

risk alert



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Lending a hand in hard times

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, numerous religious organizations volunteered to help victims of the disaster by opening their facilities as a temporary shelter. Though their intentions were good, many of those organizations did not have the adequate resources, such as showers, bathrooms or security, to provide for the victims. Some were being robbed or assaulted, and living conditions were far from comfortable.



If your organization is considering acting as an emergency shelter and providing for the community in the event of a disaster, make sure you have what the people will need. Ask yourself:

- Does your facility have adequate . . .
 - Sleeping areas?
 - Bathrooms for men and women?
 - Shower areas for men and women?
 - Changing stations for those with young children?
- Who will be responsible for housekeeping?
- How will you respond to a medical emergency?
- Is there sufficient security and protection for the people you will be housing?

Be prepared to supply needs

An emergency could require those using your shelter to stay for a few hours, days or even weeks. To be prepared for any duration, your organization should create an emergency supply kit for your shelter including the following:

- A roster of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of everyone using the facility.
- Dust masks.
- Extra clothing.
- Water: at least three days' worth for sanitation and drinking (one gallon of water for every person each day). If you live in a warmer climate, you will need more water. Water should be stored in clean plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles.

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- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Regular household bleach (do not use scented, color-safe or cleaner-added bleaches) and medicine dropper for water decontamination.
- Important documents, such as an insurance policy, in a waterproof container.
- A wrench or pliers to turn off utilities if necessary.
- A whistle to signal for help.
- Cash and coins.
- A flashlight.
- Local maps.
- A cellular phone with text messaging capability.
- A battery-powered or hand-crank radio and an NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- Extra batteries.
- A first-aid kit. For a detailed list of items to include in a first-aid kit, go to www.churchmutual.com, click “Safety Resources,” “Risk Alerts” and find the “First-Aid Kit” alert.
- Food: at least a three-day supply of food that requires no refrigeration, no preparation and little to no water. Include a manual can opener and eating utensils. Avoid salty foods, as these may cause increased thirst.
- Garbage bags, plastic ties, moist towelettes and toilet paper for personal sanitation.

If you are located in a colder-climate area, consider including:

- Jackets or coats.
- Long-sleeved shirts.
- Hats, mittens and scarves.
- Long pants.
- Comfortable shoes.
- Sleeping bags or warm blankets.

Ensure the usefulness of your disaster supplies kit

Keep your kit well maintained, or its usefulness will quickly diminish. Follow these easy steps in the upkeep of your kit:

- Store kit in a cool, dry place.
- Keep foods in tightly closed containers to protect from pests and extend shelf life.
- Discard any foods in swollen, dented or corroded packaging.
- Write the date you store your kit supplies on all materials and change stored food and water supplies every six months.
- Go over your kit at least once a year and update supplies as the need arises.

To find more information on what your organization can do to prepare for a hurricane, visit www.churchmutual.com and click “Safety Resources,” then “Hurricane Safety.”

For a complete collection of the Risk Alert series, visit our Web site and look in the Safety Resources section.