Section 6:
Response

Response to an emergency is simply putting into practice what you have planned for up until the point of an emergency. For example, during a response to an emergency (1) your calling trees may be activated or (2) taking care of one another may be increased because we will all be under stress or (3) committees and volunteer groups may activate to implement your plans. Whatever the emergency may be – your response structure and actions will be the same or similar because they will come from your plan.

This section includes:
- Notification Systems
- Activation of the Organization's Emergency Plan
- End of Emergency

Tools in this section:
- *Response Checklist*
- *Cost Tracking and Finance Forms*
- *Facility Damage Survey*
- *Decision-making Tool for Opening and Closing the Facility*

A. Notification Systems

Notification of an emergency or impending disaster will come from different entities based on the type. The organization, as well as clients and families, will benefit from knowing about the various methods of notification. Notifying your organization's clients of an emergency will be better received if your members are already aware of what the organization's plans are, how they function, and what, if any, their specific role will be in that response.

National Systems:

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide health, disaster and biological threat alerts to federal, state, local and tribal public health officials.
2. The Federal Communications Commission provides the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The EAS allows federal, state and local level emergency information to be transmitted.
3. The Department of Homeland Security has devised an alert system of advisories, bulletins and a color-coded threat level system to protect against terrorism.
4. The National Weather Service broadcasts warnings, watches, forecasts, and other non-weather related hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

State Systems:

1. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is responsible for notifying the county and local public health officials of an impending emergency. This notification is handled by the Health Alert Network (HAN).
2. Minnesota Health Alert Network (HAN) sends out messages either by a cascading alert system (e-mail) or a direct alert system (automated phone call followed up with e-mail and fax). The system chosen to be used is based on the urgency of the situation.
3. National Weather Service Office in Chanhassen, Minnesota provides weather and non-weather related hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the State of Minnesota.

Local Systems:

The County and/or City Public Health and Local Health Officials are responsible for initiating public health responses during the first 24 hours of an emergency. Alerts to local businesses, faith and community organizations, and citizens may come through the County and/or City Health Alert System, the Emergency Alert System or local media. Initiating a notification of an emergency will occur at the level of the emergency (i.e. national, state, county or local level).

B. Activation of the Organization's Emergency Plan

In the Organization's emergency plan, an individual should be identified who will activate the plan. Based on the communication plan, the organization leadership may receive the initial notification and then communicate with the Emergency Manager. The Emergency Manager contacts other organization staff and the Volunteer Coordinator, and provides the leadership based on the location, type and size of an emergency.

All the planning that has occurred prior to the emergency should provide clear designations of authority to act in the event of an emergency, outline the role the organization will play in an emergency, and the physical, emotional and spiritual support that will be provided.

C. End of the Emergency

The event is ended by the agency declaring that the emergency is over. The leadership or emergency manager should declare the emergency over within the community-based organization, once the county declaration has been made.

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Tool: Response Checklist
Note that some actions are dependent upon the nature of the emergency.

Date / Time Completed	Item
	Condition of clients/staff being monitored continuously, particularly those with respiratory problems, and provide oxygen or suitable assistance.
	Windows and exterior doors are closed.
	Air intake vents and units in bathrooms, kitchen, laundry, and other rooms closed.
	Heating, cooling, and ventilation systems that takes in outside air, both central and individual room units turned off. (Units that only re-circulate inside air may have to be kept running during very cold or very hot weather to avoid harm to members/staff).
	Food, water, and medications covered and protected from airborne contamination and from contact with waste materials, including infectious waste.
	Contact with emergency authorities regarding the hazard and internal conditions.
	Contact public health authorities for advice regarding the need for decontamination, and the means for doing it.
	Standby vehicles with pre-filled fuel tanks stationed on the highest point of ground nearby. (Flooding or high water)
	Trained staff available who can remain at the facility for at least 72 hours, especially to manage non-ambulatory members/staff or others with additional needs.
	Support teams available on standby with communications equipment in order to assist in getting additional supplies.
	Medical equipment, medicines, refrigerators, stoves, food and water, supplies, beds, desks and chairs moved to a second floor location or raised off the floor to ensure protection against possible flooding.

Tool: Cost Tracking and Finance Forms

Finance Situation Report (Filled out by FINANCE CHIEF)

Date:	Prepared by:
Time:	

Purchases During this Time Period   [cost unit]

BEGINNING BALANCE $

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	PURCHASED FROM	TOTAL COST

TOTAL PURCHASED TO DATE $

Claims   [claims unit]

NAME	NATURE OF CLAIM	DISPOSITION	ESTIMATED COST

TOTAL CLAIMS ESTIMATE $

Tool: Facility Damage Survey

Date:_____ Time:_____

Organization: _____

Contact Person & Phone: _____

Facility Address: _____

BUILDING/ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE	DMG	DEST	URG	INFO
Building structure – Outside (walls/doors/glass)					
Building structure – Inside (ceiling/doors, blocked routes)					
Natural Gas System					
Stored Water					
Heating (gas/elec.)					
Venting					
Air Conditioning					
Stairwells					
Fire Alarm System					
Emergency Call System					
Emergency Lighting					
Security System					

BUILDING/ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE	DMG	DEST	URG	INFO
Telephone System					
Fire Sprinkler System					
Emergency Paging System					
Refrigerators/ Freezers					
Other:					

Key:

DMG = Damaged: Property is damaged
DEST = Destroyed: Property is destroyed
URG = Urgent: URGENT attention is required at location
INFO = Information Purposes Only: Does not require action or future assessment

Tool: Decision-Making Tool for Opening and Closing the Facility

For each item, indicate if it may require the facility to close, or if it allows the facility to remain open. This tool is not meant to generate a score. Rather, it is intended to assist your team in considering the full range of factors in making a decision to close or open the facility for normal operations, and the level of operations the organization could support.

Decision-Making Tool for Opening or Closing your Facility	Impact on Organization Operational Capability	
	OPEN	CLOSE
FACILITY		
Permanent/Immediate loss of facility		
Loss of building for one day		
Loss of facility for one hour or less		
Loss of offices (but other areas OK)		
Loss of maintenance, building, and/or grounds staff		
UTILITIES		
Loss of phones (landline and cellular)		
Loss of computer access for more than one day		
Loss of building heating/cooling for more than one day		
Loss of utilities/power		
STAFF		
Loss of facility staff or management		
Loss of volunteers		
Surge of injured or ill		
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS		
Street flooding cuts off access to facility		
General flooding in the community		
Tornado damages roadways		
Hazardous chemical release near facility		
Loss of facility budget – financial constraints		
Fires in the neighborhood/community		
Transportation accident requires evacuation		
INTERNAL/EXTERNAL VIOLENCE OR THREAT		
Terrorism threat/bomb threat		
Workplace violence		
Civil disorder nearby		
Security intrusion		
GOVERNMENT ACTIONS		
Disaster declared in your area by City or County		
Governor proclaims a State of Emergency in your area		
NEED FOR ORGANIZATION RESPONSE		
County or City requests organization to remain open		
Community residents/Clients request organization remain open		
Mass casualties nearby		
Surge of injured or ill		
Other:		

Section 7:
Recovery Phase

Recovery actions begin almost concurrently with response activities and are directed at restoring essential services and resuming normal operations. Depending on the emergency's impact on the organization, this phase may require a large amount of resources and time to complete. This final phase includes activities taken to assess, manage, and coordinate the recovery from an event as the situation returns to normal.

This section includes:
- Continuing Care for the Organization and Rebuilding the Facility
- Evaluation

Tools in this section:
- *After-Action Report Questionnaire*
- *Post-Incident Analysis Questionnaire*

A. Continuing Care for the Organization and Rebuilding the Facility

The ending of an emergency event does not end the impact of an event on individuals, families and the organization. An emergency takes a more subtle and long-lasting toll on people. The organization's most important role at this time is to "frame the event" within the organization.

Recognizing the effect of an emergency on the organization is a first step in the recovery process. Remembering the anniversary of the event are ways to bring about a sense of comfort for the organization.

For the long-term, it is important to educate the organization about mental health resources for persons who would benefit from professional services. A list of professionals compiled in the preparedness phase will facilitate referral and individual recovery (see the *PowerPoint Presentation, "Psychological First-Aid*" on pg. 71).

Depending on the emergency event, there is assessment of damage, clean-up and rebuilding. The careful planning that has occurred prior to the emergency event will facilitate an orderly process for this phase of an emergency.

B. Evaluation

The last step for the Emergency Preparedness Committee is to complete a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the emergency preparedness plan; both the good and the bad (see the *After-Action Report Questionnaire* tool on pg. 191 and the *Post-Incident Analysis Questionnaire* tool on pg. 193).

FEMA recommends considering the following issues in the evaluation:
- Emergency management process
- Delegated authorities
- Impact of the emergency on the members and the facility
- Effectiveness of the communication plan and necessary changes
- Ability of the organizational staff and members to carry out their respective functions and possible need for different or more training
- Adequacy of supplies and equipment and acquisition of different or additional equipment
- Planning for improvement of facility safety features
- Adequacy of cooperation with outside resources

In emergency preparedness, the organization's plan is revised, communicated, practiced and the cycle continues.

Tool: After-Action Report Questionnaire

Use of After-Action Reports

After-Action Reports serve the following important functions:

- A source for documentation of response activities.
- Identification of problems/successes during emergency operations.
- Analysis of the effectiveness of the All-Hazards Emergency Plan.
- Identifies need for improvements to your All-Hazards Emergency Plan.

The Incident Command System approach to the use of After-Action Reports emphasizes the improvement of emergency management at all levels. It is important for all organization leadership and staff to be encouraged to contribute to the after-action report process. Even staff who continued their day-to-day functions can provide useful information. The After-Action Report provides a vehicle for not only documenting improvements, but also can provide a plan for how these improvements can be implemented into your plan.

_____ Date: _____

      (Emergency Name)

Completed by_____

               Name (print)

_____

               Phone Number/Email

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Were procedures established and in place for response to the emergency?			
2. Were procedures used to organize initial and ongoing resources?			
3. Was the Incident Command System used to manage response?			
4. Were all Incident Command System sections used (i.e. Planning, Logistics, Operations, Finance)?			
5. Were response personnel (staff and leadership) trained?			
6. Were action plans used in the response?			
7. Was coordination performed with volunteer agencies (e.g. Red Cross)?			
8. Was coordination performed with your local government?			
9. Was assistance requested and received?			
10. Were resource acquisition efforts coordinated?			
11. Was communication established and maintained between your organization and members? Local government? Neighboring partners?			
12. Was important information disseminated to your members? Was it done with adequate time?			

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13. What response actions were taken by the organization? (Include such things as getting or needing resources, number of personnel needed, equipment, etc.)

14. As you responded, was there any part of Incident Command System that did not work for your organization? If so, how would/did you change the system to meet your needs?

15. As a result of your response to this incident, are any changes needed in your plans and procedures? If so, please explain.

Tool: Post-Incident Analysis Questionnaire

The goal of this tool is to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of your plan after you have used it. After completing this questionnaire, you should have a better idea of how to alter your plan to fit your organization's needs.

Directions: First, answer each question as a group, if possible. Second, use these answers to decide whether that item has had adequate planning or if more planning is needed by putting a check in the appropriate box.

	Planning complete	More planning needed
1. Was the All-Hazard Emergency Plan effective?		
2. Was the organization leadership familiar with the plan and prepared to enact it?		
3. Did the organization leadership develop a first-aid plan? (If not, did you need one?)		
4. Were hazards and threats identified before the emergencies and did mitigation occur to help minimize the damage?		
5. Was your staff prepared for an emergency?		
6. Were your clients prepared for an emergency?		
7. Was the signal for alerting staff and organization leadership recognized?		
8. Were supplies adequate? If applicable, did staff have emergency kits with food, water, flashlights, medications, etc?		
9. Were the organization leadership, volunteers and staff who have special training or skills (i.e. first aid, search & rescue, CPR, AED) identified prior to the incident? Were those with skills utilized during the incident?		
10. Were volunteers used? If so, were they trained before the incident or 'just in time' for the incident? Were they effective?		
11. Did a parent/child reunion have to be utilized? Was it done in an organized manner? What was done with stranded children (if applicable)?		
12. Were mutual aid agreements needed? Did you need help or give help?		
13. Was the communication system adequate? What improvements need to be made? What equipment needs to be purchased?		
14. Did your clients and staff understand what was happening throughout the incident? If changes were made to your services, did clients and the community understand the changes?		

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