

Emergency Preparedness for Academic Museums



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Introduction

If you work for a university or college museum, you have an advantage in disaster planning – emergency management specialists, right on campus.

In this poster, we use the University of Michigan's Kelsey Museum of Archaeology as an example to illustrate how academic museums can utilize campus resources to develop emergency response plans and training programs.



1. Connect

Start by contacting your school's police department or department of safety and security.

- In an emergency, your school's police or security department will manage the response on campus. If you connect in advance, they can assist you in planning, training, and evaluating disaster response for your museum.
- Your school will already have emergency response procedures concerned with protecting human safety, and emergency management specialists can help customize these for your museum.
- Most universities with an enrollment over 10,000 will have someone designated as an "emergency manager" or "emergency planner."
- If no such person exists, contact your institution's risk management or insurance office. Insurance carriers will often provide free or subsidized consultants to assist with emergency preparedness.
- There are also several national consulting firms that can be hired to assist with planning, training, and exercising, such as:

Witt O'Briens, Tetra Tech, Wenck, Michael Baker & Associates.

- The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology worked closely with Mike Kennedy, Senior Emergency Management Specialist with UM's Division of Public Safety and Security (DPSS), and with Lisa Reiher, the Museum's facilities manager in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA).



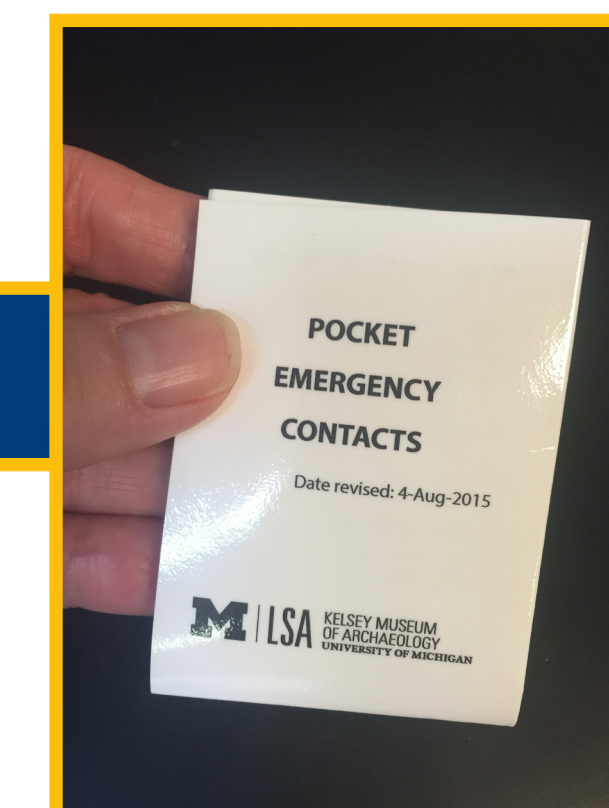
2. Create

Define your target audiences to determine the kinds of plans and training products you should create.

- Different groups need different levels of information. Students, teaching faculty, and docents might only need training to ensure human safety, while some or all of your museum staff will need information on collections salvage.
- Work with your emergency management specialists to customize existing plans and training modules for your museum.
The Kelsey Museum was able to build on the College of LSA's existing emergency response plan, and the UM's Building Incident Response Team PowerPoint training module.
- The Kelsey created two plans: Emergency Response, focused on immediate response and human safety; and Emergency Recovery, focused on collection salvage.
You can download the Kelsey's plans here: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B9smbytqAXeeOGVsWVRrME5rdHc>
- Write a collections salvage plan. To get started, reference publicly available plans: <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications/disaster-response-recovery#.Vv1N2FUrKM->
Scroll to the "Guides and Information" section in the middle of the page.
<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview>

<http://siarchives.si.edu/services/disaster-prevention-preparedness-and-response>

- The Kelsey Museum referenced these plans: George Eastman House Emergency Preparedness Plan, Smithsonian Institution, US Navy Library & Archives, Northeast Document Conservation Center's d-plan, The Minnesota History Center Emergency Preparedness Plan, The Smithsonian Institution Archives Plan, and University of Delaware Library Disaster Response.
- Keep your salvage plan relevant to your collection (you don't need guidelines for material you don't own!) and keep it simple – this is salvage, not conservation treatment.
- The Kelsey's plan was written by a group that included conservators, collections managers, and security officers.
- Update your plans. Schedule this on your calendar! Plans should be reviewed and updated annually. The Kelsey updates its plans and phone trees every August, prior to the start of the fall term and the arrival of new students, faculty, and volunteers.



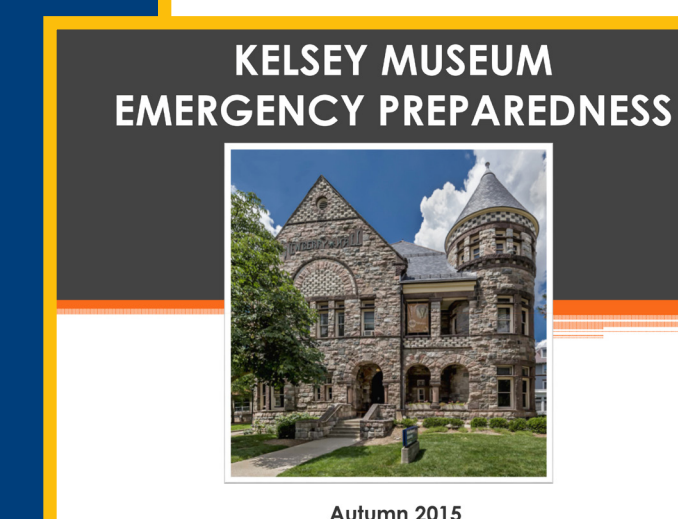
3. Share

Post plans so they are easily accessible:

- The Kelsey's are posted in the University's collaborative online workspace, available to all museum staff, resident faculty, and graduate students. The plans are also accessible to our College facilities manager and DPSS. The links are emailed annually to coincide with training.
- Hard copies exist in key locations, such as the conservation lab.
- The Kelsey also developed a pocket response guide, which is a flow chart with a phone tree.

4. Train

Schedule annual training/review of the plans for all museum personnel.



The Kelsey holds a PowerPoint training session, led by the Museum's Chief of Security, each fall at the first staff meeting of the new term. Resident graduate students receive training at the first student meeting in the new term; the same is true for the museum's docents at their first meeting.

5. Exercise

Hold a drill to exercise your plan and evaluate your response.

- A drill or exercise should be conducted once every two to three years to evaluate response and keep people familiar with the plan.
- Get someone from outside your museum, such as campus emergency management, to assist or bring in an outside consultant.
It is very difficult for a unit to run these exercises themselves while keeping the process objective to identify areas of improvement.
- Emergency management staff will be able to work with your museum to determine an exercise of appropriate scope and complexity.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a recommended exercise template, which most emergency managers will be familiar with and utilize.

