

Preparing for Emergencies – Know Your Role

Emergency Coordinator/Team

Before an Emergency:

- Enlist and train floor or hallway leaders.
- Enlist volunteers to assist in evacuating babies and persons with disabilities.
- Train volunteers, teachers, and staff on how to implement the emergency plan.
- Train teachers in administering first-aid, choking intervention, and CPR.
- Develop a procedure for informing parents of emergencies and practice drills.
- Check equipment and procedures monthly to see that the emergency plan is maintained.
- See that emergency lighting is kept in working condition.
- Ensure emergency numbers are posted by the telephone and mounted on a cordless/cellular phone.
- Make sure all preschool classrooms are located on ground floors.
- Conduct practice drills first with leaders, then with the church body.

During an Emergency:

- Depending on the nature of the disaster, decide whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate. Monitor TV or radio news reports for information or official instructions (if available) to help with this decision.
- Once a decision is made, call for the appropriate Action Plan and see that it is carried out.
- If evacuating, conduct a sweep of the facility to ensure that all doors are closed, elevators are empty, critical operations are stabilized, and all persons are evacuated.
- Keep in contact with church staff or emergency personnel for further instructions.
- Keep teachers, parents, and volunteers informed with adequate and accurate information as agreed upon by church staff and emergency personnel.

Floor or Hallway Leader(s)

- As part of preparedness training, assign teachers in each ministry classroom the roles of lead teacher, searcher teacher, and first aid teacher.
- See that teachers remain calm and speak to the children in a reassuring manner.
- In evacuations, conduct a sweep of your floor to ensure that all doors are closed and all persons are evacuated.
- Report to your designated safe area.
- Account for all lead teachers/classes.
- Contact the Emergency Coordinator for further instructions.

Lead Teacher

- Make sure flashlights in your room are kept in working order with new batteries and are used only for emergencies.
- When notified to evacuate, take the sign-in/sign-out sheet or attendance record and lead the class to follow the evacuation process assigned for the situation.
- On reaching your designated safe area, account for all children in your class.
- Reassure the children that they are as safe as possible. Preparedness training should include suggestions on appropriate ways to do this.
- Wait for further instructions from the floor leader or Emergency Coordinator before taking any action on informing parents, releasing children, or returning to your room.

Searcher Teacher

- When evacuating, bring up the rear, checking the bathrooms and other areas where children or adults might linger.
- Join your lead teacher and class at the designated safe area.
- Remain calm and help to reassure the children.
- Wait for directions from the lead teacher before releasing a child or returning to the classroom.

First Aid Teacher

- When evacuating, take with you the first aid kit, information sheets and emergency sheets on both children and adults. All information should be updated regularly and kept in a folder near the classroom door.
- Remain with the children in the designated safe area, administering first aid as necessary.

Conduct Emergency Evacuation Drills

1. In preparedness training, go through an adults-only practice drill, following the various procedures for each emergency.
2. Instruct teachers and volunteers to evacuate babies first. Indicate the crib(s) marked with fluorescent tape that will be used to transport babies to a safe location. These cribs should have large wheels that roll easily even when carrying several babies. They should fit through the doorways easily, and have reinforced springs to hold the weight of several babies at once.
3. Take teachers through the same procedures that will be used with the children.
4. Talk about ways to reassure and calm the children. Whether in practice or an actual emergency, children may be frightened of the alarms and movement.
5. Conduct drills when children are present. Record how many persons were evacuated, and note any areas of difficulty.
6. Churches with child care centers are required to record emergency drill information and keep it on file. A fire drill report form is included in the "Sample Forms" section of this folder.

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Material adapted from *Oklahoma Baptists Protecting Children* by Sheri Babb and *Steps to Take to Protect Mississippi's Children* by Don Hicks, Robin Keels and Linda Reeves.

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