Fixtures
 - Maintenance and cleaning supplies
 - Safety & emergency preparedness supplies
- ☐ **Compile an Inventory & Map Location of All Emergency Equipment.**

Check each year that items (esp. batteries) are in-date, not depleted, & in good condition.

- ☐ Fire Extinguishers
- ☐ Flashlights & emergency lights
- ☐ First-Aid kits, Stop the Bleed supplies, & AEDs
- ☐ Solar-powered or portable chargers and rechargeable batteries
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Weather Radio
- ☐ Water Bottles
- ☐ Local supply of Clean-up buckets, hygiene kits, menstruation kits
- ☐ Emergency exit placards

D. TASK THREE: Make a Church Emergency Resources Map (Property Team)

Church Map of Emergency Equipment & Safe Spaces Example:



IV. Relationships & Communication

A. TASK FOUR: Identify Community Resources and Foster Relationships

Local Emergency Contacts

	Contact Information
Fire/Rescue/Police	9-1-1
Fire/Rescue (non-911)	
Police (non-911)	
Animal Control	
Insurance company	
Attorney	
Church Technical Support Person (who runs your livestream or sound?)	

Contacts for Local Agencies & Church Network Contacts

Response Agencies	Phone
[City] Emergency Management Office	
[County] Emergency Management Office	
American Red Cross Local Office	
Presbytery Executive:	
Presbytery Disaster Response Team Contact	
Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR)	Rev. Libby Janes, LCSW, MDiv Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery, Director libby.janes@synodsun.org (972)741-5777
SPDR/Presbytery Liaison	
Our Nearby Church Neighbors	
Our Local Schools	

➤ **Disaster Team Reflection:**

- Who is your local emergency manager? What role would they invite your church to play in their EM plan? Could your church become an official gathering place during a disaster?
- Who are your neighboring churches? Can you collaborate with them and share emergency planning resources? Could you co-host CPR trainings? Could you share their building or worship space if an emergency struck your church building?
- What other local organizations does your church collaborate with, who are active in disasters?

B. TASK FIVE: Develop a Communication Plan for Enacting a Response

1. Develop procedures for alerting building occupants of emergencies.

- a. Example: Walkie-talkies, intercom systems, or a group text alert.

2. Determine a point-person to manage external communication during or after a major disaster, and a plan for various possible circumstances:

➤ **Disaster Team Reflection:**

- What **communication plan** will your church enact **for alerting building occupants** of emergencies such as a fire or intruder, or hazardous weather?
- **Which communication method works best** for your church – a group text, call system, email, social media, etc?
- What **criteria** will help your Disaster Team **to decide if evacuation or sheltering** in place is the best response?
- In the event of a major disaster, who will be responsible for communicating church status **updates to the media**?

➤ Recommended Article on Church Communications After Mass Shootings & Major Disasters:

<https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2026/4/23/ministering-natural-and-unnatural-disasters>

- “Your session or leadership team has to make a decision immediately about if you’re going to speak to the media or not.” Rev. Gini Norris-Lane, after the Robb Elementary School mass shooting in Uvalde... She also emphasized the sudden public exposure clergy face in these moments. “Every state and national government person, leader will come to your town, and so will every media outlet,” Norris-Lane said, recalling “168 voicemails in the first 24 hours asking for us to make a statement.” [quotes from article]

☐ **Install a Weather Radio:** Weather Radios are the #1 recommended alert method, according to experts from the National Weather Service. Keeping a weather radio in the narthex allows ushers or greeters to listen to & appropriately alert the congregation if a response is needed. Encourage congregants to also keep a weather radio at home, and in their bedrooms at night.

- **Resource Referral:** Midland Radios National Spokesperson & Meteorologist Bruce Jones offers weather radio discounts to churches and schools. This is a message from Bruce, email him at bjones@midlandusa.com to request radios at his discounted rate.

“I recommend every church have a Public Alert-certified WR120 or WR400 desktop weather radio in the main office. By Public Alert specifications, the radios must have Specific Area Message Encoding so they can be set to alert for only their county. The radios must also have a minimum 77-decibel alert tone, and battery back-up in case the electricity fails during a storm. The WR120 is weather radio only. The WR400 features weather radio plus AM/FM reception.”

The church pricing is: WR120: \$34.99 per radio. (MSRP = \$54.99) or
WR400: \$58.99 per radio. (MSRP = \$109.99)

C. TASK SIX: Develop an Alternate Worship Plan

☐ **Investigate alternative sites for worship in case facilities become suddenly unusable.**
(such as no power or access to the building).

☐ **Develop a Memo of Understanding agreement with a neighboring congregation.**
This would be a reciprocal agreement to share worship space if an emergency causes facilities to be temporarily unusable.

☐ **Develop Zoom Capacities to hold worship remotely from home.** During the pandemic, many churches shifted to remote worship from home, and that experience is a capacity to retain, in case this practice is needed again due to future disasters.

☐ **Develop a Communication Method for informing congregants of alternative worship or programming plans.**

- **Disaster Team Reflection:** Who will communicate to congregation members updates on the status of worship and church programs if they are disrupted by a disaster? What method of communication will be used – email, calling, Facebook, etc.?

Worship and spiritual practices for commemorating disaster grief can take many forms:

- a special prayer in worship to commemorate a disaster loss
- a candlelit Taizé chant
- an open invitation for silent reflection in the chapel
- a team of deacons available in the chapel on that day to offer prayer
- a reflective walk as a community near the disaster location
- a meditative labyrinth walk

V. Planning a Disaster Response for All Local Hazards

B. TASK SEVEN: Identity Disaster Risks & Make a Plan for Each Hazard

☐ **The Church Disaster Team meets to discuss disasters their church might experience:**

- ☐ **Medical Emergencies:** requiring First Aid, CPR, AED, or other medical care
- ☐ **Church Safety & Security Event:** such as theft, arson, or an active shooter situation
- ☐ **Fire:** within a building, or a wildfire
- ☐ **Building Damage:** perhaps not covered by insurance, or uninsured facilities
- ☐ **Tornadoes or Windstorms**
- ☐ **Freezes & Winter Storms**
- ☐ **Extreme Heat**
- ☐ **Flooding**
- ☐ **Hurricanes**
- ☐ **Pandemic**
- ☐ **Other:** _____

☐ **Develop a Disaster Plan for all local hazards.**

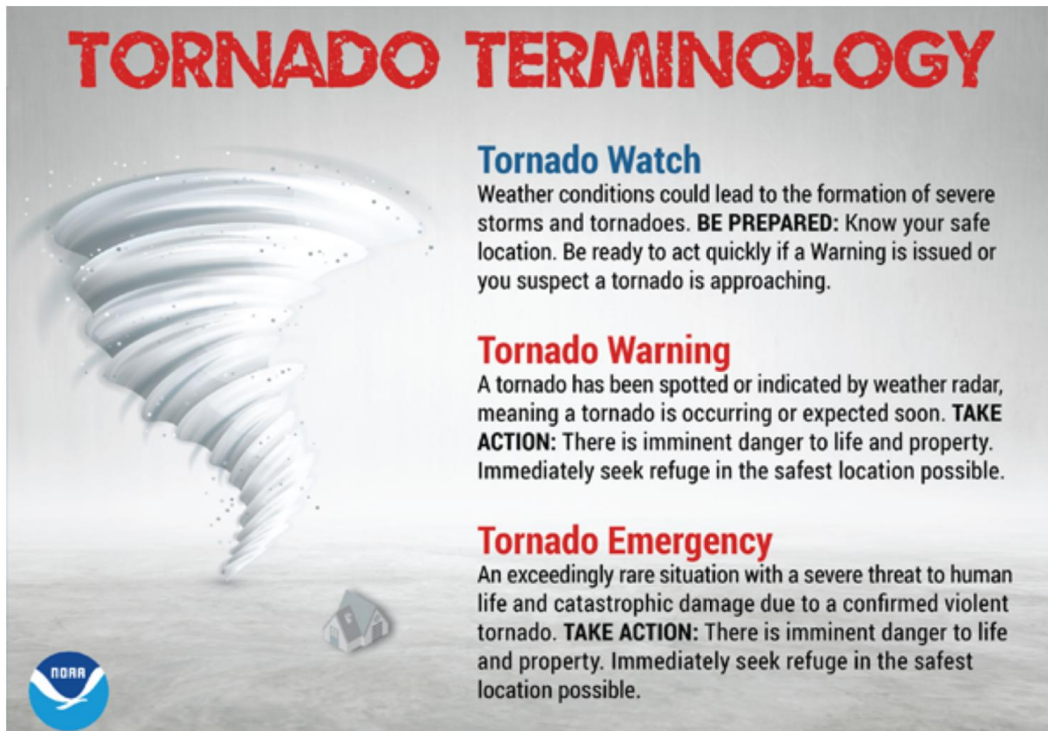
VI. General Advice for Disaster Immediate Response

If the Church Building is Not Occupied, do not go to building until the immediate needs of your family are met, and it is safe to travel.

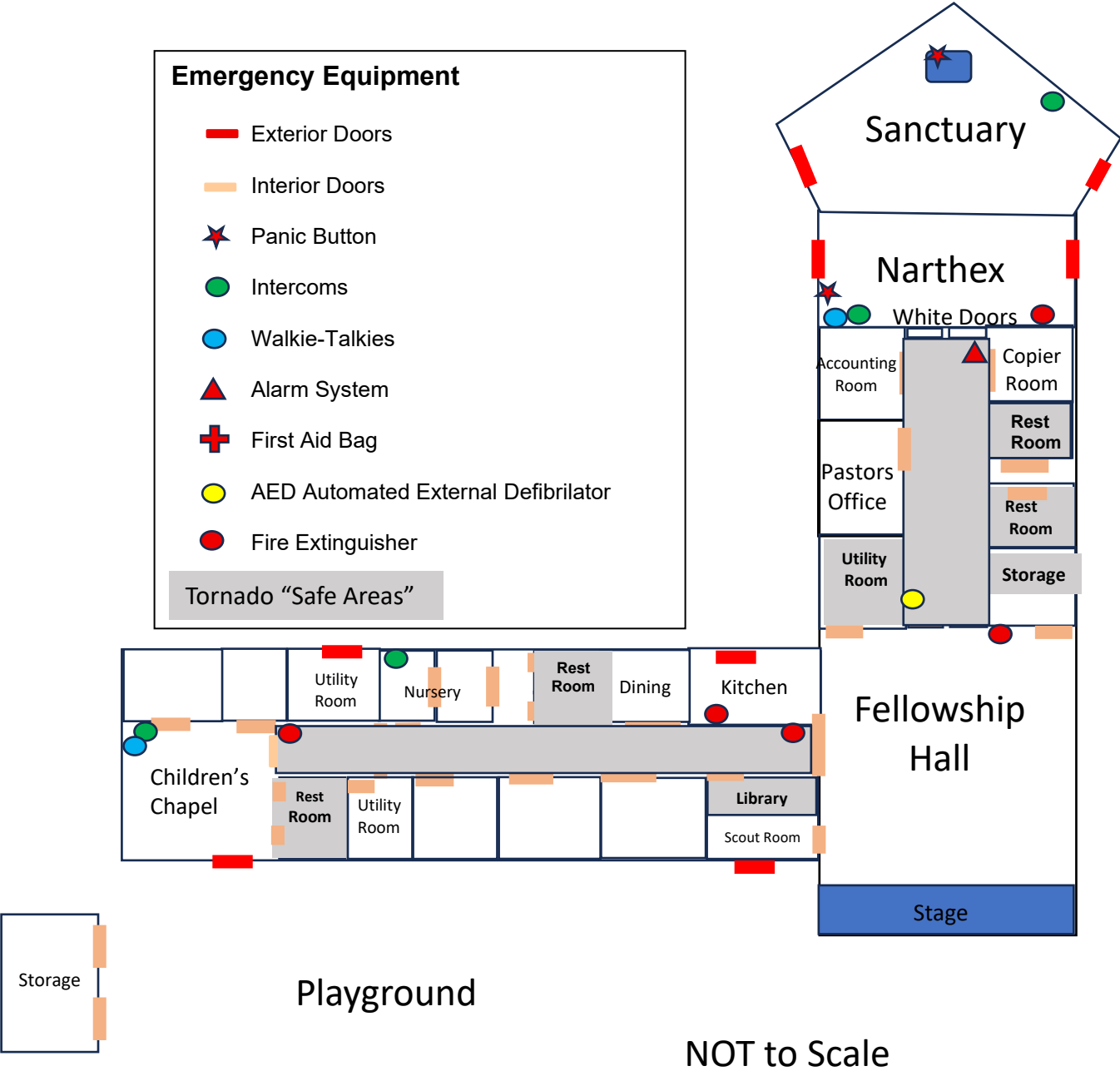
1. **Call pastor, elders, and/or Disaster Coordinator to inform them of your personal status and to get information. Utilize church communication plans. Check especially on vulnerable church members and those who live alone.**
2. **Use local media to receive best information from local authorities – follow all official guidance. Check Emergency Manager updates on their website and social media.**
- 3.
4. **Once immediate family needs are met and it is safe to travel, send leaders to check on the church property and impacted members' homes.**
5. **Take pictures of any damage and contact the church insurance agency.**
6. **Update the Presbytery:** Notify Presbytery Leaders and Presbytery Disaster Team or the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery of any impact to your community, needs, damage, or professional, emotional, or spiritual support needs for the pastor or church leaders.
7. **Know that financial assistance and grants are available, but you need to ask the presbytery to make this happen.** Grants can be available both for immediate relief, and weeks or months out, for long-term recovery needs. Preparedness grants may be available too from the Presbytery or Synod. **Just ask!! 😊**
8. **Call 3-1-1 for Resources and Storm Debris Cleanup.**
9. **Listen for updates on where to find DAC “Disaster Assistance Centers” that are organized as local resource and donated supply centers immediately after disasters.**
10. **Conduct a Session meeting to discuss next steps.**
11. **Inform the congregation** about the status of church programs, worship, known impact, and next steps. **Remind congregants of local resources.**
12. **Hold worship or prayer service** that week either at the church, a partnering local church willing to share space, or over Zoom.
13. **Over the long-term recovery, continue to provide updates** and let the Presbytery and Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery know how needs change and what support you would like to receive. **People don't know what you don't tell them, so communicate what you need.**

VII. TORNADO RESPONSE PLAN

Weather Radios and **cell phone alerts** will give an alert when tornadoes are a risk in your county.

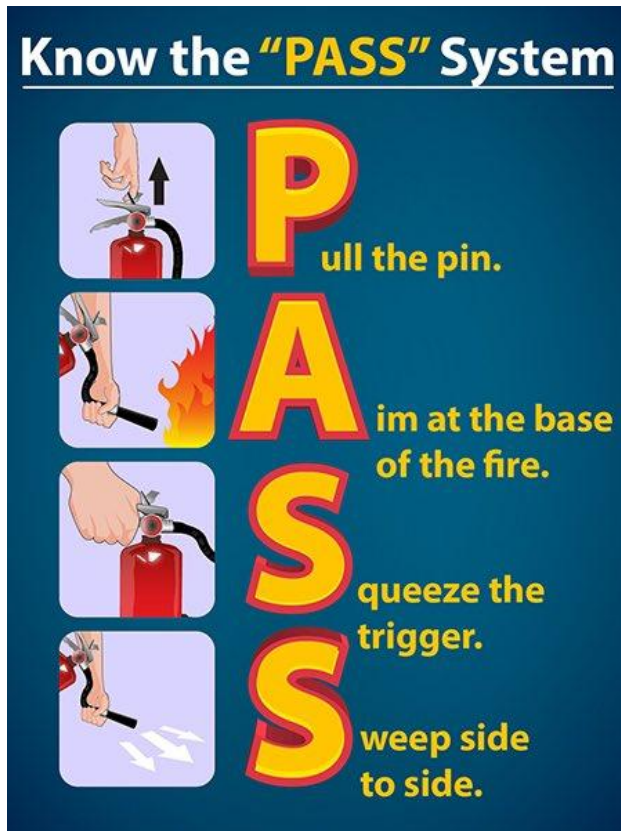


1. If the church is occupied and a tornado alert is received, the Ushers/Greeters will be responsible for directing all church members to shelter areas within the church.
2. Church elders will bring first aid kits into their shelter areas.
3. Tornado Safety Basics:
 - a. Move away from windows, doors, and outside walls. If there is time, close window blinds/shades to help minimize flying glass or debris.
 - b. Warn all those around you and get to sheltered areas immediately.
 - c. Move away from large expanses of unsupported ceilings, such as the church Fellowship Hall.
 - d. In interior hallways, crouch down as low as possible, facing the walls.
 - e. Shelter your head with your arms or blankets.
 - f. If you are unable to get to designated shelter areas, get underneath desks or heavy tables in offices and classrooms.
 - g. If driving, do not shelter under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location or ditch.
4. After a tornado has passed, call 9-1-1 to summon emergency aid, if needed. Widespread damage may limit the ability of first responders to reach the church quickly, so church members should not hesitate to provide first aid until help arrives.



VIII. FIRE RESPONSE AND EVACUATION PLAN

1. If fire is detected, call 9-1-1 immediately.



2. Fire Safety Tips:

- a. If you see smoke under the door, or if the door feels hot, find another way out.
- b. If trapped in a burning building, stay near a window and close to the floor. Signal for help if possible.
- c. Do not return into a burning building until instructed by a firefighter it is safe to do so.
- d. Turn off the gas and electricity from outside this house, if possible.

3. Extinguish the Fire - If You Can Stay Safe:

People who know how to use a fire extinguisher and can do so without limiting their ability to evacuate, and without injuring themselves or others, can try to extinguish the fire.

4. Safety Evacuate to the Evacuation Area: If

Greeters/Ushers, Church Staff or Elders, or Disaster Team Members are present, they will be responsible for helping to evacuate the church to the safe gathering area.

Church staff will call on assistance as needed for evacuating children, the elderly, or those needing physical assistance.

5. **Make Room for Firefighters:** Do not congregate near building exits or the marked fire lanes in the church parking lot. People should be advised not to try moving their cars or leaving the parking lot. This could hinder access by emergency vehicles.
6. **Bring the AED:** During the church evacuation, a CPR/AED trained leader should bring the automated external defibrillator (AED) device, if it is safe to access while evacuating.
7. **Account for Members:** At the Safe Gathering Location Disaster Team Member, Elder, or Staff Member should make a head count and query those outside to make sure that all church members and children have been accounted for. Provide this information to the Fire Department officials who arrive.

Example Pre-Designated Evacuation Area: Away from the building & out of the way of arriving first responders.



IX. Heat Wave

Stay Hydrated – drink more water than usual and avoid sugary, caffeinated beverages

Protect Your Skin – apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30

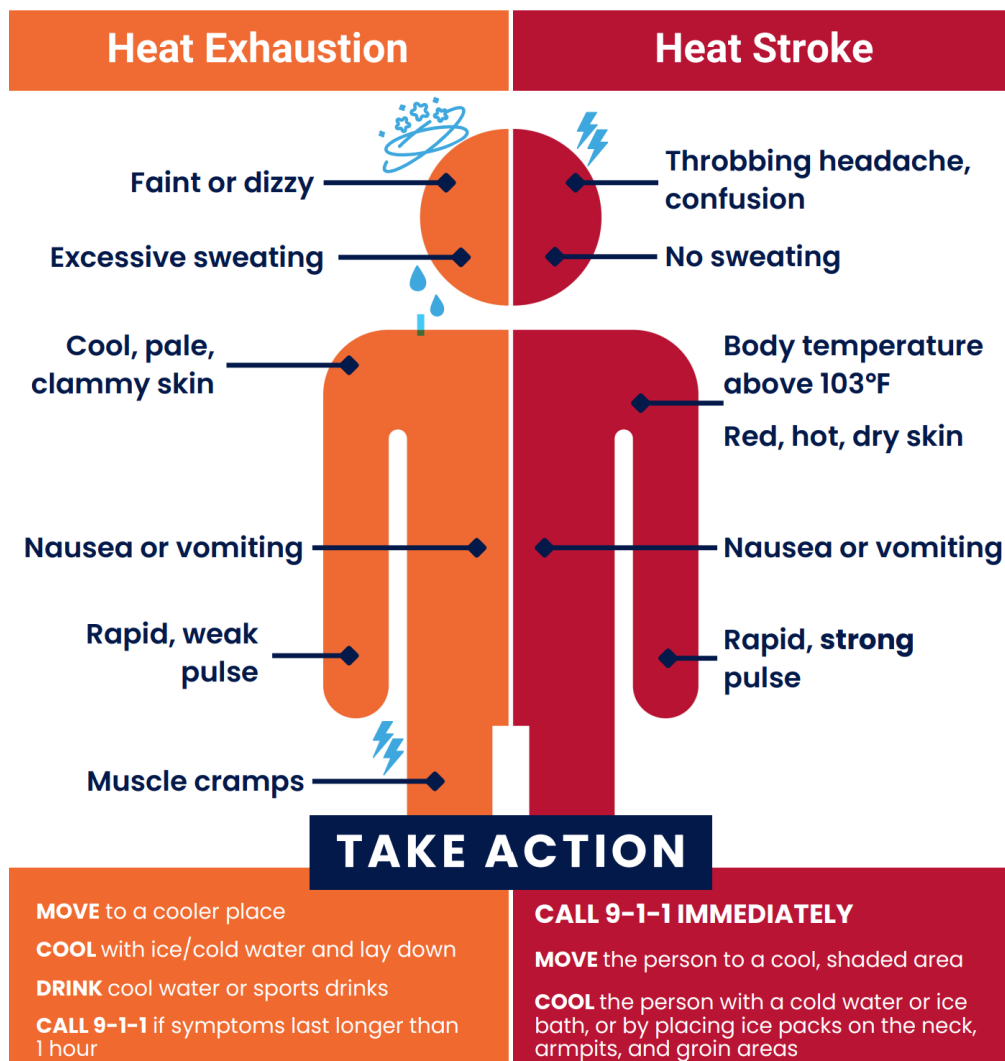
Limit Time Outdoors – avoid high-energy activities and exercise during extreme heat

Look Before You Lock – Ensure children and pets are not left in hot vehicles

Check in on Elderly Church Members & Neighbors – make sure they have access to air conditioners, fans, and clean water for hydration.

Consider opening your church as a community cooling center – Contact your Presbytery Disaster Team for more information.

SIGNS OF HEAT ILLNESS



X. Wildfire

Free Fire Safe Ignition Zone Evaluation - Contact your city or county emergency management office to ask if your community offers a free Ignition Zone Evaluation for your church and members' homes.

Fire Weather: Know the Different Terminology
Weather Forecast Office
Amarillo, TX 

Red Flag Warning • Critical fire weather conditions ongoing or expected to occur shortly due to low relative humidity and windy conditions within county. • Be cautious when doing any outdoor activities that may cause sparks or flames.  READY	Fire Warning • Issued at the request of county officials when a life-threatening wildfire is occurring within the polygon. • Be prepared to evacuate if asked by local officials.  Evacuation <u>may</u> be requested for Town 2 SET	Evacuation Immediate • Issued at the request of county officials for mandatory evacuations based on an ongoing wildfire or other hazardous event in polygon.  Evacuation <u>is</u> requested for Town 2 GO
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NWSAmarillo
weather.gov/ama

Preparation & Risk Mitigation:

- Create defensible space and harden your church or home in the “Home Ignition Zones”:
 - Immediate Zone: 0-5 feet around the building
 - Intermediate Zone: 5-30 feet around the building
 - Extended Zone: 30-100 feet around the building
- Keep trees and shrubs trimmed so they don’t have dead branches, touch electrical wires and chimneys.
- Prune lower branches 8 feet from the ground.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from buildings.
- Keep roof and gutters clear of leaves and debris.
- Store important documents in fireproof containers.
- Take photos in advance of all property, to support insurance claims if a disaster occurs.
- Make evacuation plans & practice regularly.

Ask the insurance provider if wildfire mitigation actions will also lower insurance premiums.

Wildfire Response: If it is safe to take these precautions, these steps can help protect lives and homes:

- Turn on a battery operated radio to receive the latest emergency updates.
- Be ready to evacuate all family members and pets when requested to do so, with go-bags.
- Prop a ladder on the roof so firefighters have access, if needed.
- If hoses and water are available, set them up. Fill buckets with water.
- Remove all combustible materials from the area surrounding your home so the area is as clear as possible.
- Close doors and windows but do not lock them. Close non-flammable blinds and window coverings.
- Take down flammable drapes and curtains and move upholstered furniture away from windows.
- Turn a light on in each room for visibility in case of smoke.
- Turn off air conditioning and air circulation systems.
- Detach electrical garage doors. Back in your car and leave the key in the ignition.

XI. Winter Storms

☐ **Identify Leaders:** Determine two or three people who will be responsible for protecting building & equipment against forecasted severe weather.

☐ **Make a List:**

- ☐ Indoor items that may need special care (such as an organ or piano)
- ☐ Outdoor items that need to be secured (such as playground, chairs, signs, garbage cans)
- ☐ Shut-off list:
 - ☐ Electric power sources
 - ☐ Water supply
- ☐ Other winterizing or preparedness tasks

☐ **Check-in Plan:** Ensure daily checks on facility conditions occur during or following severe weather, once roads are safe to travel.

Preparation:

- ☐ **Access and review your church insurance policy.**
- ☐ **Stock Supplies:**
 - Foam exterior faucet covers,
 - Entryway water-absorbent mats to prevent slip-and-fall hazards
 - Rock salt and a snow shovel to clear ice on walkways
- **Routine Building Care:**
 - Clear rain gutters and repair roof leaks
 - Clear tree branches that could fall on the building during a storm
 - Ensure several leaders know the exact location of the primary water valve
- **Check on vulnerable members before, during, and after storms.**
 - If possible, encourage families with fireplace access or generators to open space for vulnerable members to shelter with them, if a major winter storm is approaching.

Church Freeze-Protection Protocol: Enact when a winter weather or winter storms are coming.

- **Designate a Leader:** Identify one or two leaders who can travel to the church once a storm is warned, to prepare the building, and again after the storm to check for damage, once it is safe to travel.
- **Thermostat:** Set thermostat for all rooms to a minimum of 55°F. Do not turn the heat completely off.
- **Open cabinets** in the kitchen, coffee stations, and restrooms to allow warm air to circulate around pipes.
- **Interior faucets:** drip to a slow, steady drip to keep water moving and relieve pressure.
- **Exterior faucets:** shut off and drain all external hoses and taps. Install insulated foam covers over exposed spigots.
- **Protect Plants:** Cover plants with plant-cover fabric, towels, or a light blanket with plastic sheeting on top of it

In the Event of a Pipe Rupture:

- Shut down the primary water valve ASAP to prevent further water damage.
- Contact insurance company, and take photos of damage.
- Contact the Presbytery Disaster Team for information on applying for a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Church Repair grant.

Personal Safety Tips During Winter Storms:

- Dress in dry layers to protect yourself from the cold.
- While heating your home, do not use a generator, grill, camp-stove, or any gasoline, propane, or charcoal-burning device, because they generate deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- Bring pets inside to keep them warm and safe.
- **Safe Driving:** (avoid driving if possible)
 - o Check tire pressure and tread
 - o Avoid bridges and overpasses. Stay on main roads.
 - o Check for updated weather conditions
 - o Approach intersections with caution and always treat dark signals as an all-way stop.
 - o Keep a winter emergency kit in your car, including:
 - Jumper cables
 - Flares or a reflective triangle
 - Ice scraper
 - Car cell phone charger
 - Extra blankets

Consider Becoming a Heating or Cooling Center: Talk with your Presbytery Disaster Team or the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery to learn more.

XII. Hydroplaning & Flooding

1. **Mitigation: Is your church (or home) located in a Flood Plain? Search your address on this FEMA Flood Map to learn about your risk, and nearby waterways.**

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>

2. **Hydroplaning: As little as 1/12 inch of water can cause hydroplaning.**



Graphics created by Zion Powell from NOAA

3. **Turn Around, Don't Drown: Do not drive through flooded roadways.**
 - 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock adults off their feet and sweep them away
 - 12 inches of moving water can carry a car
 - 18-24 inches of moving water carry away larger vehicles including trucks, vans, and SUVs.
 - a. Avoid driving over bridges, which can collapse without warning.
 - b. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground.
 - c. Nearly half of all flood fatalities are vehicle related.
4. **Evacuation: If you are asked to evacuate, shut off the main power, gas, and water. Follow local evacuation plans and routes.**
5. **Beware of Electrocutation:**
 - a. Watch for wires and do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If possible, turn off the electricity.
 - b. Do not wade in floodwater, which can be contaminated, contain dangerous debris, or underground/downed powerlines.
 - c. Beware of using open flame where there may be broken gas lines.
6. **Mold Remedy Safety:** Use an appropriate mask, gloves, when cleaning mold or other flood-related debris.

XIII. Medical Response Plan

In a Medical Emergency, Call 9-1-1. Be prepared to give the following information:

- 1. Name and Phone Number**
- 2. Church Name and Address:**
- 3. Which entrance of the building to enter**
- 4. Number of people involved**
- 5. Nature of injury or illness**

Remember to stay on the line until help arrives, if at all possible.

If it is safe to do so, people trained in First-Aid or CPR may provide aid to the level of their training, until help arrives. The person providing aid should conduct a primary assessment of the situation and report this information to arriving first responders.

While a person is providing CPR, as soon as possible:

- one person should be ready to relieve them if they tire,
- one person should call 9-1-1, and
- one person should retrieve the First-Aid and AED supplies
- a few people should go to the nearest entrances of the building to indicate to first responders where to enter to access the unresponsive person

The First-Aid kits are located:

The AED is located:

Treat minor injuries from supplies in the first aid kits.

While waiting for professional help do not move the ill or injured person, unless safety considerations necessitate movement or transportation to a safer location.

When professional help arrives, allow them to take control of the situation.

Note: In an active shooter incident, the first priority of first responders will be to neutralize the threat. Medical treatment will be provided by EMS only once the scene is safe. CPR/First-Aid/Stop-the-Bleed trained church members may save lives.

☐ **CPR/AED/First-Aid (re)Certification Training:** must be renewed every two years, for all Ushers/Greeters & any interested members. Contact your local Red Cross agency, local EMS, or Grace Presbytery's Disaster Response Team (214-630-4502) to schedule a training.

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XIV. Church Safety & Security Preparedness & Leader Training

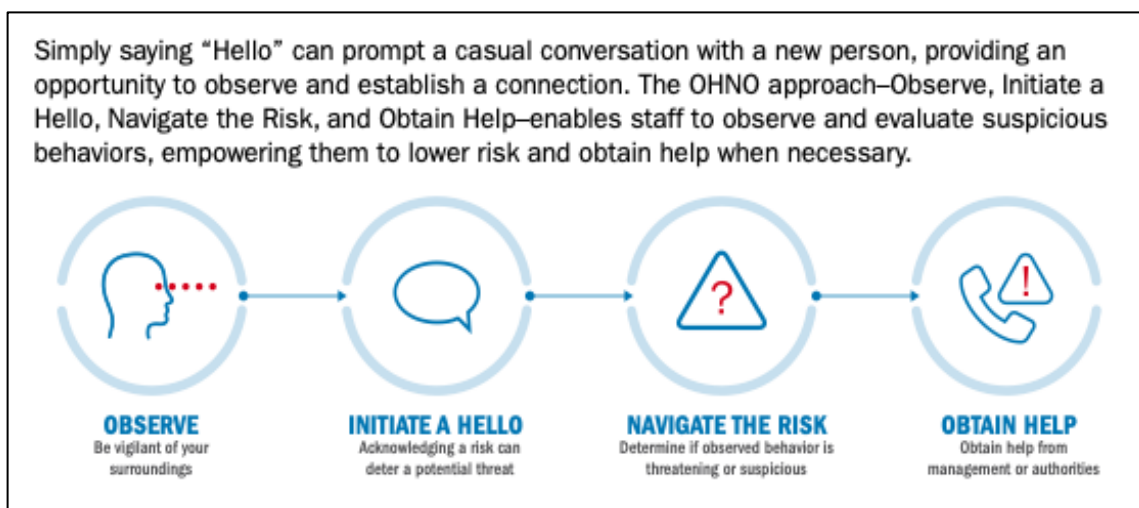
(Adapted from the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Church Safety & Security Training Resources)

1. Basic Security Preparedness: Never leave unattended doors unlocked.

- Ensuring external doors remain locked unless attended by a trained greeter.
- Having an easy way for greeters to lock doors in case of emergency.
- Have a lock-down plan, and practice with the congregation and ushers. Encourage people with mobility needs to sit closer to exits or lockable rooms so they can be assisted swiftly.
- Establish practices of swift communication with multiple occupied areas of the building, in case of emergency.

2. Ushers & Greeters: Stay Observant

- Observe** - Potentially suspicious behaviors:
 - Repeatedly walking in and out of the sanctuary
 - Demanding to speak with clergy
 - Loitering and not entering sanctuary
 - Asking questions about schedule, trying doors, or taking pictures of the space
 - Clothing or large bags, perhaps to conceal something



- Hello** – Greet this person with eye contact. Say “Hello, how are you?” or “Welcome, is this your first time here?”
- Navigate the Risk** – Reflect on how you feel, and seek help if needed.
 - Ask yourself:
 - Is everything normal? Do they need assistance?
 - Is there something worrying you about the situation? Is there a potential for danger?
 - If no danger is sensed, but just mild discomfort:**
 - Consider if this person may feel unfamiliar with church. Perhaps a friendly member or greeter can sit with them during church and answer questions.
 - Consider if discomfort arises from something unfamiliar about the person, such as a different culture, language, disability, or socioeconomic status. Be friendly, and know that kindness is felt, even when we don’t know what to say.

iii. If you feel threatened or danger:

1. Calmly walk away. Do not directly engage.
2. Seek help from others, and consider discretely moving other people away from the area. Lock the doors if possible, to keep a dangerous person out.
3. Note the individual's physical description and any identifying information that may be helpful, such as vehicle information or license plate.
4. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so.

Church Safety & Security Emergency Response – Since first responders may not arrive in time to prevent loss of life, the church members may have to take drastic actions to save lives.

1. Alert & Inform

- a. **Call 9-1-1.** If safe to do so, be prepared to give the following information:

- i. **Name and Phone Number**
- ii. **Church Name and Address:**
- iii. **Which entrance of the building to enter**
- iv. **If known:**
 1. **Location of the shooter**
 2. **Description of the shooter**
 3. **Type of weapon(s)**
 4. **Number of people in the building, and where they may be**
 5. **Number of people injured**

b. **Alert Others**

- i. Use plain language, no code words
- ii. Alert childcare leaders and people in other areas of the building, if possible.
- iii. Consider special needs or mobility assistance needs.

2. Evacuate

- a. Is the threat outside or inside? Be observant to discern where the safest place is.
- b. Evacuate if it is safe to do so. Use any available exits (not just the one you entered by.) Act quickly to seek safety, don't wait for instruction.
- c. Leave all belongings behind, including your vehicle. (You don't want traffic to block first responders.)
- d. Once outside of the building proceed to the evacuation area.
- e. Once at the rally point, take attendance and report anyone not with you.

3. Lockdown

- a. Without time or opportunity to evacuate, you will need to **control your room**
- b. Lock the door. If impossible, use any furniture available to barricade the door.
- c. Get away from the door and windows. Turn off the lights. Stay out of sight.

4. Counter

- a. If evacuation or lockdown are not possible and an encounter with the shooter is immanent, do not be still and quiet.
- b. Make distractions to overwhelm the decision making process of the attacker. Confusion caused to them by noise, movement, and chaos may provide an opportunity for some to evacuate or lockdown.

5. Control the Situation

- a. In the rare instance that an assailant is within arm's length, a personal decision can be made to control the shooter and weapon, as a last resort.

- b. Grab appendages to bring the shooter to the ground and control the weapon. Hold them there until police arrive, and keep the weapon under an overturned trash can, or far from the attacker. When police arrive be sure no one is holding any weapon, and follow all instructions.
 - i. At May 15, 2022 at Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Laguna Woods, CA, a group of elderly congregants controlled an active shooter by hitting him in the head with a chair, tackling him to the ground, and tying his arms with an electrical cord. This active shooter killed one person and injured five others.



A common phrase to remember basics of responding to an active shooter is Run – Hide – Fight.

RUN (If you can)

- Get out if you can, even if others insist on staying
- Leave belongings behind
- Your life is more precious than "things"
- Once out, call 9-1-1



HIDE (If you need)

- If you can't get out, find a place to hide
- Barricade or lock doors
- Hide behind large objects
- Turn out lights and silence your phone



FIGHT (If you must)

- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with aggression
- Improvise weapons
- Commit to your actions



XV. Congregational Care as Disaster Response

- ☐ **Identify at-risk members of the congregation who may need assistance during a disaster.**
 - Elderly, disabled, or medically vulnerable people and their caregivers
 - People who live in remote or more hazard-vulnerable areas, or in mobile homes
- ☐ **Develop a plan for congregational care, assigning volunteer groups to call vulnerable members before, during, and after disasters.** If needs are identified, the Church Disaster Team should inform the session and the Presbytery Disaster Team.
- ☐ **Providing Shelter or Food:** Investigate if volunteers would be interested open the church for sheltering or food preparation, as a heating or cooling center, or community care, in the event of a disaster. If so, contact the presbytery disaster team and your local emergency manger to develop this capacity before a disaster occurs.
- ☐ **Educate families on how they can make a safety plan and emergency kit at home.**
- ☐ **Prepare & Store Disaster Kits for Local Use:**
 - Clean-Up Buckets
 - Personal Hygiene Kits
 - Menstruation Kits

Notify your Presbytery Disaster Team, so we know you have some of these kits on hand that may be requested to be deployed out to nearby community need after severe storms, fire, or tornadoes.

XVI. Individual/Family Disaster Preparedness

Get Ahead of What's Ahead. BUILD YOUR DISASTER SUPPLY KIT



**TEXAS
READY**

Build your kit all at once or step by step. Start with what you already have at home; then shop for the rest, as needed.

Pack these basic supplies for each person or pet in a portable container or backpack. A waterproof container is best. You'll need these supplies whether you stay in your home (shelter in place) or evacuate to another location.

You may have to leave in a hurry to get to a safe place. Keep these supplies near your car. When it's time, grab them and go.



FOOD AND WATER

- ☐ 3-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned or pouched food
- ☐ 1 gallon of water per day for each person and pet
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Baby items (baby food, formula, bottles, diapers)
- ☐ Pet supplies (listed on next page)



FIRST AID, MEDICATION, HYGIENE SUPPLIES

- ☐ First-aid kit (listed on next page)
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Hand sanitizer, wipes
- ☐ Bleach (To purify water, mix 1/8 teaspoon per gallon. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes.)
- ☐ Toilet paper, paper towels, garbage bags
- ☐ Dental care products (toothpaste, toothbrushes)
- ☐ Hearing and vision products (hearing aids and batteries, glasses, contact lenses, contact lens solution, sunglasses)
- ☐ Soap, shampoo, personal hygiene supplies
- ☐ Sunscreen, insect repellent
- ☐ Face masks to filter air



COMMUNICATION, LIGHTING, DOCUMENT BAG ITEMS

- ☐ Battery-powered radio with extra batteries or crank radio (emergency alert radio is best)
- ☐ Extra cell phone battery and car charger
- ☐ Flashlights and extra batteries
- ☐ Matches and lighter - keep in a waterproof container or sealable plastic bag
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Document bag items (listed on next page)



ADD THESE ITEMS FOR EVACUATING BY CAR

- ☐ Road maps
- ☐ Car repair items (tools, spare tire, tire patch kit, oil)
- ☐ Food and water
- ☐ Plastic plates, cups and utensils
- ☐ Tent, blankets, pillows
- ☐ Clothes and sturdy shoes
- ☐ Rain gear and towels
- ☐ Books, games, toys

Before you leave home

- ☐ Fill your gas tank, and check your spare tire
- ☐ Take cash, checkbook, and credit cards
- ☐ Call your family emergency contact
- ☐ Charge your mobile phone
- ☐ Get a map of your route

When staying home is your safest choice, add these items to your kit and stay tuned to the news.



ADD THESE ITEMS FOR SHELTERING IN PLACE

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Non-perishable food and manual can opener
- ☐ Pet food
- ☐ Baby food
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to seal doors, windows and air vents from contaminated air or to build an emergency shelter)

Texas Department of State
Health Services



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

TexasReady.gov

**DOCUMENT BAG CONTENTS**

Imagine how hard it would be after a disaster if you couldn't prove your identity or have access to your bank account. Avoid difficult situations by making copies of important documents and keeping them in a waterproof bag.

- ☐ Current photo IDs, driver licenses, birth records, Social Security cards, passports (always keep your Social Security number separate from other documents to decrease risk of identity theft)
- ☐ Current photos of family members in case you get separated
- ☐ Health insurance and prescription cards
- ☐ Medical records, medications and dosages
- ☐ Phone numbers (family, friends, doctors)
- ☐ Bank account information
- ☐ Wills
- ☐ Insurance documents (homeowner, renter, flood, life)
- ☐ Property deeds, leases, mortgages
- ☐ Vehicle titles, insurance, leases, loan documents
- ☐ Inventory of household possessions and their value (take photos of every room, every drawer, every closet)
- ☐ Backup computer files (on a USB drive)
- ☐ Copies of important keys
- ☐ Utility bills (to prove where you live)

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THOSE WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS**

Think about your day-to-day needs for independence. Plan now for your health away from home. Label medical equipment with your contact information.

- ☐ Wheelchairs, walkers, and canes
- ☐ Cooler with cold packs for medications
- ☐ Extra medications and dosages
- ☐ Copies of prescriptions and medical alert tags
- ☐ Food for special diets
- ☐ Medical supplies (oxygen, glucose monitoring strips, syringes, etc.)
- ☐ Hearing aids with extra batteries
- ☐ Communication devices
- ☐ Supplies and documentation for service animals

**FIRST-AID KIT CONTENTS**

- ☐ 2 compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- ☐ 25 band-aids (different sizes)
- ☐ First-aid tape
- ☐ Antibiotic ointment
- ☐ Hydrocortisone ointment
- ☐ Pain reliever, such as aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- ☐ Instant cold pack
- ☐ 2 pair of medical gloves (non-latex)
- ☐ Oral thermometer, scissors, tweezers
- ☐ 2 roller bandages (different widths)
- ☐ 2 elastic bandages
- ☐ 10 sterile gauze pads (different sizes)
- ☐ 2 triangular bandages (for making slings)
- ☐ First-aid instruction booklet

**PET SUPPLIES**

- ☐ 3-day supply of food, water, and bowls
- ☐ Pet medications and first-aid kit
- ☐ Vaccination records
- ☐ Crate or carrier (may be required in shelters or where you spend the night)
- ☐ Leash and toys
- ☐ Cat litter and box
- ☐ Photo, in case pet gets lost

XVII. Disaster Outreach: Hygiene Kit

CWS Hygiene Kit

A small package that makes a meaningful difference.

Each kit includes everyday essentials—soap, towels, a toothbrush—offering comfort and care and a fresh start each day.



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Pack these items into one **1-gallon resealable plastic bag**.

- One washcloth
- One fingernail or toenail clipper (either is acceptable; remove from package)
- One bath-size bar of soap (in the original package)
- One toothbrush (in the original package)
- One travel-size deodorant stick (3.4 ounces or less, non-aerosol)
- One travel-size lotion (3.4 ounces or less, fragrance-free)
- One travel-size shampoo (3.4 ounces or less)
- One travel-size toothpaste (3.4 ounces or less, with an expiration date at least one year out)
- One sturdy wide-tooth comb (remove from package; must have at least 6 inches of teeth; pocket combs or picks not accepted; rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable)

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Place all items inside the 1-gallon bag, remove excess air and seal tightly. All items must be new. Please do not include notes, money or extra items.

XVIII. Disaster Outreach: Menstruation Kit

CWS Period Packs

Supports health and confidence.

Each kit includes menstrual supplies and hygiene items so everyone who needs them can care for their health with comfort and dignity.



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Pack these items into one **1-gallon resealable plastic bag**.

- Two 2 oz bottles of hand sanitizer
- Three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- One travel-size pack of antibacterial hand wipes (about 20 wipes, unscented)
- One pack of flushable wipes (unscented, 42 wipes or fewer)
- Five regular-absorbency tampons
- Five super-absorbency tampons
- Twelve sanitary pads (unscented)
- One bath-size bar of soap (3 oz or larger, in original wrapping; avoid Ivory or Jergens)
- Six fragrance-free laundry sheets (place in a small resealable plastic bag)

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Place all items inside the 1-gallon bag, remove excess air and seal tightly. All items must be new. Please do not include notes, money or extra items.

XIX. Disaster Outreach: Clean-Up Bucket

CWS Cleanup Bucket

A fresh start after the storm.

Packed with cleaning supplies, gloves and other essentials, each bucket offers care and relief to help people begin recovery and restore their homes after flooding or other disasters.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:



Pack these items into **one five-gallon bucket with a resealable lid**. (If reusing a bucket, please clean thoroughly. Do not use buckets that have held chemicals of any kind. Brand labels on the outside are acceptable.)

- Five scouring pads (no stainless steel or pads with soap in them; remove from packaging)
- Seven sponges (including one large)
- One scrub brush (with or without handle)
- 18 reusable, lightweight multipurpose cleaning towels (not paper towels; remove from packaging)
- One 16–34 oz bottle of liquid dish soap (antibacterial preferred)
- One 12–40 oz bottle of liquid concentrate household cleaner (no spray bottles)
- One 50–100 ft clothesline (cotton or plastic)
- Five dust masks (N95 particulate respirator dust masks preferred; no surgical masks)
- Two pairs of heavy-duty, waterproof dishwashing gloves (latex-free preferred; remove from packaging)
- One pair of heavy-duty, reusable work gloves (such as nitrile, cotton with leather palm, or all leather)
- 20–28 heavy-duty or contractor type 30–45 gallon trash bags (on a roll; remove from packaging)

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Place all items inside the bucket and seal the lid securely. All items must be new. Please do not include notes, money or extra items.

XX. Saving Important Information

A. TASK EIGHT: Save Disaster Plans, Important Documents, & Contact Lists in Multiple Ways

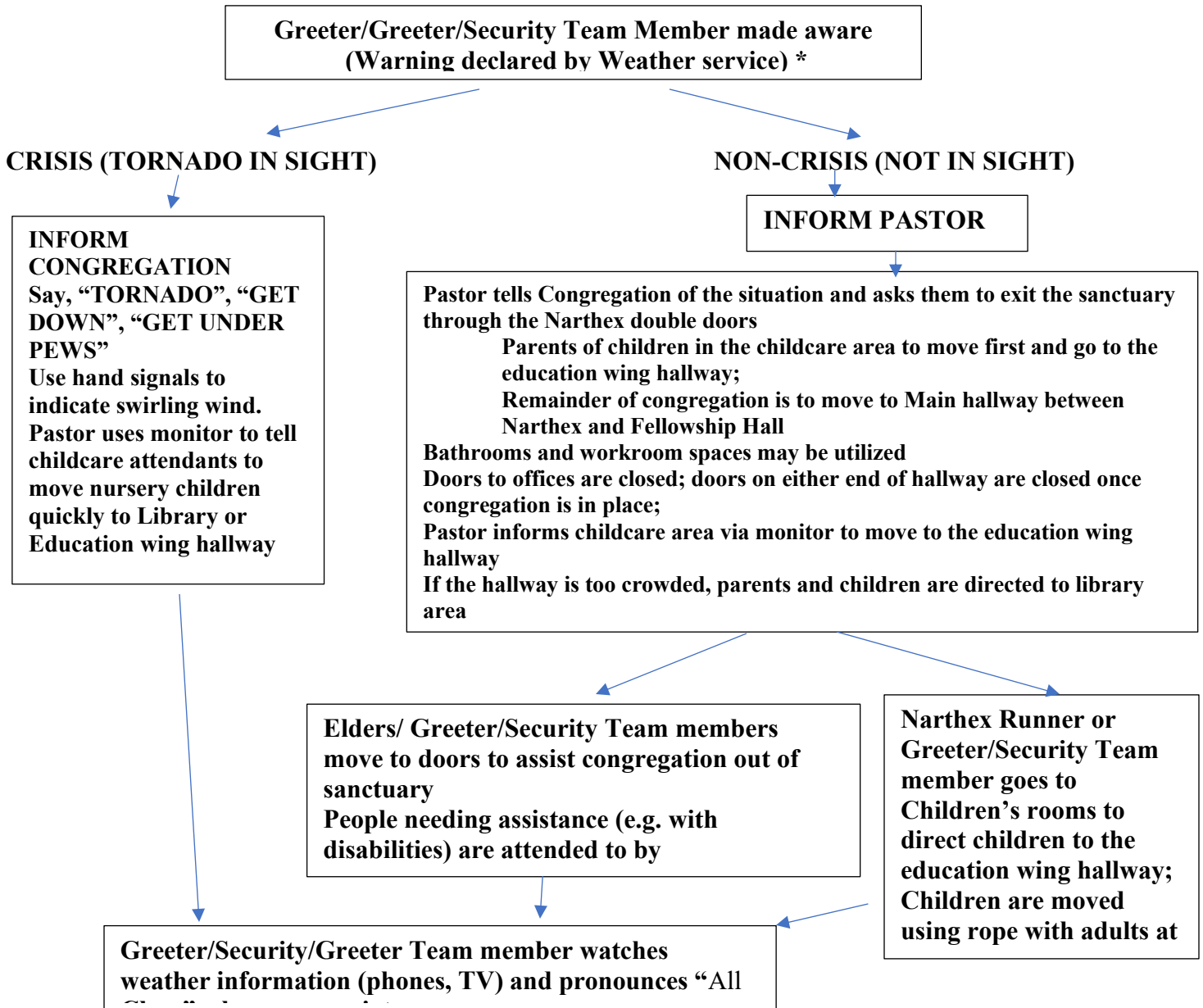
- ☐ **Digitally Save Documents:** Use a “Cloud” storage service like Google Drive, or a private, secure software online to digitally save contact information, disaster plans, financial documents, insurance policies, and other important information.
- ☐ **Hard Copies in Multiple Places:** Keep additional hard copies and USB-saved files both on-site and at a secondary location beyond the church.
- **Disaster Team Reflection:**
 - If suddenly the church office became inaccessible, what would you lose access to?
 - Where are church contacts, important financial documents, and insurance policies stored?

Documents that we must protect against loss	Primary Location	Back-up Location
Insurance policy, insurance binder, insurance company/agent name and contact information		
Pastor, staff, session, contact information		
Presbytery & Synod staff contact information		
Member directory		
Electronic church financial transactions		
Financial account information (institutions & acct #s)		
Tax Exemption certificate with ID number		
Personnel files		
Legal contracts and agreements		
Historic documents		
Membership Rolls		
Session Minutes		
Inventory of computers, business equipment, manuals, warranties, and equip. maintenance contracts		
List of all places where copies of pertinent equipment information and manuals are housed		

B. TASK TEN: Train Your Ushers/Greeters/Safety Team

a. Safety Scenarios

1. Safety Scenario: TORNADO



*If the “runner” is absent on any particular Sunday, the Pastor or Greeter/ Greeter/Security Team member will ask that another one of the Greeter/Security team remains in the Narthex to act as a runner for the day.

2. Safety Scenario: FIRE

Congregation in Sanctuary; fire in sanctuary, kitchen or Classrooms

Greeter/Greeter/Security Team Member made aware of fire out of control *

Call or Instruct runner to call 911 or push panic button on Main hallway panel

INFORM CONGREGATION

**Say, “FIRE. EXIT THROUGH DOOR BEHIND ORGAN IF ON RIGHT SIDE OF SANCTUARY;
EXIT THROUGH PARKING LOT DOOR IF ON LEFT SIDE”.**

**SOME IN BACK PEWS WITH WALKERS MAY BE DIRECTED TO EXIT OUT NARTHEX
DOORS; EVERYONE MEET ON LARGE GRASSY AREA NORTH OF SANCTUARY**

Pastor

Greeter/Security team/Elders

**Shows exits by pointing to them
Notifies the childcare via
Sanctuary baby monitor**

**Assist in the
evacuation of
members**

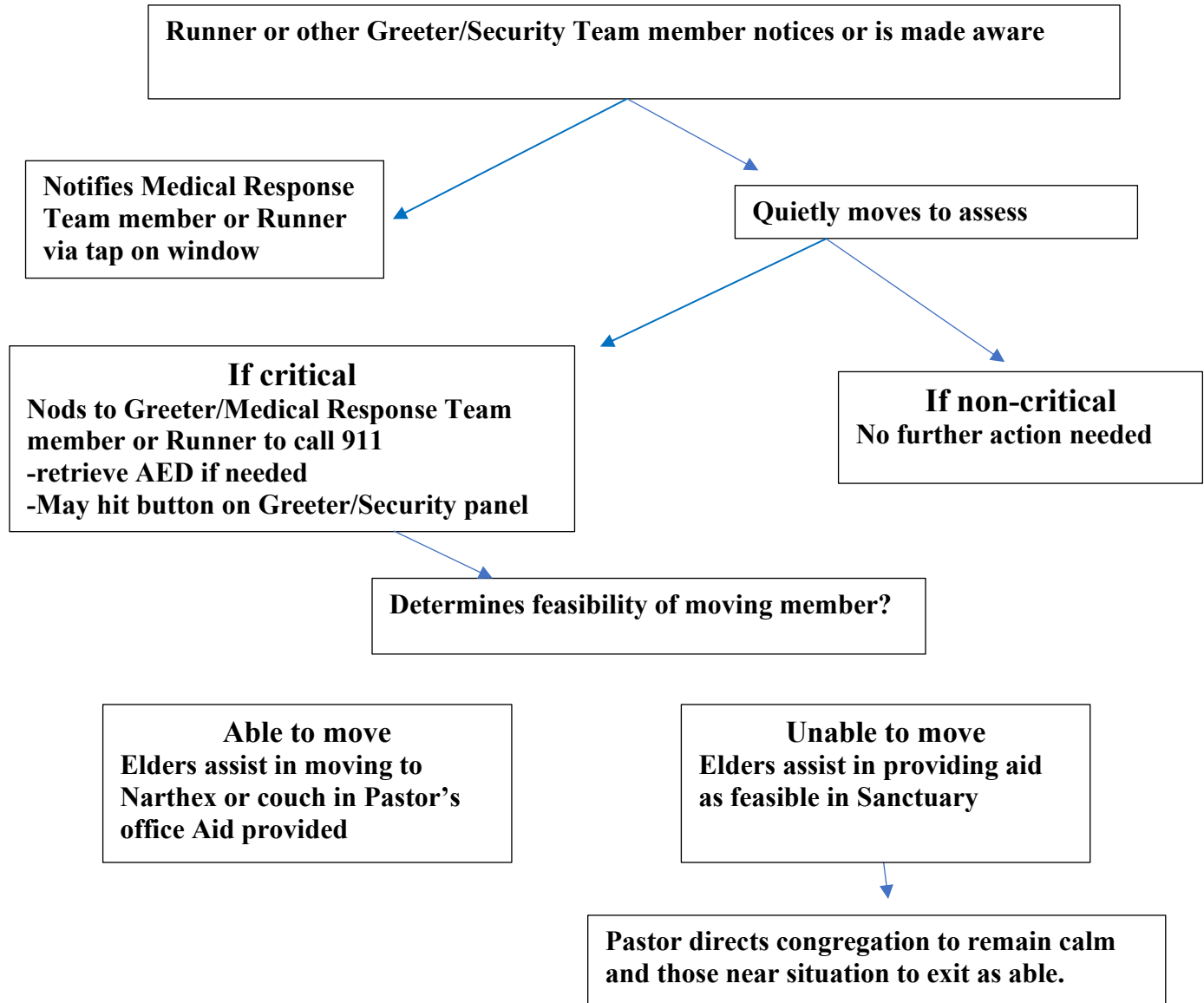
**If way is clear, run to childcare
area to ensure they are aware
and evacuate; If needed use very
loud voice to notify them or
enter from outside**

All children exit via the back door in large classroom; Attendants use rope to keep children together; attendants and volunteers are at front and rear of line; Children are moved through backyard of church and to large grassy area north of Sanctuary to join the congregation. Identified Elder or Greeter/Security team member takes attendance at final destination and notifies fire and police if all are accounted for. Takes clip-board and iPad from sign-in station with them. Greeter/Greeter/Security team member and elders check congregation, including children’s group to make sure everyone is out of the church.

***If the “runner” is absent on any particular Sunday, the Pastor or Greeter/Greeter/Security Team member will ask that another one of the Greeter/Security team remains in the Narthex to act as a runner for the day.**

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Congregation in Sanctuary



*If the “runner” is absent on any particular Sunday, the Pastor or Greeter/Greeter/Security Team member will ask that another one of the Greeter/Security team remains in the Narthex to act as a runner for the day.

INTRUDER/ACTIVE SHOOTER

**Runner or other Greeter/Security team member says, “GET OUT. EXIT CLOSEST DOOR”
Pastor hits panic button on FOB (at pulpit)
Pastor speaks loudly into monitor to notify childcare staff**

**All Greeter/Security team member move to defend in all ways possible
(Wasp spray, thrown objects, physical take-down, block sanctuary door)**

**Runner moves quickly
(by door to outside to
notify the childcare staff**

**Elders assist in evacuating people;
Elders return into church once “all
clear” in order to render aid.**

**Children are led
into backyard
using back door**

**Pastor assists in evacuation and to “clear” the church
All work with police as directed**

***If the “runner” is absent on any particular Sunday, the Pastor or Greeter/Greeter/Security Team member will ask that another one of the Greeter/Security team remains in the Narthex to act as a runner for the day.**

bGreeter/Security Team Position Description

Purpose: To greet and warmly welcome guests and members to the worship services. In addition, monitor key areas of the church during worship services or other events as part of security program of First Presbyterian Church-Copperas Cove.

Status: Volunteer

Accountability: Accountable to the Session through the Session and to the Pastor

Requirements: To be a friendly personality, knowledgeable about the church; [Watch a training video Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event \(CRASE\)](#) or equivalent yearly, in order to identify characteristics of an active shooter. Excellent understanding of Church Disaster Preparedness plan in regard to all emergencies (tornado, fire, intruder, etc.). Be prepared to conduct or assist in emergency action drills and briefings. Has physical abilities and awareness skills. Well acquainted with CPR and first aid skills.

Responsibilities:

- Be present in the Narthex **no later than** 10:40am on Sunday mornings and remain until all members of the congregation have either left the building or moved to Fellowship Hall.
- Refamiliarize yourself with Security Team responsibilities as needed (file holder on wall next to door)
- Check in with Usher(s), Media Team, and Pastor, such that all are aware that you are on duty as the greeter/security team. Ensure that childcare attendants have been contacted and all is going well. Ensure that they know how to reach you if they require assistance. Report problems to the elder over Discipleship (**Becky Hunter**).
- Put on name tag and greet attendees with a smile and a welcome
- Open door for everyone entering the building and assist those who need assistance.
- Remind parents to sign in young children (≤ 7 years) (If childcare attendants are not there)
- Work in cooperation with the usher to attend to those who need direction to nursery, restroom, coffee, pastor as needed
- Work in cooperation with Runner to make rounds of church facility by 11:05am, checking that all doors other than those of the Sanctuary entrance are locked.
- Lock Narthex (Main entrance) doors by 11:10am. They remain locked.
- Shut the double doors into the Sanctuary
- Occupy the seat in the chair nearest to the door
- Investigate any door openings (INHOUSE alarm chimes)
- To minimize disruption in worship, assist the usher in asking all members who leave the Sanctuary after the service has begun to remain in the Narthex and reenter only during breaks in the service (e.g. during hymns, between sections, passing of the peace, etc.). Please gently invite them to have a seat while they wait. (i.e. they should NOT enter during prayers, reading of scripture, the sermon, or choir anthems).
 - Note: small children should be accompanied by parents if they leave the sanctuary.
 - The Fellowship Hall is useful as worship space for overflow, for members who may not feel well, or for parents of small children who are struggling to remain in the Sanctuary. Unsupervised youth are not to “hang out” there.
 - Only the security member, runner and one (1) usher need remain in the Narthex during the service; Ushers may gather in the Narthex just prior to their roles in the collection of communions or offering.
- Working with the runner and other security team members, keep watch over the congregation for any who become distressed, ill, or in some way need assistance. Provide “first responder (medical) service” to those incurring a medical emergency until medical personnel with higher training arrives on scene.

- Keep watch over the parking lot, determine identity of all who come to the church after the doors are locked.
 - Open doors to late comers or guests. Greet them warmly (as stated above, keep them in the Narthex until a break in the service allows entry).
 - Refer those who come to the church seeking financial or other assistance after 10:30am to either join in worship or return after 12pm to speak with the Pastor
 - Enact the agreed upon proper procedure for the congregation (Avoid, Deny, Defend) if the individual approaching appears to be a risk to them.
 - Store backpacks under table or look inside back pack before allowing into Sanctuary.
- After service, close the white doors in the hallway between the Narthex and the Fellowship Hall. (This assists in keeping children from playing in rooms they don't need to be in)
- While you are present, keep children from playing in the Narthex and running outside.