WORKING WITH

ENESPONDERS



What do they need to know before, during, and after an emergency?









In any major emergency, you will be working with local emergency responders to save and secure your institution. If you have a good relationship with your local emergency responders and know how their systems and practices work, you can help them keep your staff and collections safe.

WHO ARE YOUR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS?

- Local, County, Tribal, and State Emergency Management Officials
- Fire Department
- Police/Sheriff's Department
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- National Guard

- Coast Guard
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- Public Works Department
- Mayor or Community Administrator's Office

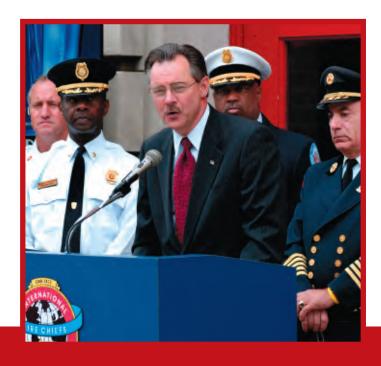
HOW DO YOU FIND THEM?

Search the blue pages in your phone book or online at ready.gov and similar sites. Consider attending chapter meetings of the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) or National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (www.nvoad.org).

WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY TO THEM?

When you make contact with your emergency responders, explain who you are, what you do, and why cultural resources need special attention. Here are a few talking points:

- Local museums, libraries, historic sites, and archives hold the collective history of the community.
- Many artifacts, documents, and structures are irreplaceable.
- Collections often have a high monetary value, in both the objects and the tourism they attract.
- Visitors to cultural institutions, including school groups, can be at risk during emergencies.
- Cultural institutions can be critical to recovery — as gathering places, information centers, educational resources, and icons of community identity.



HOW DO YOU BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM?

Emergency responders are dedicated to serving their community, and they will be interested in the contributions your institution makes to the quality of life.

SOME WAYS TO MAKE CONTACT:

- Ask for help with site assessment and emergency planning.
- Have the police and fire department do a walkthrough.
- Offer free tickets to your institution or hold an emergency responders appreciation night.
- Invite emergency responders to participate in your training and drills.

- Explore ways that staff members might volunteer with emergency responders.
- Suggest that the local emergency management agency stage a table top exercise at your institution.
- Take lunch/cookies to the fire station or police or sheriff's department.
 Remember that there may be three shifts.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PAVE THE WAY:

- Learn the basics of the Incident Command System. You can take training online at http://training.fema.gov.
- Understand the chain of command.
 The person in charge may change as your situation develops.
- Take local Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Check with your local emergency management offices to find out when and where the training is held.
- Ask local emergency responders how they work and communicate.
- Review and become familiar with your community and state emergency response plans.
- List skills and resources you and your staff can offer to the emergency responders.
- Identify ways your institution could help the community in an emergency.



WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?

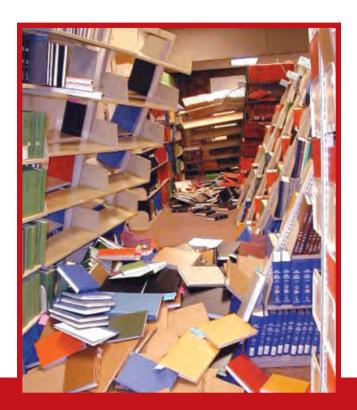
The more information you have prepared in advance, the easier it will be to salvage your collections and maintain a good relationship with the emergency responders. Consider giving them information ahead of time; prepare a briefcase or box for them to keep. It should include:

- Maps of the institution showing entrances, exits, elevators, utility (water, gas, electricity) shutoffs, the alarm and sprinkler systems, telephones, cable, and hazardous materials.
- All names of site locations, current and historical, so emergency responders aren't looking for 'Main Building' when the sign on the building says 'John Henry's House.'
- An aerial photograph of the institution and surrounding area for reviewing response routes.
 Your local municipality may have such photos.
- Blueprints of the buildings.
- Floor and room plans with room names or numbers.

- Any changes to floor plans due to special exhibits, maintenance, etc.
- Contact information for staff and key responders. Photos can help identify missing or injured people.
- Locations and types of hazardous materials, including collections (e.g., ammunition, medical supplies, preserved specimens).
- Locations of priority objects. These can be marked on the plans using shading, colored notations, or photographs.
- Master keys and keys to the exhibit cases (or how to get them).

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THINGS GO SMOOTHLY:

- Appoint a liaison who has authority to make decisions on behalf of your institution.
 Designate two backups.
- Give the liaison an orange vest or hat so he or she is easily identifiable.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with emergency responders that spells out the chain of command and mutual expectations of each party.



DURING AN EMERGENCY

During a disaster, you may be scared or confused. If emergency responders already know you and your institution, the situation will be easier for everyone. But even if you don't have a relationship, you can help the responders by providing this information:

- What happened?
- How large an area is affected?
- Who is in the building?
- Where are the entrances and exits?

- What hazards are present and where?
- What location is good for a staging area?
- What response has already taken place?
- What and where are the priority materials?

In a disaster during public hours, the emergency responders will need information on visitors: how many and where they might be. They will also need to know about staff members with special needs.

Remember that the emergency responders will be in control of your facility until they turn it back over to you.

AFTER AN EMERGENCY

Take time to debrief.

- Include all the agencies you worked with and discuss what went right and what did not.
- Discuss what you could have done better.
- Incorporate the information into your emergency plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND OTHER USEFUL TOOLS:

www.heritagepreservation.org/lessons









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