



Diocese of Galveston-Houston Disaster Response Plan

I. MISSION

A. Purpose, Goals, Definitions

1. Purpose

- a) The purpose of this plan is to assist the parishes, agencies, and departments of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston to provide stewardship over the resources of the local Church and to provide compassionate outreach and services to those in need during disaster response and recovery.
- b) This plan describes the basic strategies, assumptions, and mechanisms through which the parishes, institutions, agencies, and departments of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston will mobilize resources and conduct activities to support local disaster response, relief, and recovery efforts. In order to facilitate interagency operations, this plan adopts a functional approach that groups the types of assistance to be provided under areas of responsibility to address functional needs at the local level. Each area of responsibility is headed by a primary agency or department based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in the functional area. The areas of responsibility serve as the primary mechanism through which assistance is managed in an affected area.
- c) This plan provides for an orderly means to prevent or minimize, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies or disaster that threaten life, property, and the environment within the Diocese of Galveston-Houston by:
 - Identifying major, natural, and man-made hazards, threats to life and/or property that are known or thought to exist.
 - Assigning emergency management responsibilities and tasks.
 - Describing predetermined actions to be taken by parishes, departments, and agencies to eliminate the effects of these threats and to respond effectively and recover from an emergency or disaster.
 - Providing for the effective assignment and utilization of local volunteers and resources.
 - Enhancing cooperation and coordination between parishes, institutions, and agencies of the diocese.



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- Providing for an emergency planning team comprised of representatives from all departments, agencies, or institutions as identified and utilized through this plan development for continued review and revision of the plan and exercise planning, and evaluation.
- This plan provides guidance for:
 - Preparedness, response, and recovery policies and procedures;
 - Disaster and emergency responsibilities; and
 - Training and education activities.
- This plan is strategic and “responsibility oriented” and addresses:
 - Coordinated parish and inter-parish post-disaster response and recovery;
 - Rapid deployment and pre-deployment of resources;
 - Communications systems;
 - Annual exercises to determine the ability to respond to emergencies; and
 - Clearly defined responsibilities for departments/agencies through a “functional annex” approach to planning and operations.

2. Goals

- a) To develop parishioner self-sufficiency.
- b) To develop parish response capability.
- c) To have a plan that will guide organizational response during emergencies and disasters.
- d) To create a framework of interagency and diocesan-wide cooperation to enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.



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3. Definitions

- a) The term “emergency” as used in this plan means a set of circumstances which demand immediate action to protect life, preserve safety, health and essential services or protect property.
- b) “Disaster” means the situation requires all available local (parish) resources and/or augmentation from beyond the local parish resources. The Chancellor of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston will declare a state of “emergency” or “disaster” and activate all or parts of this plan.
- c) “Response stage” means the time immediately following the emergency or disaster. First Respondents in the response stage will be family, neighbors, congregants, local fire and police departments, search and rescue teams, American Red Cross (ARC), Salvation Army (SA), and other voluntary agencies. This is usually a very dangerous time. The survivors and the professional rescue people can be endangered if nonprofessionals are in the way. (1NVOAD Long Term Recovery Committee Manual, 1999) Properly trained (Community Emergency Response Teams [CERT]) parish volunteers may be active in this phase.
- d) “Relief stage” begins within the first week following the event. Basic human needs are cared for in a temporary way and may last days or weeks. Medical services, food, clothing, and temporary shelters become available from ARC, the churches, other helping organizations, or friends and family. ⁽¹⁾ Basic clean up of homes, businesses, and streets begins. Utilities begin to be restored. The processes of applying for aid begins by making contact with personal insurance companies, ARC and, if Presidentially declared, FEMA. ⁽¹⁾
- e) “Recovery stage”: People begin moving out of shelters and into temporary housing. Homes and lives begin to be rebuilt. ⁽¹⁾ People and communities try to return to normal. ⁽¹⁾ The recovery stage usually lasts about 10 times as long as the relief stage (or in catastrophic disasters – years). ⁽¹⁾

B. Authorities

1. Incident Command Center Coordinator:
 - Activation of ICC.



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2. Risk Management:

- Approve damage assessments.
- Activate insurance adjusters.
- Obtain repair contracts.
- Approve Repair Scopes.

3. Information Technology:

- Assignment of telecommunications and IT hardware, software, and passwords.
- Approve repair scopes.

4. Communications:

- Approve all media contacts.
- Approve all external communications.

5. Volunteer Coordination:

- Assignment of Volunteer Teams.

6. Donations Coordination:

- Approve assignment of all CIK receivables.
- Approve all distributions of CIK.



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7. Human Services:

- Approve grant requests (if resources are available).
- Assign case management (CM) tasks.

C Situations

1. Hazard Analysis – This section lists the various hazards which affect the Diocese of Galveston-Houston.

a) Natural hazards:

- Hurricanes and tropical storms.
- Floods and flash floods.
- Tornados.
- Fires.
- Thunderstorms, windstorms, hail and lightning strikes.

b) Unnatural (man-made) hazards:

- Accidental explosions.
- Intentional explosions (bombs).
- Bomb threats.
- Aggressive persons onsite.
- Unauthorized intrusions
- Kidnapping.
- Hostage situations.
- Hazardous materials exposure.



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D. Assumptions

1. Parish, agency and institution officials will be trained to recognize their responsibilities regarding the safety and well being of their constituents and property and they will assume their responsibilities when the Diocesan Disaster Response Coordination Plan is implemented.
2. General conditions: When a community experiences a disaster, its surviving citizens fall into three broad categories: those directly affected through personal or family injury or property damage; those indirectly affected through interruption of the supply of basic needs and those not personally affected. This plan and the Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Guide (published separately) are designed to promote personal self-sufficiency in the face of a disaster. Following the guidelines set forth in both publications will allow the resources of the Church and partnering agencies to be directed toward those who are directly affected.
3. It is highly encouraged that each individual or head of household will develop a family disaster plan and maintain the essential supplies to be self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours.
4. Each parish, institution or agency of the diocese is expected to develop internal disaster plans that will integrate and cooperate with this plan.

Note: This plan is not intended to limit or restrict initiative, judgment, or independent action required to provide appropriate and effective emergency and disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

E. Limitations

1. No guarantee is implied by this plan. Preparation, response and recovery actions in any individual emergency or disaster will be dependent upon the resources available at the parish or diocesan level or provided by the broader community. Because local (parish) assets may be damaged, destroyed or overwhelmed, the Disaster Planning and Response Committee can only endeavor to make reasonable efforts to respond based on the situation, information, and resources available at the time.



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II. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. Diocesan Disaster Planning and Response Committee (DDPRC)
 - a) The purpose of the committee is to plan and coordinate a Diocesan response to disasters.
 - b) The committee will be responsible for (1) providing initial leadership and subsequent direction in establishing a preparedness and response planning guide; (2) evaluating the effectiveness of the guide and assist parishes/schools in its implementation; (3) reviewing and revising the guide, if needed, on an annual basis; and (4) coordinating, at the Diocesan level, the response during times of disaster.
 - c) Membership targets leaders in media, risk management, facilities oversight, archives information, technology, and volunteer coordination and will be appointed by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston.
 - d) The committee will be led by a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair is appointed by the Chancellor of the Diocese.
2. Incident Command Structure
 - a) The DDPRC has named personnel from the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, Catholic Charities and the Society of St. Vincent DePaul (SVDP) to the incident command structure for this plan. The Director of Community Outreach for Catholic Charities has been appointed as the ICC Coordinator for this structure.
 - b) Primary/Support flow chart (see attachment) reflects the incident command structure for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and indicates authorities and functions which can support emergency operations.
 - c) This plan establishes the incident command structure for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. All appointments and work assignments in an emergency or disaster situation shall be documented. All departments, agencies and parishes will submit documentation as to injuries, damages, property loss, service delivery, volunteer assignments, and other emergency-related needs as requested by the ICC Coordinator.



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B Responsibilities

1. General preparedness responsibilities (all parishes, departments and agencies of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston). The following common responsibilities are assigned to each parish, department or agency of the diocese. Further, each parish, department, or agency shall create an internal disaster preparedness and response organization (committee) and develop a disaster plan using the Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Guide. Preparation activities include:
 - Establishing departmental and individual responsibilities and assigning emergency tasks;
 - Working with other parishes, departments or agencies to enhance cooperation and coordination and eliminate duplication. Departments with shared responsibilities should work to complement each other. Departments from different agencies but with similar responsibilities should cross train and be prepared to back each other up;
 - Establishing education and training programs for staff, volunteers and parishioners so that each will know where, when and how to respond;
 - Developing site-specific plans for facilities as necessary, including evacuations, closures and shelter-in-place;
 - Ensuring that employee job descriptions reflect emergency duties;
 - Training staff and volunteers to perform emergency duties and tasks;
 - Identifying, categorizing and inventorying departmental resources;
 - Develop procedures for mobilizing and employing additional resources as appropriate;
 - Ensuring communications with the ICC;
 - Filling positions in the ICC as shown on the flowchart (see attachment); and
 - Preparing to provide internal logistical support to the parish, department or agency during the initial response phase.



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2. General Response Responsibilities (all parishes, departments and agencies of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston).
 - Upon receipt of an alert or warning, initiate notification actions to alert employees, volunteers and visitors.
 - As appropriate:
 - Suspend or curtail normal business activities.
 - Recall essential off-duty employees.
 - Send nonessential employees home.
 - Evacuate facilities.
 - Keep the ICC informed of actions and maintain a communications link with the ICC.
 - Facilitate department response activities, maintain events log and report information to the ICC as requested.
 - Report damages and status of facilities to the ICC
 - Coordinate with the ICC to establish protocols for interfacing with local, state, and federal responders.
 - Coordinate with the ICC Information Officer before releasing information to the media.



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III. COORDINATED RESPONSE

A. General

1. The Incident Command Center (ICC) is the central point for disaster response operations. The purpose of this central point is to ensure coordinated response when the emergency involves more than one parish, department, or agency and requires resources from several areas. Coordination and allocation of all resources will be through the ICC function leaders and the ICC Coordinator to provide for the most efficient management of response resources.
2. During disaster situations, certain departments of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, Catholic Charities, and SVDP will be required to relocate their center of control to the ICC.
3. Department or agency heads or other officials legally administering their office may perform emergency function(s) on their own initiative if, in their judgment, the safety or welfare of others (particularly visitors or clients) are threatened. The ICC Coordinator should be notified as rapidly as possible.
4. During an ICC activation, the appropriate departments or agencies will be represented in the ICC and will coordinate their activities under the supervision of the ICC Coordinator.

B. Levels of Emergency

1. Graduated response. Most emergencies or disasters will require a graduated response involving only those persons necessary to handle the situation. For this purpose, four levels of response will be used:
 - a) Level One Emergency. A level one emergency is a common emergency situation that occurs on a frequent basis (e.g. “unruly” visitor who can be “talked down” by staff, minor property damage such as an accidental window breakage). The responsibility for control of the incident rests with the responding department. Completion of an incident report is necessary.
 - b) Level Two Emergency. Should an incident remain unresolved, the emergency status will rise to a level two emergency (e.g., intruder becomes violent, serious injury or property damage requiring medical or police intervention). Level two incidents involve routine assistance from other agencies (police, ambulance, etc.). Control is still the responsibility of the responding department. Notification of the Office of Risk Management is necessary. Completion of an incident report is necessary.



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- c) Level Three Emergency. Should the incident begin or escalate to a situation where non-routine assistance is required or anticipated, a level three emergency will be declared. The ICC will activate at this level. A level three could be a major single site event or a widespread disaster. This level of emergency will be used for all natural or man-made disasters.

- d) Level Four Emergency. This level of emergency is used for catastrophic diocesan-wide or regional events. The ICC may not be activated until the immediate danger is passed.



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C. Crisis Monitoring

1. Risk Management personnel at the Diocese and Catholic Charities will monitor level one and two events within their own areas of responsibilities. If a level two event is anticipated to escalate to level three, the ICC Coordinator should be contacted immediately for possible opening of the ICC.
2. The ICC Coordinator is responsible for monitoring other potential level three emergency situations (weather events, non-natural events, etc) and will consult with the Chancellor of the Diocese and/or the President of Catholic Charities regarding opening the ICC.

D. ICC Activation and Staffing

1. The Incident Command Center (ICC) is key to the successful response operation. With decision and policy makers located together, personnel and resources can be used efficiently, coordination of activities ensures that all tasks are accomplished and duplication of effort is minimized.
2. Depending upon the severity and magnitude of the emergency or disaster (see levels of emergency described above), activation of the ICC may not be necessary, may only be partially required or may require full activation. Partial activation would be dictated by the characteristics of the disaster and would involve only those persons needing to interact in providing coordinated response. In some emergencies, this may involve only a Crisis Action Team (CAT) comprised of the personnel in the responding department(s).
3. The ICC may be fully activated by decision of the Chancellor, President of Catholic Charities, and the ICC Coordinator. When the decision is made to activate the ICC, the ICC Coordinator will notify the appropriate personnel appointed to the ICC. Once activated, the ICC Team will take appropriate action to mobilize other resources.
4. ICC activation will generally follow the emergency levels as discussed in section B above.
5. ICC Staffing (see flowchart attached): Diocesan Incident Command Center Coordinator, Diocesan Office of Risk Management, Catholic Charities Risk Management Officer, Information Systems (Diocese and Catholic Charities), Communications Officers (Diocese and Catholic Charities), Volunteer/Donations Management Coordinators (SVDP and Catholic Charities), Human Services Coordinator (Catholic Charities).



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E. Incident Leadership

1. In an emergency during which the ICC is activated, there will be two levels of leadership. The first level will be at the scene of the incident and will be led by the responding department. The second level will be at the ICC where overall coordination will be exercised.
2. In a level one or two emergency, the responding department will have responsibility for leadership of the incident. The senior representative at the scene will be the “incident commander” and will make decisions regarding the management of the incident.
3. During level three and four emergencies, decision-making authority and control of the emergency is retained by the ICC Team.
4. To ensure full staffing of the ICC, each department appointed to the ICC will name one primary and at least one alternate staff member to the ICC.

F. Facilities

1. Primary location: 2900 Louisiana
2. Alternates: 1700 San Jacinto, 2403 Holcombe, St. Catherine of Sienna Parish, 10688 Shadow Wood Dr., Houston, Notre Dame Parish, 7720 Boone Rd., Houston, Sacred Heart Parish, 915 Runneburg Rd., Crosby, TX.
3. The ICC Coordinator is responsible for communicating which location will activate to the ICC Team.

G. Plan Maintenance

1. If the plan is to be effective, its contents must be known and understood by those who are responsible for its implementation. The Disaster Response Coordinator (ICC Coordinator) is responsible for the dissemination of the plan to the appropriate personnel.
2. All departments will be responsible for developing and maintaining their respective “functional annex” of the plan. The ICC Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring all departments involved in this plan conduct an annual test and review of the plan.



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3. The Disaster Response Coordinator ensures that necessary revisions to the plan are prepared, coordinated, published and distributed. The plan will undergo revision whenever:
 - It fails during emergency.
 - Drills reveal deficiencies in the plan.
 - Annually if review indicates a need for revision.

4. The Disaster Response Coordinator will maintain a list of individuals and organizations that have received copies of the plan. These individuals and organizations will receive updates and revisions of the plan.



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Attachments

Incident Command Center Flow Chart

Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acknowledgements

Areas of Responsibility



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Attachment B Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARC – American Red Cross

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team

CIK – Contributions in Kind

DDPRC – Diocesan Disaster Planning and Response Committee

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

ICC – Incident Command Center

NVOAD – National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

TXVOAD – Texas State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

TGCVOAD – Texas Gulf Coast Regional Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster



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Attachment C Acknowledgements

Long Term Recovery Committee Manual, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, July 1999.

National Disaster Response Plan, Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent De Paul, 2001.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Guide, Diocese of Galveston-Houston/Catholic Charities, 2003.

The Emergency Manager, Federal Emergency Management Agency, August 2002.

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