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## Disaster Resilience: Emergency Planning and Recovery for Sexual Assault Programs

# Letter from the Editor



Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck  
Program Management Specialist, WCSAP

My mother told me that I slept through an earthquake in California when I was a baby. As college students, my husband and I were caught in a house fire during an overnight babysitting job and had to evacuate the children and ourselves. When I lived in Tennessee just a few years ago, a tornado ripped off the roof of a school across the street from my home (which was miraculously untouched). As a psychologist, I volunteered to talk to teachers in a nearby area where several students lost their homes in a tornado, and I did a little volunteer counseling with survivors of Hurricane Katrina who took refuge in nearby Jackson, Tennessee. A couple of years ago, an acquaintance died while trapped in his vehicle in a flash flood. In other words, like all of you, I am no stranger to disasters.

Sexual assault services are vital, and it is important that they continue even in the face of an emergency. Indeed, an increased rate of sexual assault is an often unrecognized consequence of a disaster, as the repercussions of the earthquake in Haiti have demonstrated. The dilemma for most sexual assault program managers is that they are so busy managing the day-to-day activities of their programs that emergency planning is often on the back burner. The goal of this publication is to provide information and resources to make emergency preparedness and recovery planning more attainable.

We are truly fortunate to have multiple voices represented in this publication. Dr. Elaine Enarson, an internationally respected authority on gender and disaster, kindly consented to be interviewed and to share her knowledge. You will find her insights on this topic to be both fascinating and very practical. Several managers of sexual assault programs across the state of Washington contributed their experiences and ideas to this *Manager's Viewpoint*. We can all learn from their knowledge and creativity in the face of difficult situations.

This publication also includes some practical tools: a disaster recovery guide from TechSoup that will help you to safeguard data, a fact sheet on emergency planning for businesses, accreditation information related to this topic, and specific tips on disaster resilience for sexual assault programs.

The one thing we know in our field is to expect the unexpected. We at WCSAP hope that this issue of the *Manager's Viewpoint* will help you to be as prepared as possible, no matter what comes your way.

Be safe!

Jennifer

Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck  
Program Management Specialist



**WCSAP** is a membership agency comprised of individuals and organizations dedicated to ending sexual assault in their communities. WCSAP's mission is to unite agencies engaged in the elimination of sexual violence through education, advocacy, victim services, and social change.

**The Manger's Viewpoint** is a publication designed to support WCSAP's efforts to provide technical assistance regarding nonprofit management and organizational development to WCSAP member programs, other allied organizations, and statewide sexual assault coalitions across the nation.

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# Manager's **VIEWPOINT**

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# Interview with Dr. Elaine Enarson

## Q&A

**D**r. Elaine Enarson is an accidental disaster sociologist whose personal experience in Hurricane Andrew sparked extensive work on gender, vulnerability, and community resilience. Elaine writes widely on social vulnerability and resilience; consults with United Nations agencies; teaches sociology, women's studies and emergency management independently; and develops training and planning materials for women's organizations and emergency managers. She coedited *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes* (1998) and *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives* (2009), and is a founding member of the global Gender and Disaster Network and country-specific networks in Canada and the United States. She is currently coediting a book on *The Women of Katrina: How Gender, Race and Class Matter in an American Disaster*, and writing a book on women and disaster in the U.S. Elaine received her PhD from the University of Oregon, directed the first women's studies program at the University of Nevada-Reno, and coordinated the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence. With her geologist spouse, she reared two wonderful boys while living in Montana, Nevada, Florida, Sydney (Australia), Vancouver (British Columbia), and Colorado.

### **1. *What sparked your professional interest in the topic of disaster response?***

There's nothing like seeing a huge hurricane destroy your house, neighborhood, and city to spark an interest in disasters! I had no previous knowledge or interest in anything remotely connected to hazards, disasters or emergency management before moving to Miami just two months before Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992. But as a feminist, sociologist, and antiviolenace advocate (and a mother myself--my husband was off in Australia when Andrew hit!), I immediately was concerned about how women were doing and especially about women in domestic violence shelters. That was the beginning of a long journey to learn more and try to use research to effect changes that make women and girls safer.



Anxiety is higher when people are aware [of potential dangers] but feel unprepared or under-resourced.

**2. As you know, our readership consists primarily of executive directors and program managers of community sexual assault programs in Washington State. These are busy people with multiple demands on their time. What would you suggest as appropriate priorities in emergency and disaster response planning for this group?**

Emergency planning is way low on everyone's list as a "high consequence, low probability" event, especially in an era of rising need and reduced resources, so it's important to be strategic. I strongly suggest two approaches: First, work through your existing networks or coalitions with other community agencies to maximize the impact of your collective work. This might include some outreach to your physical neighborhood, too, to think through mutual assistance in the event that people and property might be threatened. Secondly, instead of launching a new "Emergency Preparedness" campaign, do enough research into existing resources and good practices to identify the five or six steps you think are most needed and then integrate these into your other ongoing activities, such as public education, staff training, personnel policies, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with partner agencies, budgeting, new publications, antiviolence months/days/anniversaries, etc.

**3. Some people avoid emergency preparation because thinking in detail about possible emergencies heightens their anxiety. Others seem to be indifferent. How can managers handle these attitudes and help gain "buy in" by their staff for emergency preparedness?**

Anxiety is higher when people are aware but feel unprepared or under-resourced. Feeling anxious can also motivate action, so it can be a good thing, too! Getting staff and volunteers engaged in emergency planning in their own households is a good starting point and could be done in a fun and collaborative way. Listening to first-person accounts is a very powerful way to raise awareness. I'm suggesting a few resources that might help. They make difficult reading but are important documents that bring the issue of sexual violence "home" in disasters.

*Editor's Note:*

The resources recommended by Elaine Enarson are included in the RESOURCE section on [page 17](#) and are identified by the initials (EE) after the listing.



Learn from what has happened elsewhere, develop and strengthen your agency's (and networks') capacity to remain functional in the interests of mitigating potential violence, and then become a partner in public education around violence prevention.

**4. What do you think managers are most likely to inadvertently overlook in their emergency plans?**

Planning for recovery tends to drop off the radar screen. Plan now for how you will reflect on the learning after a severe storm or explosion. What would your clients, staff and volunteers most need to get back on their feet? How would your agency meet new needs? Emergency planning is all about preparing for the worst, which can be difficult. Also, I think it's vital to reach out to local emergency managers in government agencies at all levels (as well as tribal emergency managers) so that they know about you, your work and the strengths as well as vulnerabilities of those you serve. They may not consider you as a partner in emergency exercises or community planning teams if they don't know about you--and hear loud and clear that you want a seat at the table. This also means finding out which individuals in your local hospital, various schools, social service agencies, etc. have responsibilities for emergency planning and being in touch with them, too. Law enforcement is also a critical partner in this. I also strongly recommend revising intake forms now or in other ways being able to track and document the connections that rape survivors may draw between assaults and the disaster or emergency. It may seem a small point but can be important for funding later.

**5. How can people working on sexual assault issues at the local level respond to the issues of increased vulnerability of women and girls during disasters?**

Learn from what has happened elsewhere, develop and strengthen your agency's (and networks') capacity to remain functional in the interests of mitigating potential violence, and then become a partner in public education around violence prevention. Women who have been hurt by violence as well as a disaster that takes their home, transportation, schools, child care, job, neighborhood and community centers, and faith-based places will need all the support you can give. They need trained and educated counselors who know what they are going through and may feel; they need help accessing what resources may be available to them and how these may interface (or not) with those they are already using; they need an integrated system (your agency, emergency rooms, sexual violence advocates in hospitals, law enforcement, counselors, judiciary) that understands the likelihood of increased and more severe violence as well as the likelihood of survivors not being able to report or their cases not being adjudicated if they do. Cross-border reports must be accepted, for example, and ways found to document assaults when women must flee their hometowns. Also, anticipate that women will come from outside (e.g. on or with construction crews or as volunteers) and not have a local support system at all. Outreach to them is essential. Strong prevention messages can be built into ongoing community education programs in advance. In the aftermath of a disaster, sexual violence agencies (in conjunction with district-wide antiviolence teams) can step up and let people know what to expect and where to go for help. This happened successfully in Santa Cruz, California after the quake there.



In the aftermath of a disaster, sexual violence agencies (in conjunction with district-wide antiviolence teams) can step up and let people know what to expect and where to go for help.

**6. Do you have any thoughts about self-care for managers in emergency preparation, response, or recovery?**

Peer support is essential and I would urge managers to build this into your planning early on. It might be useful to develop a national network (not a new network, but just some informal linkages) of managers who have been through this before (e.g. in California, in New Orleans, in NY City post 9-11, in the Midwest after floods, in rural communities isolated by severe weather) who could be excellent emotional and practical guides through the unknown for others. This is something national antiviolence organizations could take up at a different level, too. Self-care should also include being able to be there for staff, clients, and volunteers--you will want to be. So emergency plans at home are a good place to start.



Self-care should also include being able to be there for staff, clients, and volunteers--you will want to be. So emergency plans at home are a good place to start.



Lower Valley Crisis and Support Center

## The View from Sunnyside

### An Interview with Julia Hart Lower Valley Crisis and Support Center

Thinking about the need to be prepared for emergencies, Julia Hart says, “This is the stuff that wakes me up at night.” As the Executive Director of Lower Valley Crisis and Support Center (LVCSC) in Sunnyside, Washington, Julia’s most frequent emergency concerns are severe winter weather and icy roads. She says it is always a dilemma when there is an individual in need of services in the hospital, yet the roads are so treacherous that an advocate’s life might be endangered by driving. As with many programs in more rural areas, LVCSC’s advocates often must drive long distances to reach the hospital. Not too long ago, an advocate attempting to come into the office on a wintry day had her car slide right off the road. Like most managers, Julia uses her best judgment in situations like this. “We try to have the advocate who lives the closest to the hospital respond if driving conditions are bad.”

Julia also mentions that a few years ago, before she was at the agency, the area experienced five days of flooding and their two offices were cut off from each other. She knows that these conditions could reoccur, and that it is best to be prepared.

She makes the point that connecting with other resources before an emergency arises can be critical.

“It is important to know your community resources well,” Julia says. She makes the point that connecting with other resources before an emergency arises can be critical. For example, while most sexual assault programs are either dual programs with domestic violence (DV) shelters or have good access to local DV shelters, it is wise to cultivate relationships with other non-DV emergency shelters. “What happens if a sexual assault victim is at the hospital and the weather is so bad she can’t get home safely?” Julia asks.

In addition to concerns about clients, the safety of staff members is always uppermost in Julia’s mind. She reminds other managers to ensure that they have the supplies needed to “shelter-in-place,” should it become necessary (*Note: See the Resources section for more information on sheltering in place, page 17*). Do you have fresh batteries for your flashlights? Do you have access to food or other supplies in the event that staff members might need to spend the night at the office?

Caring for the safety needs of staff and clients is the responsibility of sexual assault program managers, in coordination with everyone else at the agency. Preparation is vital, but as Julia makes clear, even a well-prepared manager may lose some sleep at the prospect of dealing with the unexpected.



## The View from Cowlitz County

### A Comment from Sherrie Tinoco Emergency Support Shelter

Sherrie Tinoco, Executive Director of Emergency Support Shelter in Kelso, found that it was useful to ask designated staff members to attend the Cowlitz County Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings. The staff members attended a few meetings over the course of a year and returned with valuable information about emergency procedures and an increased knowledge of local resources.

## The View from Forks

### An Interview with Ann Simpson Forks Abuse Program

Ann Simpson, Executive Director of the Forks Abuse Program, says that she and her staff talk about emergency preparedness, especially this time of year. Staff members participate actively in planning because they understand that being prepared to deal with emergency conditions will make their responsibilities clearer and (most importantly) will allow them to assist their clients.

The statewide 211 website ([www.win211.org](http://www.win211.org))...was developed with Homeland Security resources, and is intended as a way to access vital services in the event of a disaster.

The emergency they are most likely to face is an extended power outage. In recent years, the program has been without power for more than two days, while clients in outlying areas have suffered through five days without electricity. What happens when the power goes out? Well, for one thing, it is very cold in the office. After a few days, the batteries on their phones and the battery for the building alarm are out of juice. Ann says they face the difficulty of trying to keep their facility secure, yet maintain access for those who need services.

As unpleasant as it is for the staff to work in a cold office, they are acutely aware that their clients face even more adversity. As with many programs, Ann says, "Most of our clients are at the poverty level or below. They are pretty resourceful, but they often live in mobile homes with electric heat, and they suffer when it is cold." Advocates may find themselves doing common-sense problem solving with clients whose pipes have frozen, for example. "Do you have an outside spigot? Is the water running there? Do you have a pot?" The emphasis on practical assistance extends to maintaining a supply of vouchers for hot meals at the hospital cafeteria for clients without power at home.

Because of Forks' location near Washington's northwest coast, the town faces the challenge of being a tsunami refuge area. Ann realizes that in the case of a large-scale disaster like a tsunami, sexual assault survivors will face an extra measure of posttraumatic stress. If tsunami refugees came to Forks, the program's advocates would help wherever they are needed. Ann plans to become more active in community emergency planning, to help her area make more informed choices about sheltering people if that becomes necessary. She recently learned that the statewide 211 website ([www.win211.org](http://www.win211.org)), in addition to being a general source of referral information, was developed with Homeland Security resources and is intended to serve as a way to access vital services in the event of a disaster. She suggests that programs make sure they are listed in a way that makes them easy to find, and that if internet access is available during a disaster, programs should update their information as conditions change.

Ann provides another practical tip for dealing with winter travel difficulties, a foreseeable emergency condition which affects nearly every sexual assault program in Washington State. If advocates are unable to get to the hospital, she appoints an advocate who lives nearby and informs the hospital and the 911 service about how to get in contact with the designated staff member. In extreme conditions, police have provided transportation to the hospital for a nearby advocate.

Throughout all the emergency planning by the Forks Abuse Program, the theme remains the same: How can we protect and serve our clients and others who need us during extreme conditions?

# The View from Lewis County

**Written by Joan Caywood  
Human Response Network**

*Note: Lewis County has experienced debilitating floods. This article, written by the Executive Director of Human Response Network, reflects the lessons learned from that experience.*

As a victim response agency in Lewis County, we've had to put a lot of thought into emergency preparedness. Overall, floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States. Flood effects can be local, impacting a neighborhood, community or sometimes the entire county. Icy roads, power outages, fires, earthquakes and other miscellaneous emergency situations can also affect agencies that serve the community.

Our Emergency Preparedness incorporates three main branches of our ability to serve our clients and maintain safety for staff and the community. The preparation of the office and staff is the first area of planning. Without our staff we cannot provide the services that are needed, especially in times of crisis and need. Our second focus is the preparation in our confidential shelter. When we have clients who are depending on Human Response Network to provide a safe home, it's critical that we meet all their safety needs, including emergency preparedness. Lastly, preparing for emergency crisis intervention is another vital piece to our planning. Often the trauma of an emergency can trigger previous harrowing events in someone's life.

Often the trauma of an emergency can trigger previous harrowing events in someone's life.

In order to maintain staff safety we discuss obstacles to getting to work safely when conditions impede travel. Certain staff members live closer to the office or have a vehicle that is more capable of travel when there are hazardous road conditions. We rely on communication and procedure in order to assure that staff remains safe and our office remains open until there are no other options for staff to get into work. When weather changes or storm advisories occur, our staff meets and works together in order to

cover the bases and ensure services—even if the only services we are able to provide are the crisis lines and providing advocacy via telephone.

The confidential shelter has emergency preparedness supplies to serve our clients. Having canned foods, high-energy foods and a variety of comfort foods is critical. Water, first aid supplies, paper cups, a battery-operated radio, toilet paper, baby wipes, soap, baby food, diapers, changes of clothing, blankets, an outdoor barbecue, extra charcoal briquettes, flashlights, and coats are some vital supplies. Having supplies on hand to repair broken windows is also an important aspect of preparation; at a minimum, having a roll of plastic and some duct tape would produce a fix good enough to keep the cold out.

During the flood, we had advocates available and on site at the emergency flood relief station to help assist people who were in crisis and in need of advocacy services. Our outlines and lists are a starting point for preparation. Subsequently consistent communication and practice of these situations is the most central piece to our planning.

## Supplies to Have on Hand as Recommended by Joan

- canned foods
- high-energy food
- a variety of comfort foods
- water
- first aid supplies
- paper cups
- a battery-operated radio
- toilet paper and baby wipes
- soap
- baby food and diapers
- changes of clothing
- blankets
- an outdoor barbecue and extra charcoal briquette
- flashlights
- coats
- roll of plastic and duct tape to repair broken windows

# The View from the Lummi Nation

## An Interview with Nikki Finkbonner Lummi Victims of Crime

**O**n the Lummi Reservation, near Bellingham, Washington, emergency planning and response looks a little different than in other communities. Because the sexual assault program is directly under the tribal police department, Lummi Victims of Crime relies on the police for alerts and disaster planning. The most likely disasters in the area are earthquakes and flooding. The location of the Lummi Nation makes it susceptible to both coastal and river flooding.

Nikki Finkbonner, Coordinator of Lummi Victims of Crime, remembers a time a few years ago when the Army had to transport tribal police officers by boat so they could perform their duties. Nikki explained that in case of an evacuation, the longhouse community building, or Wex li em, would be used for safe housing.

The Lummi Nation has a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Team that has created a tsunami evacuation brochure and the Lummi Nation's website provides an emergency hotline number for the Nation. A chilling fact from the tsunami plan is that in the case of an earthquake, tsunami waves as high as nine feet could reach the Lummi Reservation in about two hours – and successive waves may be even larger. Fortunately, the Lummi Nation has a newly-formed Community Emergency Response Team. Nikki says that disaster recovery would be guided by the Tribal Council. Because of her program's proximity to the police department, she knows that her program will have protection and guidance in the event of a disaster.



Nikki Finkbonner, Coordinator  
Lummi Victims of Crime

# TechSoup Disaster Recovery Guide

## The Resilient Organization: A Guide for Disaster Planning

This checklist is from TechSoup Global's guide, *The Resilient Organization: A Guide for Disaster Planning*. The full guide is available at <http://www.techsoup.org/toolkits/disasterplan/links/techsoup-disaster-recovery-guide.pdf>

## Disaster-Planning Checklist

Here's a quick checklist to keep track of your progress in implementing the strategies covered in this guide. Not every item on the checklist applies to every organization. As you work through the disaster-planning process, be sure to document new technologies and strategies that you implement, and keep staff informed of new procedures and policies.

### Chapter 1: Your Office Is Everywhere

- Implement unified communications systems or adopt a backup communications plan
- Create a backup web presence

### Chapter 2: Documentation and Your Master Key

- Document all critical systems and processes
- Store physical hard copies of documentation safely and securely
- Store documentation on an encrypted flash drive
- Back up documentation online

### Chapter 3: Remote and Local Backup

- Choose and implement a backup strategy
- Document your backup strategy and train staff members in backup and retrieval
- Back up data not included in backup strategy (e.g. website, paper records, etc.)
- Routinely check backups

### Chapter 4: Privacy and Encryption

- Assess security needs for all of your organization's data
- Encrypt all critical or sensitive data
- Use secure logins for donor and constituent databases
- Check compliance with HIPAA or other applicable standards

### Chapter 5: Human-Made Disasters and Accidents

- Enact a policy for critical logins
- Develop an end-of-employment policy and make it available to employees

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# The View from Kitsap County

## An Interview with Martha Wescott Kitsap Sexual Assault Center

Martha Wescott, Executive Director of Kitsap Sexual Assault Center (KSAC), believes strongly that advocates' needs should be taken into account in emergency situations. Martha says they have a "big storage unit" in their office with food, first aid gear, and blankets, in case people are trapped at work. Advocates are advised to keep emergency kits in their cars. If the road conditions are truly dangerous, Martha doesn't hesitate to tell advocates to respond by phone rather than driving. In some circumstances, a police officer has been willing to safely transport an advocate to the hospital. Martha is clear that she doesn't want advocates endangering themselves. She says her message is, "We treasure you – don't take risks that shouldn't be taken."

Martha is clear that she doesn't want advocates endangering themselves. She says her message is, "We treasure you – don't take risks that shouldn't be taken."

Martha is interested in sharing emergency response policy ideas and best practices with other managers. In line with her stance on advocating for her staff, Martha is proud of a policy in place at KSAC to pay advocates even if a disaster closes the office. The policy reads:

In the event a KSAC office is closed for safety reasons, the individuals working in that particular branch will receive full compensation during time loss for up to ten (10) days. In the event a natural or unnatural disaster or act of war causes physical harm to you on or off the jobsite, you will be fully compensated for time loss up to ten (10) days which does not include vacation or sick leave.

Martha realizes that treating staff fairly and in a supportive manner will enhance the agency's ability to respond to a crisis. "People need to know where they stand, and that they will be paid if they can't work because of a disaster."

# The View from Moses Lake

## A Comment from Suzi Fode New Hope Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services

Suzi Fode, Executive Director of New Hope Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services in Moses Lake, provided some wisdom on the fly as she traveled within her region. "As managers, it's our job to be intentional thinkers, not simply reactive. Advocates are very resourceful and do an amazing job of reacting to crises every day. We can't plan for specific emergencies – for example, an orchard burns down and the people living there are displaced. However, we need to be thinking more generally about how to manage emergencies, and maybe even carving out time every quarter to think about the 'what if's.' We need a game plan."

Advocates are very resourceful and do an amazing job of reacting to crises every day.





Theresa Fears, Partnership Program Coordinator  
ARC of Spokane

## The View from ARC of Spokane – Disability Considerations

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### **An Interview with Theresa Fears ARC of Spokane**

Because sexual assault programs serve a diverse group of clients, comprehensive disaster planning should include consideration of those with disabilities. Theresa Fears is Partnership Program Coordinator of the ARC of Spokane, an organization that serves people with developmental disabilities. She raised some important concerns for the safety needs of vulnerable populations during and after emergency situations.

During a disaster, mobility may be an issue for those with disabilities. Clients may have difficulty getting around in their homes or in the community. Both clients and staff with disabilities may need additional assistance with evacuation or with navigating changed conditions in your office during or after a disaster.

Theresa offers some specific suggestions for assisting clients with intellectual disabilities. Because anyone can become flustered and have difficulty in processing information under crisis conditions, several of her ideas may also be useful as communication strategies for nondisabled individuals who are feeling overwhelmed.

Comprehensive and inclusive disaster planning should include discussions of how to address the needs and concerns of clients and staff with disabilities.

### Additional things to consider:

- **Care** - what will happen if a client's caregiver is not able to reach him or her?
- **Medications** – do clients have access to sufficient medications for the duration of the emergency, and do they require assistance in taking medications on time?
- **Food** – do clients have enough food, and can they prepare food alone?
- **Personal care** – do clients require assistance in getting up, dressing, or toileting?

#### Safety

- Do clients have heat and lights?
- Can they communicate without electricity?
- Will a power outage be dangerous because of the need for medical equipment?

Theresa recommends both the general information on emergency preparedness in the [Emergency Resource Guide](#) by the Washington State Department of Health and the information provided by the Department of Health on emergency preparedness for those who are [Deaf or hard of hearing](#), those who have [mobility disabilities](#), those who have [special medical needs](#), and those with [visual disabilities](#). Some ideas from these tip sheets that could be incorporated into general emergency planning would be:

- Ensure that flashlights are high-powered and have wide beams, to accommodate those with visual impairments.
- Mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape, or Braille.
- Encourage both staff and clients to maintain at least a three-day supply of their own essential prescription medications for emergencies.
- Encourage television stations to plan to provide ASL interpreters on camera during emergencies.

Comprehensive and inclusive disaster planning should include discussions of how to address the needs and concerns of clients and staff with disabilities. Including those stakeholders in the planning process is an excellent way to obtain an accurate view of the steps that need to be taken.

### Considerations for people with intellectual disabilities:

- ☑ Would experience a greater sense of disorganization than the general population
- ☑ May have difficulty with responding quickly to immediate disaster situations
- ☑ May have difficulty processing the information
- ☑ May have problems with time and the passage of time. For example – “we can have someone to your home in three hours” would not be as useful as “we can have someone there before lunch time.”

#### Recommendations:

- ☑ Remember that you are communicating with an adult.
- ☑ Information should be as concrete and clear as possible.
- ☑ Avoid complex sentence structures such as double negatives, metaphors or similes.
- ☑ Do not include more than one piece of information in a single sentence.
- ☑ Information needs to be calmly given, and repeated often.

# Emergency Planning for Businesses

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The Washington Military Department Emergency Management Division was kind enough to give us permission to reproduce the guide on the next page, "Emergency Planning for Businesses." We would like to encourage you to visit their website, [http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep\\_business.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_business.shtml), for access to the most up-to-date information about emergency planning as well as a vast array of great information and tools.

Some highlights from the website:

- **PLAN** – toolkits, forms, and online training to help you develop your emergency management plans
- **PREPARE** – information on individual/employee preparedness, neighborhood/community preparedness, and business preparedness
- **RESPOND** – up-to-date information on current emergency conditions in Washington, contact information for local emergency management agencies throughout the state, a sample emergency response action plan, and a link to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) information about what to do in the first 48 hours after a disaster
- **RESUME** – a business recovery guidebook, disaster assistance resources, and cleanup fact sheets

"91% of Americans live in places at moderate to high risk of earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, high-wind damage or terrorism."

--Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division





# Emergency Planning for Businesses

**Businesses are just as vulnerable to emergency situations as are individuals. It is important for businesses to have comprehensive emergency plans to protect their employees and their customers, in addition to the survival of business operations.**

**Following these guidelines will help you in your planning process.**

- Develop a comprehensive emergency plan for your business.
- Work closely with your local law enforcement, fire, emergency medical service, and emergency management office in all planning endeavors. Coordination is the key to success.
- Make sure an evacuation plan is a vital part of your emergency plan.
- Conduct training classes with all employees on how to carry out your emergency plan. Your employees will look to you for direction and leadership in times of disaster.
- Have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio in your office for official notification of any predictable disaster.
- Practice your emergency plan at least twice a year, making sure that you change any part of the plan that proves problematic during the practice.
- Maintain an accurate list of all employees, their phone numbers and emergency contact numbers for use in the event of an emergency.
- Back-up computer data on a regular basis. Consider file storage off-site to facilitate recovery.
- Include a recovery plan in your emergency plan. Before the disaster, identify the types of losses your business could incur.
- Identify an alternate site for your business operation. Know ahead of time places that would adequately facilitate continuation of your business.
- Develop an emergency contact list of the suppliers, insurance agents, and other individuals and organizations you might need to notify in the event of a disaster.
- Make certain your business has adequate insurance to cover losses incurred by a disaster.
- Maintain a current list of company equipment and resources, including model and serial numbers, along with the purchase price and vendor.
- If you have a home-operated business, don't assume your homeowner's insurance will cover your business. You might need an endorsement on your insurance policy to cover business losses. Check with your insurance agent before the disaster strikes.

WASHINGTON  
MILITARY  
DEPARTMENT



Emergency  
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www.emd.wa.gov  
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This fact sheet is part of the *Disaster Preparation Handbook 2004* prepared by the Washington State Department of Health and the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division.

“Good plans shape good decisions.”

--Lester R. Bittel, The Nine Master Keys of Management

## Disaster Resilience: How Managers of Sexual Assault Programs Can Upgrade Emergency Preparation and Recovery Plans

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Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck, WCSAP Program Management Specialist

- ☑ **Figure out what kinds of emergencies are most likely to affect your agency**, both minor and major. Remember that a wide variety of events can become emergencies - everything from a power outage to an armed intruder to a flood.
- ☑ **Identify the major issues your clients, your staff, and your community may face** in the event of a disaster.
- ☑ **Review your existing emergency policies and procedures.**
- ☑ From the articles and resources presented in this publication, **make note of what you need to do in order to improve your agency’s emergency response and recovery plans.**
- ☑ **Don’t reinvent the wheel.** The resources included here will give you a great deal of direction for improving your disaster resilience, and you can ask other directors as well as WCSAP for help as you make changes. Dr. Elaine Enarson ([enarson@gmail.com](mailto:enarson@gmail.com)) has also generously offered to be available for questions by email.
- ☑ **Include all staff members in building your emergency plans.** They each have valuable information to incorporate, and they will be more likely to follow through in the event of an emergency if they were involved in developing plans. You can also increase buy-in by providing information to staff members about home emergency planning.
- ☑ **Use your systems coordination skills** to link with community resources as you build your plan.
- ☑ **Make an action plan** based on your identification of gaps in preparation. Examples of some action items might be: having all staff trained in first aid and CPR, obtaining meal vouchers from the local hospital to feed clients in an emergency (a suggestion from Ann Simpson), replenishing your first aid kit, or updating your emergency contact numbers for staff members.

- Take inventory of your emergency supplies.** Make a list of whatever else you need, and consider asking for donations to upgrade your supplies. A local service organization might be willing to assist, and this would be a great job for a volunteer.
- Create a “mobile office.”** Use a small wheeled suitcase or backpack to hold any items you would need to have with you if you had to leave the office in a hurry. For a list of forms to harvest critical “take along” information, check out [http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/business/prep\\_business\\_plan.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/business/prep_business_plan.shtml).
- Don’t forget to include recovery planning.** According to Elaine Enarson, this aspect of disaster preparedness is often overlooked. Her suggestion about creating a way to track the impact of a disaster on your clients may be extremely important in accessing resources and reimbursement after the fact.
- Once you have created your new, improved plan, **ask for staff feedback once again.** Others may see potential pitfalls that you haven’t considered.
- Train your staff.** An emergency plan is completely useless if it just sits on the shelf and gathers dust. To increase staff investment, assign training responsibilities for different portions of the plan to various staff members. Consider including short training segments in other meetings, such as staff meetings or retreats.
- If you have 11 or more employees at the same location and working the same shift, **you are required by Washington State law to establish a safety committee.** Otherwise, you may have safety meetings to address workplace safety issues. Check out the Washington Department of Labor and Industries guidelines.
- Consider participating in local emergency management teams,** as suggested by Sherrie Tinoco. As Elaine Enarson describes, increased sexual assault is often a byproduct of the disruption caused by a major disaster, and your participation in community planning and response may increase community safety and services for survivors.
- Be sure your plans reflect the diversity in your program and your community.** Include consideration of those with disabilities and remember to address language or cultural barriers in your planning.
- If there is a college or university in your area, you may wish to **collaborate on emergency plans for your mutual benefit.**
- Remember that your leadership makes a difference.** If you approach the emergency management process as a nuisance chore, it’s unlikely that your staff will embrace the need for thoughtful preparation.

## Resources for Planning and Recovery

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*Note: Resources recommended by Elaine Enarson are marked with (EE).*

American Red Cross. Fact Sheet on Shelter-in-Place. <http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/shelterinplace.pdf>

Bergin, K.A. (2008). Witness: The racialized gender implications of Katrina. In M. Marable and K. Clarke (Eds.), *Seeking higher ground: The Hurricane Katrina crisis, race, and public policy reader* (pp. 173-190). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (EE)

Enarson, E. P., & Chakrabarti, P. G. (2009). *Women, gender and disaster: global issues and initiatives*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Klein, A. (2008). *Sexual violence in disasters: A planning guide for prevention and response*. Enola, PA: Louisiana Foundation Against Domestic Violence and National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (EE – highly recommended) <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/sexual-violence-disasters-planning-guide-prevention-and-response>

Larrance, R., Anastario, M. & Lawry, L. (2007). Health status among internally displaced persons in Louisiana and Mississippi travel trailer parks. *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 49 (5), 590-601. (EE)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. *Natural Disasters*. <http://nctsn.org/trauma-types/natural-disasters> (includes information on helping children and psychological first aid)

National Sexual Violence Resource Center. General disaster preparedness resources. <http://www.nsvrc.org/projects/151/general-disaster-preparedness-resources>

Thornton, W.E. & Voigt, L. (2007). Disaster rape: Vulnerability of women to sexual assaults during Hurricane Katrina. *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy*, 13(2), 23. (EE)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Ready for anything: A disaster planning manual for runaway and homeless youth programs*. [http://www2.ncfy.com/publications/pdf/ready\\_for\\_anything.pdf](http://www2.ncfy.com/publications/pdf/ready_for_anything.pdf)

(While this is designed for runaway and homeless youth programs, it is a great planning manual with lots of tools and checklists that would be useful to nearly any human service program.)

Washington Department of Health. *Earthquakes* (one-page fact sheet, suitable for posting). [http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/hbk\\_pdf/quake.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/hbk_pdf/quake.pdf)

Washington Department of Health. Emergency Planning and Preparedness (includes an Emergency Response Guide and specific information about considerations for individuals with disabilities). <http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/default.htm>

# Accreditation Café

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These are the Accreditation Standards that relate to emergency preparedness.

## FE3

*The agency acts to ensure the safety of its clients, personnel, and visitors on all facility premises as well as during transport for agency business.*

This standard requires written plans for personnel and client safety and security needs, including fire, medical, and other emergencies. The safety plan must be posted for both clients and visitors. The standard also requires formal orientation to these plans for all staff and volunteers. Be sure to include this requirement in your orientation checklist. The tools and resources in this publication will provide you with all the information you need to develop a robust safety plan.

## CIC3

*The agency has and follows written operational procedures, consistent with legal requirements governing the retention, maintenance and destructions of records of clients. These procedures should address...reasonable protection against destruction by fire, earthquake, flood or other damage.*

The TechSoup Disaster Recovery Guide included in this issue should be a big help in addressing the safety and security of electronic data. In your disaster planning, identify critical information and plan for both access and security. Your insurance agent may have some tips on fire and flood protection for your records.

### Accreditation Questions?

Contact Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck  
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