

How to integrate the emergency preparedness plan (Ward Plan)

The “ward plan” is set up with a series of committees with each having their specific job and certain amount of other information that can help in the event of an emergency or disaster but how does this all come together. Remember the “ward plan” is only a tool and like any other tool if it is not used or it left on a shelf and not studied when the time comes to use it - the whole thing is virtually useless. Go through the plan now and familiarize yourself with it’s content and how it can be used.

In the event of a disaster a few things need to happen:

- All members of the emergency preparedness committee need to come to the predesignated area and set up a ward EOC (Emergency Operation Center). This has several components. If there is a CERT team in the area this EOC may already be set up but if not, the ward is responsible for this. On a stake level this should also be done although the stake EOC has fewer components. The ward level components, which shall be detailed later, in this order of importance are:
 - communications
 - medical - either a first aid station or CCU (Critical Care Unit)
 - search and rescue/fire/utility teams - if you do not have a CERT team (Community Emergency Response Team)
 - logistics
 - water
 - transportation
 - sanitation
 - fuel and heating
 - mass feeding
 - child care
 - elderly and physically impaired care
 - temporary housing
 - safety and security
 - reconstruction
 - moral and recreation
 - death and morgue care
- Each of the committee members should be “pre-disaster” familiar with and trained in their own parts of the puzzle so that when needed they can concentrate on what is needed. We will not go into the responsibilities in this document because they are detailed well enough in the ward plan document itself.
- CERT team members need to be freed up to take care of their responsibilities. They are responsible to get the disaster relief operation started until the ward plan can be fully implemented. It is important that the ward plan be set up properly so that at the proper time the CERT team can be disbanded or be incorporated into the ward plan. **Warning:** Do NOT disband the CERT team if you cannot take over the disaster relief effort. In all reality for a ward plan to be ready to operate it should take a minimum of about 1 hour and up to 24 hours depending on the severity of the disaster on the availability of committee members. Although it is not immediate, the CERT team is organized in such a manner to be operational within on half hour or so. It is possible to incorporate the CERT teams search and rescue efforts into the ward plan for many hour, days, or week, well after the ward plan is operational. If you do not have a CERT team in your ward, you may have one in your stake or neighboring stake. It is important to get you facts and needs straight and quickly turned into the local CERT team so they can help you with the search and rescue effort in your ward. The CERT team will have their own EOC which may or may not be in the same location that the ward set up their EOC in. Try to keep the rooms separate to avoid confusion. Sometime the emergency preparedness director and the CERT team leader are one in the same and so setting up two EOC’s is impractical.

The rest of this will be outlined as if you do not have CERT team in your ward.

- Before an EOC is set up each of the committee members should have already:
 - checked their own families and administered what every first aid the can or know how
 - checked their own homes structurally and tagged them according to the medical condition of the occupants still in the home
 - checked in with their block captains

- **A check in area** should be set up just outside the EOC to be able to account for all members coming and leaving the EOC. At the check a survey should be taken of members needs and resources that can be used in the disaster relief effort.
- **The communications area** should have at least one communicator and a logger. If no one is pre-trained in this area it doesn't take a whole lot to give someone a radio and ask them talk on it. The logger is just a person that takes notes. This can be anyone that writes legibly. It is suggested that on a ward level you have several FSR (Family Service Radio) radios that can be given out to search and rescue teams and anyone that need to leave the EOC. If you do not have radios. It would also be wise to have at least one HAM radio for ward to stake communications. All communications needs to be set up with runners. Youth are especially good for this due to their agility and speed. No matter what age you use not runner should be sent from anywhere without a written report. Even if the report is on a scrap of paper. If you have a EOC box all of these reports should already be preprinted and in the box. Communications starts with individual members and families checking in with their block captains and then the block captains sending their reports to the EOC. While waiting for the reports to come in the communicator needs to pull out the communications worksheet from the ward plan and start calling around to find the availability of service in the area starting with medical institutions. As soon as the availability of medical institutions are found out then the communicator needs to let the block captains know so they can direct their injured block members as to where to go for help. Do not count on telephones to be working so these calls may need to be done by HAM radio. This means that pre-disaster HAM radio frequencies and call signs and operator names should be obtained and the information put into the communications worksheet in the ward plan. As search and rescue teams, fire teams and others leave the EOC the communicator needs to keep constant communication lines open with these teams and a log kept of everything incoming and outgoing. An open communications channel should be established with the stake. All civic authority communications should be directed through the stake.
- **The medical area - either a first aid station or CCU (Critical Care Unit)** should be set up second so that the members of the ward that are not send directly to a hospital or CCU can be cared for. The CCU should be set up on a stake level and not a ward level. A stake may feel inadequate to set up a CCU and ask a certain ward to do it for the entire stake. Each ward should setup their own first aid station with simple care available. Use what every medically trained personal you have available to do this. If you don't have any you local CERT team can help with this. In most disaster situations the local hospitals and clinics are easily overrun and so medical care must be handled on a ward basis until more professional help can be found. The set up and operation procedures of this ward level first aid station should be in the ward plan supplement.
- **The search and rescue/fire/utility teams** are to be set up in the absence of a local CERT team. These are setup in minimum groups of 6/4/2 respectively. They are to go out to search out those member of the neighborhood that are trapped in their houses, put out fires, and shut off utilities.
- **The logistics area** is set up to collect supplies for the disaster relief effort from and existing cache or from members. An inventory of supplies should be taken from members coming into the EOC as volunteers. It would be best to do a survey/inventory pre-disaster of supplies from member should be taken and kept in the ward plan. The supplies need to include everything form shovels, water, food, medical supplies, radios, wheel barrows, to a whole variety of possible supplies.
- **Water** is usually the first thing that disaster relief workers run out of. Collecting it from members donation, local canals, rivers, lakes and streams is advisable. When collecting water from non filtered sources great care should be taken in purifying and filtering it for medical purposes and human consumption.
- **Transportation** to and from hospitals, disaster sites, destroyed homes, relocation areas needs to be set up. This could include as fancy buses, cars, ambulances, to ATVs to wheelbarrows to horse and cow "A" frames to backboards and stretchers - all depending on the need.
- **Sanitation needs** are probably just as important as everything else and most often the least planned for. This needs to include water, water and more water, to bleach, sanitizing agents, and deodorizing agents such as lime and borax. Five gallon buckets, port-a-potties, plastic, and shovels for burring waste need to be among the supplies. Provisional toilets need to be set up away from medical and food preparation areas.

- **Fuel and heating** concerns are of special interest in winter. If you are operating your EOC indoors and do not have natural lighting then this section should include finding generators for electricity. If you have members that are on automatic electric feeders, oxygen machines, etc and the power is out finding generators for these members maybe a need as well. You may need bring all of you members in need to one location to better use the electricity produced by a limited supply of generators and fuel. Part of fuel needs should include find blankets for those in need. The medical needs must come first.
- **Mass feeding** is an are that can take some time to set up. As far as feeding the people the order of importance is the search and rescue teams first, victims second, the general membership last. Mass feeding needs to be kept simple and as nutritious as possible.
- **Child care** should be set up to free up adults to help in the disaster relief effort. Try to use your youth for this as to free up as many adults as possible.
- **Elderly and physically impaired care** needs to be in the planning. These are people that pre-disaster already have problems. You can guarantee that their situation just got worse with the disaster.
- **Temporary housing** needs should be ascertained as member show up at the EOC or according to block captain reports. Part of the survey mentioned above should be to see who can and will take displaced members into their homes. You may need to set up tents and tarp to handle this need. Check with you Boy Scout to see what type of tents they have that can be used for this need.
- **Safety and security** is not an are we think of a gun wielding vigilantes. This is controlling access to certain areas such as first aid stations, mass feeding supplies, and the morgue. It should include roving patrols of neighborhood watch to watch for vandals - especially at night.
- **Reconstruction and cleanup** of the neighborhood should happen as soon as possible. The immediate need should be to get the homes that are safe to enter and habitable that just need a little work safer. This should be the clean up of glass in homes, patching windows and door (especially in the winter) with plastic, cutting up downed trees and limbs, etc. This does not include rebuilding members homes that are deemed unsafe or uninhabitable or completely destroyed, moving downed power lines, etc. It might include, if you have the equipment to do so, opening up or clearing destroyed roads so that emergency personnel can get in to your aid.
- **Moral and recreation** seems to be not needed but it is a great need. Not top priority but still necessary just the same. Have some one set up diversions in a separate room or field away from the medical areas and EOC. This could include everything from light minded books to read, to baseball/basketball games to knitting to other games and such. These diversions must be a complete change of scenery from the disaster relief effort.
- **Death and morgue care** is something we do not really want to think about but people do pass away and we must be prepared to take care of this need. Setting up a provisional morgue needs to be in an outbuilding or tent away from the EOC or building you are using. This is specially important if you are using a church or school.
- In setting up all of these areas remember that the disaster relief effort must go 24 hours until all is taken care of. In making assignment no one should be asked to work longer that eight hours no matter what their willingness is. Send them home to get rest and have them come back after a minimum 8 hours rest. If the do not have a home to go back to send them to the temporary housing area to arrange for such.
- As soon as physically possible after the disaster a short brief meeting should be held to make sure questions are answered and everyone know what they are to do and to fill in the positions of those committee members that have not shown up for whatever reason. Short briefing meetings should be held after that every 3 - 6 hours for the first 24 hour period and every 12 hours following that. A log should kept of all decisions made or at least attempted. As professional services become available they should be welcomed as needed. All immediate/critical need medical patients/victims should be transported to a professional facility as they are available. All instructions from Stake, city, or other appropriate authorities should be followed as they are feasible.

Good Luck!