



**SACHEM
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**DISASTER
RESPONSE
PLAN**

MARCH 2021



GENERAL INFORMATION

Overview

This Disaster Response Plan is a tool created to help our organization carefully and quickly navigate natural or man-made disasters that may affect the Sachem Public Library's facilities, grounds, holdings, staff and library users. It is meant to assist in recovering collections from events ranging from a minor emergency to a major disaster. In an emergency it is important to keep in mind that **human safety is always the highest priority**. Recovery of collections should not begin until all staff and patrons are safe, and the building secured. This document is a summary of a much larger plan which houses all our emergency plans and procedures.

A Disaster Planning Team which consists of the Library Director, Assistant Director, Head Custodian, Network System Specialists, Coordinator of Finance and the Associate Administrator is responsible for devising and maintaining the disaster plan which consists of three main sections; response, recovery and rehabilitation. The body of the plan is designed for ease of use during the early stages of a disaster. Details of exact procedures and other sensitive information will not appear in this summary for security purposes. Once the initial response to a disaster is underway, staff should consult the more detailed plan.

Information in the Disaster Response Plan will be reviewed by the planning team annually and updated regularly by the Safety Committee.

Scope and Goals

It is the intent of the Sachem Public Library to maintain a safe and healthy work environment for staff and patrons and to provide for the protection of property and assets. In order to achieve this, Sachem Public Library has developed and fully supports a workplace safety program in which staff members are expected to be active participants. Staff are expected to make positive contributions in the interest of their own safety, that of their colleagues and the general public. Participation includes acting responsibly and complying with established policies and procedures set forth in the Building Safety and Security Guidelines. These guidelines were established to help staff manage potential safety and security emergencies.

Stay Safe,

On behalf of the
Library Administration & Board of Trustees

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RESPONSE

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

General Procedures

- Remain calm.
- Always respond to an evacuation order or siren. **DO NOT** assume the situation is a drill or false alarm.
- **Human safety is always the highest priority.**
- Assist others requiring help leaving the building.
- Evacuate in an orderly fashion according to the established evacuation routes.
- After exiting the building move to designated emergency meeting area.
- Do not block the street or driveway entrance and exit.
- **Do not re-enter the building** until instructed to do so by authorized personnel, fire department or police.

Evacuating the Building

Each public service desk and staff office has specific areas of the building they are responsible for evacuating while on their own way out of the building. Upon arriving to the designated emergency meeting area staff will account for each department and area having been cleared and will alert the Manager in Charge or Fire Chief of any individuals awaiting assistance in an area of refuge.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services (other than 911)

Police 6th Precinct 631-852-2677

Holbrook Fire District 631-588-8410

For other specific vendors such as electric, heating, plumbing, water, phones and security systems refer to emergency numbers located at each service desk and office.

Emergency Call List

In the event of an emergency key staff members should be contacted if they are not already present to assist in addressing the problem, however small the emergency. See the key staff numbers located at each services desk and office.

DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Disaster Response Team Responsibilities

Team Leader: Director (with Assistant Director as backup)

Administration Supplies Coordinator: Associate Administrator (with Coordinator of Finance as backup)

Collections Recovery Specialist: Associate Administrator (with Coordinator of Finance as backup)

Subject Specialists

Primary: Director (with Coordinator of Finance as backup)

Work Crew Coordinator: Assistant Director (with Head Custodian as backup)

Technology Coordinator: Network System Specialists II (with Network System Specialist I as backup)

Building Recovery: Head Custodian (with Associate Administrator as backup)

Security Coordinator: Head Custodian (with Associate Administrator as backup)

Public Relations Coordinator: Director (with Assistant Director as backup)

Documentation Coordinator: Coordinator of Finance (with Associate Administrator as backup)

ADVANCED EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS

Hurricanes, Tornadoes and Winter Storms

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are slow moving, severe storms with high winds that originate in the Caribbean and the tropical Atlantic. Hurricane season lasts from June to November. They are monitored by satellite and advisories are usually issued well in advance. A **hurricane watch** is issued when hurricane conditions pose a threat to the area within 24 hours. A **hurricane warning** is issued when hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours and low-lying areas are usually evacuated.

When a hurricane watch is issued

- Ensure staff is aware of evacuation routes.
- Check gutters and downspouts are clear and functioning.
- Tie down loose objects outside or move them indoors.
- Ensure flashlights are charged or have fresh batteries.
- Check auxiliary sources of electricity are in working order.
- Ensure battery powered radios are working and have fresh batteries.
- Fasten down any containers of flammable liquids or gases.



When a hurricane warning is issued

- Put protective shutters/panels for windows in place.
- Tape windows to prevent shattering.
- Seal off any areas where water may enter the building.
- Move collections away from windows, with more valuable collections taking priority.
- Drape plastic sheeting over shelves.
- Perform a controlled shut down of the computer system and disconnect other electrical equipment not being used.

Thunderstorms/Lightning

A **severe thunderstorm watch** is issued when a severe storm, defined as having damaging winds 58 miles per hour or more or hail of 3/4 of an inch in diameter or greater, is likely to develop. A **severe thunderstorm warning** is issued when a severe thunderstorm has been reported or identified on radar. Once a warning has been issued it is important to take shelter and listen to a radio for information. Thunderstorms can hit with no warning.

If there is time

- Ensure flashlights are charged or have fresh batteries.
- Check battery powered radios are working and have fresh batteries.
- Tie down loose objects outside or move them indoors.
- Check auxiliary sources of electricity are in working order.

ADVANCED EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS continued

Hurricanes, Tornadoes and Winter Storms

Severe Winter Storms

A **winter weather advisory** is used when poor weather conditions are expected. A **winter storm watch** is issued when a storm is possible. A **winter storm warning** is issued when a storm is occurring or will occur shortly. A **frost/freezing warning** is issued when below freezing temperatures are expected. A **blizzard warning** is issued when heavy snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and severe wind chills are expected.

If a winter storm is expected

- Check disaster kits are complete and that you have food, water and/or batteries.
- Make sure there is sufficient heating fuel as well as emergency heating in case of loss of power.
- Check fire and carbon dioxide detectors are working.
- Ensure auxiliary sources of electricity are in working order.
- Make sure all shovels and other snow removal equipment are in working order.
- Make sure you have enough rock salt for walkways and fuel for snow blowers.

Tornadoes

A **tornado watch** is issued when tornadoes and/or severe thunderstorms are likely to strike an area, while a **tornado warning** is issued when the funnel of the tornado has been spotted in the area. At that point, human safety is the highest priority. Immediate shelter must be sought, there is no time for anything else.

If a tornado watch is issued

- Open windows on the opposite side of the building from the expected route of the tornado.
- Tie down loose objects or bring them inside.
- Perform a controlled shut down of all computer equipment.
- Ensure flashlights are charged or have fresh batteries.



EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Water Damage, Fire & Mold

Water Damage (minor)

For small amounts of clean (not contaminated) water leaks

- Try to determine where the source of the water leak is.
- If possible, turn off the water to that area or the main water valve.
- Notify person in charge of the building and facilities maintenance.
- Protect materials by moving them away from the water source to the extent possible or covering with a tarp.

If sewage or other dangerous substances contaminate the water, enlist professionals.

Fire

If there is an active or suspected fire in the building

- Activate the nearest fire alarm if you see or smell smoke.
- Call the fire department or 911.
- Start evacuation of the building.
- From a safe location call person in charge of library.



Remember to report the fire first, before trying to extinguish. If you are in immediate danger, evacuate first and then call it in. Always make sure you have an escape route.

Mold

If you discover mold on collections or surfaces

- See if you can safely ascertain the source causing the mold issue.
- Contact building facilities maintenance and person in charge of the library.
- They will consult a mycologist to ensure no toxic mold is present. Do not handle it yourself.
- In the interim try to modify the environment so it's no longer conducive to grow more mold.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Hurricanes, Storms, Tornadoes, Earthquakes

Hurricane

If a hurricane warning is issued

- Have protective shutter/panels for windows put in place.
- Tape windows to prevent shattered glass from being blown.
- Seal off areas where water may enter building.
- Move collections away from windows or cover with plastic sheeting.
- Disconnect or shut down computers and other electrical equipment not in use.

Remember to remain indoors during the storm in a secure location away from windows.

Thunderstorms/Lightning

During a storm

- Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones or televisions during a storm.
- Avoid water faucets and sinks.
- Stay indoors.



Severe Winter Storm

During a winter storm

- If possible do not travel.
- Stay indoors.
- After the storm remove ice, snow and downed tree limbs from roof and walkways.

Earthquake

If an earthquake occurs

- Drop, cover and hold onto a supportive doorway. Do not go outside.
- Stay away from windows.

Tornado

If a tornado warning is issued or one is sighted

- Stay indoors, directing staff and patrons to the lowest part of the building.
- Stay away from windows.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Gas Leak, Hazardous Materials Incident, Power Outage

Gas Leak

If you smell gas indoors

- Evacuate the building immediately, opening doors and windows on the way out.
- Gather in a safe place outdoors.
- Call 911 from another location. Do not call in the area of the gas leak as it could spark an explosion.
- Do NOT reenter the building until it has been declared safe by authorities.

If you smell gas outdoors

- Call 911 from an area where you can not smell the gas.
- Do not assume someone else has called it in.
- Make sure occupants of neighboring buildings and passersby are made aware of the situation.
- Block off the area until the gas company arrives.
- Avoid any source of flame and shut down motorized equipment.
- Do not use cell phones.
- If smell is strong evacuate building and move to where you can not smell the gas.

Hazardous Materials Incident

If you are at the scene of an accident involving hazardous materials

- Call 911 and the local fire department. Do not assume someone else has called it in.
- Evacuate the affected area. If inside, evacuate building. If outdoors keep yourself and others away from incident, preferably upwind to avoid contact with chemicals.

If you are asked to shelter in your building

- To the extent possible, seal the building so hazardous material can not enter.
- If contaminants are in the building breathe shallow or through a damp cloth.
- Do not eat or drink anything that may have been contaminated.

If you are told to evacuate

- Evacuate immediately and follow recommended routes.
- If there is time shut all windows and door on way out to minimize contaminants entering building.

Power Outage

If there is a power outage

- If you suspect it is only the building, check the electrical panel.
- If you can not determine cause of outage call power company.
- Open blinds for light, move to lit areas or use flashlight.
- Shut down computer equipment.



EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Civil Disturbance or Terrorist Attack

Civil Disturbance

If a riot or other civil disturbance occurs

- All staff members should remain inside and try not to draw attention to themselves or the building.
- If rioters enter the building, try to get public and staff safely to a locked area.
- Do your best to avoid confrontation with rioters.
- Call 911 and retreat to a safe area, preferably a locked office.

Terrorist Attack

If there is a bomb threat

- Do not panic, listen carefully, make notes if possible.
- Keep caller on phone as long as possible, get as much information as possible.
- Call 911 immediately or have a second staff member call while you are still on the phone.
- Once call ends write down as much info as you can remember.
- Evacuate building immediately if instructed to do so by authorities.

If a chemical attack occurs

- Call 911 and follow their instructions.
- If you are instructed to shelter in the building, seal all openings to the extent possible.
- Fill sinks and containers with water, in case water supply becomes contaminated.
- If instructed to evacuate, follow the directions from authorities.

If a biological attack occurs

- Call 911 and follow their instructions.
- If you are instructed to shelter in the building, seal all openings to the extent possible.
- Fill sinks and containers with water, in case water supply becomes contaminated.
- If instructed to evacuate, follow the directions from authorities.
- If you develop symptoms of an illness, contact medical personnel immediately and limit your exposure to others.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Sewer System Backup & Water Main Break

Sewer System Backup

If a sewer system backup occurs

- Avoid contact with contaminated water.
- Quickly move items (collections or otherwise) out of danger.
- Call custodian and Associate Administrator. If they are not available, call appropriate vendor from emergency list.
- Custodian or Associate Administrator can assess what type of clean up is required.

Water Main Break

If there is a water main break

- Contact the local water authority from the emergency list.
- Alert custodian and Associate Administrator.
- If it safe to do so, shut off the main water valve to building.
- Do not enter into wet puddles unless you are sure there is no power outlet or electrical wires affected.
- If possible, move items and collections away from areas of water and cover other collections.

ASSESSING THE AFTERMATH

Next Steps Following a Disaster

In all cases, collection recovery efforts do NOT begin until the safety of staff and patrons has been assured. If serious damage has occurred to the building or its contents, it may be necessary to wait until appropriate officials have deemed the building safe to re-enter. It may be necessary to get advice from disaster cleanup specialist companies.

Staff should refer to the larger Disaster Plan which details

- Salvage Priorities
- Damage Assessment
- Documentation
- Insurance Claims
- Collection Recovery
- Building and Environment Stabilization
- Communication with Media Outlets and the Public
- Listing of vendors for various disaster assessments and cleanup

Prevention and Protection

Assessing risks, engaging in preventative building maintenance, maintaining information about building systems and putting in place consistent opening and closing procedures can prevent disasters. Staff training is crucial to successful disaster planning. It begins with the Disaster Response Team and is shared with the Safety Committee to assist in training all staff. Training staff in the mechanics of our disaster and other safety plans ensures that they will be familiar with them and that they will be able to use them in emergency situations. Staff members are often the first line of defense against disasters, observing them as they occur. They must be able to recognize that there is a problem, know how to respond, and know whom to call. Annual building safety trainings are conducted for the entire staff and the library provides for staff members to also be trained in first aid and CPR.