



PLAN, PREPARE, AND PROTECT

A House of Worship Resilience Guide





DISASTERS HAPPEN,

and they can affect you, your family, your community, and your house of worship. The Department of Emergency and Security is pleased to provide the community with this “House of Worship Resilience Guide,” a companion document to the **Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG)**. This guide offers first action steps to take during emergencies in an easy-to-read format.

If you are interested in a house of worship Resilience Workshop, please contact the **Fairfax County Department of Emergency and Security** at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement or email DEMS-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov.

We look forward to working with you toward a more ready and resilient Fairfax County!

To download a copy of the House of Worship Resilience Guide, Community Emergency Response Guide, and templates, please visit, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement.



**INSTEAD OF THINKING
“IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN
TO MY HOUSE OF WORSHIP,”
USE THIS HOUSE OF WORSHIP
DISASTER RESILIENCE GUIDE TO
HELP YOU PREPARE, RESPOND,
AND RECOVER FROM DISASTERS.**

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INTRODUCTION

DISASTERS HAPPEN.

Although residents and workers in Fairfax County enjoy relative security in their everyday lives, the threat of emergencies, such as natural disasters, technological accidents, and acts of terrorism, remains. Unfortunately, many organizations do not adequately plan for such situations, often due to a lack of understanding of hazards or knowledge about how to do so. Yet, emergency planning is just as critical for houses of worship as it is for the home.

Disasters affect all houses of worship, large and small. That's why we're asking you, our faith-based community, to help us educate and engage those around you in the community and other houses of worship. The materials supplied in this guide will help inform you and your congregants about the relevance of emergency preparedness and empower you and your community to take the necessary steps to protect yourself should an unexpected disaster occur.

Every house of worship faces unique risks and challenges. While every house of worship may not plan the same way, preparations for your congregation can make a difference. You can reduce a disaster's impacts on your operations, community members, and future.

Take the time now to create a plan of what you would do before, during, and after an emergency to prevent lost revenue, loss of data, extra expenses, and loss of community members. The better prepared you and your house of worship are, the better the outcome.

Remember that no plan is perfect. By reading this far, you have taken the valuable first step towards making your house of worship disaster resilient. Now, let's take the next step to safeguard your investment!

It is our intent that this document will assist you with the development of your house of worship plan. For additional assistance, you can visit the Emergency Management and Security site (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement>)

Sincerely,
Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security

FAIRFAX COUNTY HOUSE OF WORSHIP COMMUNITY

Houses of worship are typically places that provide their members with comfort and inspiration. Most of the congregants who attend places of worship expect to find peace and solace. Unfortunately, disasters and emergencies can strike any place at any time.

There is diversity within the houses of worship that reside in Fairfax County:

- 505 Christianity
- 16 Islam
- 13 Judaism
- 8 Buddhism
- 5 Hindu
- 4 Unitarian Universalist
- 3 Bahai
- 3 Quaker
- 3 Sikhism
- 1 Humanism
- 1 Jainism
- 1 Science of Mind
- 1 Taoism
- 1 Wiccan

Source: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/sites/housing/files/assets/documents/ccfac/january%2014,%202020/fairfax%20county%20at-a-glance.pdf>

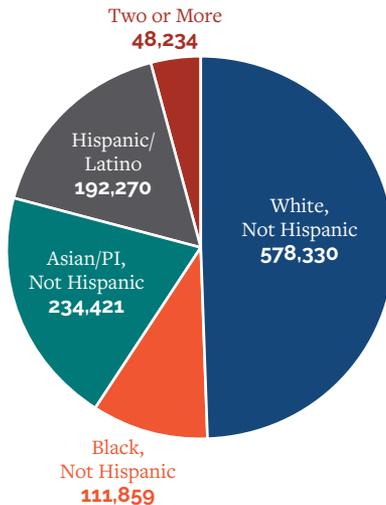


INCLUSIVE RESILIENCE PLANNING

Houses of worship in Fairfax County serve and are supported by a culturally diverse community. Planning for an unexpected crisis necessitates being inclusive of these richly diverse houses of worship and the congregants served. Embracing the diversity of the house of worship is a foundational part of building resilience in the workplace.

Community members may come from many parts of the world, bringing with them varied life experiences that influence their threat awareness, perceptions, and response behavior. Use this guide to educate your congregants on the actions to take during disasters and emergencies while in your house of worship.

PERSONS BY RACE / ETHNICITY



Source: Fairfax County Economic Demographic and Statistical Research, 2022 data and U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 five-year American Community Survey data.



LET'S GET STARTED: UNDERSTANDING HOUSE OF WORSHIP RESILIENCY

All houses of worship, large and small, have the potential of being impacted by an emergency or disaster. After all your effort to building your congregant base and establishing your operations, think of losing it all in a flash. Pipes break. Bad

weather hits. Cyber-attacks happen. These threats leave you vulnerable to devastating losses. It pays to be proactive and build disaster resilience beforehand so you can keep operating if the unexpected occurs.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CHURCH SAFETY AND SECURITY MONTH.

Houses of Worship are encouraged to use this time to educate congregants.

How will your house of worship recover following a major loss?

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, governments, institutions, houses of worship, and social systems to survive, adapt, and grow – no matter what kind of challenges or disasters they experience.



RESILIENCE SNAPSHOT: DO YOU KNOW YOUR...

- **Risks:** identify serious threats that may lead to disruptions.
- **Operations:** understand house of worship functions and processes critical for survival.
- **Congregants:** document contact information so you can connect with them.
- **Equipment:** protect critical equipment to keep your house of worship running.
- **Information Technology:** understand IT needs and develop protection systems.
- **Finances:** ensure financial resilience.
- **Plan:** review, test and update plans to stay updated.
- **Community:** build ties with those that can help your house of worship recover.

(Source: OFB-EZ, IBHS)

TOP 10 PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

1. Build a team to create your plan.
2. Gather critical documents and information needed for decision making.
3. Identify and prioritize critical operations and processes.
4. Identify hazards—the potential disruptions to your operations.
5. Keep it simple: Build your plan and create an emergency kit so you can grab and go.
6. Create a communications strategy and plan to use post emergency. Maintain emergency contact lists for staff, vendors, suppliers, and congregants.
7. Recruit and train volunteers that can keep emergency supplies and take the preparedness message home.
8. Back up and store vital records and data off-site.
9. Take action to mitigate the potential impact on your equipment, buildings, facilities, inventory, and storage. Consider insurance and a generator.
10. Exercise, test, and update your plan. Keep it current.

CREATE A RESILIENCE PLAN

This guide includes three valuable planning tools to help you get started:

1. **House of Worship Resilience Planning Template**, an easy-to-use tool described below and located in the end of the guide and online.
2. **Action Checklists Before, During, and After**, to walk you through actions to take.
3. **Fairfax County Hazards**, a description of threats and hazards, along with actions to take before, during, and after an event.

Your house of worship resilience planning addresses the impacts most likely to disrupt your house of worship, the critical activities that are essential to stay open and recovery quickly, and resilience strategies to keep those critical activities running. As you begin (or continue) your planning efforts, you will document essential information, identify, and eliminate single points of failure, establish roles and responsibilities, and clarify communication protocols – all critical to keeping the house of worship operating or reopening as rapidly as possible after a disruption.

Think of these efforts as a work-in-progress and your template a **working document**, unique to your house of worship, that you will update as the house of worship evolves and changes occur. Consider inviting representatives from different parts of your house of worship to offer diverse perspectives, voice concerns, and brainstorm ideas and solutions. Innovation and inclusive collaboration are key!

Four basic steps to building *House of Worship resilience*:

1. **Identify risks** that make your house of worship vulnerable (Risk Assessment).
2. **Analyze the impacts** those risks potentially have on your house of worship (House of Worship Impact Analysis).
3. **Create a resilience strategy and plan** using the template included in this guide.
4. **Measure your efforts** through testing, training, and maintaining your documents.



YOUR HOUSE OF WORSHIP RESILIENCE PLANNING TEMPLATE

In the back of this guide, you will find an easy-to-follow template to kickstart your efforts in building a resilient house of worship. The template consists of five steps that walk you through the planning process.

1. Plan to Stay Open
2. Emergency Contact and Communications
3. Evacuation
4. Lockdown
5. Share, Practice, Train, and Review

Go online, answer the questions directly in the form, download your plan, and print it out for your use. Distribute the plan, ask for input, and revise accordingly. It's key to remember that your plan can change regularly so consider it a work in progress.

The online template is strictly for your own private use. Fairfax County does not access, collect, maintain or disseminate any information entered onto the template. If you fill out this form electronically, data entered into the template during your current session will not be saved automatically. If you need to stop working on your plan, please make sure you save your work.

Reach out to the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS) at 517-350-1000 or DEMS-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov if you have questions or would like assistance completing the template and building your plan. Our preparedness team is ready to help, and to answer any questions you may have.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

People with disabilities or access and functional needs (DAFN) may need accommodations to support their ability to prepare, respond, and recover from a disaster event. Create emergency preparedness plans that are inclusive of everyone.

Consider the following accommodation ideas in your evacuation plan:

- Have emergency alarms and signs showing the emergency exit routes. Ideally, exit signs will be well-lit, unobstructed, and uniform in appearance throughout the building.
- Consider installing lighted fire strobes or other visual alerting devices to supplement audible alarms.
- Implement a “buddy system.”
- If you have a volunteer security team in your place of worship, consider asking them to identify visitors with DAFN as they enter the building, and be ready to assist them in the event of an evacuation.
- Insure a barrier-free route of travel out of the building. It is important to include those with DAFN in the process of surveying the building to ensure no barriers exist which may escape the notice of users without DAFN.
- Designate areas of refuge with accessible routes and support supplies.
- Consider purchasing devices such as an evacuation chair to help move people with motor impairments down a staircase or across rough terrain.
- Install tactile signage with graphics and maps for staff with vision impairments.
- Consider making portable wheelchairs available for evacuation.

Disability affects approximate 61 million, or nearly 1 in 4 (26%) people in the United States living in communities. **DISABILITY AFFECTS MORE THAN ONE BILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.**



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-inclusion.html>

Additional Tools for those with Access and Functional Needs

Fairfax County maintains two systems which may aid county personnel in an effective and efficient response to those with access and functional needs during an emergency.

- **Community Connect:** This database, maintained by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, allows individuals to share critical information about their property which may aid in the county's emergency response. You may enter information about any access and functional needs that may help responders.
- **Emergency Health Profile:** Emergency Health Profile is a voluntary database for residents to enter their own "relevant mental health information and emergency contact information." The information entered into the profile is only seen when the registered phone number calls 911. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/emergency-health-profile>

In your organizational planning, create specific guidelines and put equipment in place to help evacuate persons with disabilities, such as limited mobility or sight impairments, in the event of a disaster to minimize risk during an emergency. Many people who are otherwise self-sufficient may have special circumstances due to short-term issues such as physical or mental health issues. This guide provides an overview of accommodation ideas for emergency planning and evacuation and a valuable resource link to get more information.

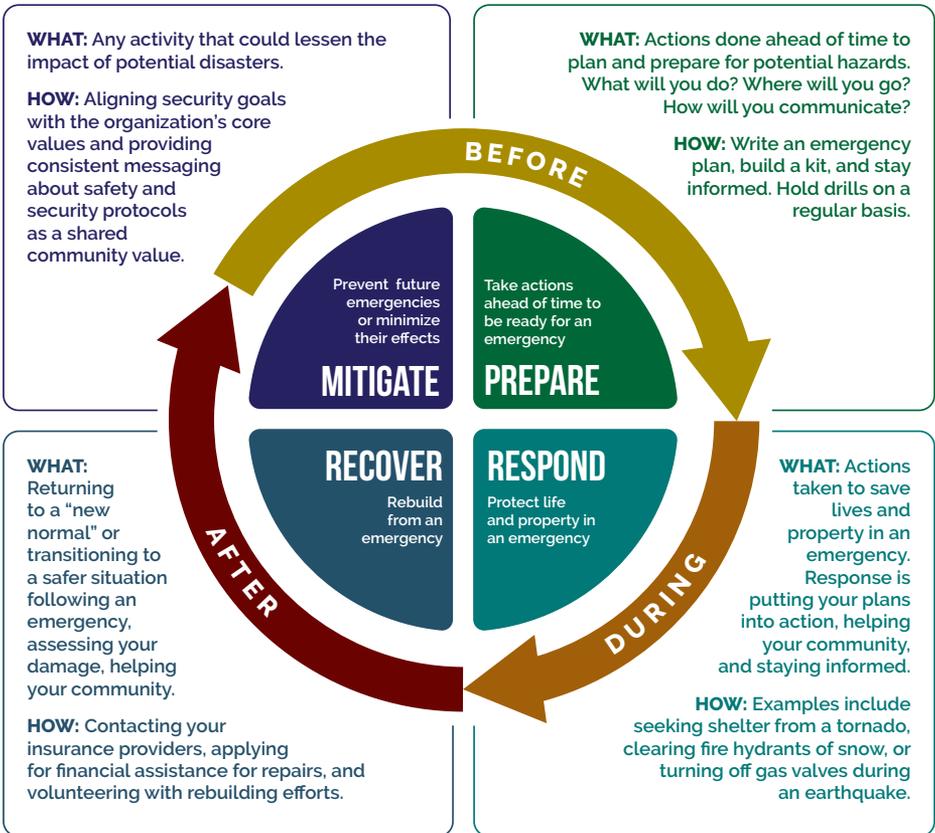
Once written, the evacuation plan should be trained on and practiced in drills, and accommodations updated periodically. For example, some individuals with intellectual or cognitive disability benefit from frequent emergency drills, but for others, practice drills may trigger anxiety. Notifying congregants of upcoming drills and allowing them to opt out of participation may be a reasonable accommodation.

Residents should continue to follow emergency protocol by calling 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency even though they have entered their information in one of the aforementioned system. There is no guarantee that services will be provided, nor does participation in either of these programs guarantee that services will be received on a preferential basis.

CORE ACTION CHECKLISTS (BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER)

Use these detailed checklists as an overall list for actions you can take to build house of worship resilience.

Four Phases of Emergency Management





MITIGATION (LONG TERM RISK REDUCTION -- BEFORE AND AFTER)



- ❑ Identify potential internal and external hazards.
- ❑ Complete a risk assessment.
- ❑ Address priority hazards.
- ❑ Identify hazards that may impede emergency evacuation for those with disabilities, access and functional needs.
- ❑ Secure your space (begin by addressing hazards starting at no/low-cost items with high impact).
- ❑ Strengthen your property, such as using surge protectors or getting a generator (actions if you lease or own).
- ❑ Review your insurance coverage and design a program that fits your house of worship and risk.
- ❑ Plan on what items you will be required to provide when filing an insurance claim.
- ❑ Be diligent in continuing solutions that work for *your* house of worship.

INSURANCE TIPS

- Keep electronic and/or physical copies of insurance policy information and contact information in a place that can be easily accessed.
- Document any damages and track any expenses you incur related to the disaster. These records may be necessary for insurance and/or government assistance.
- Listen for public information about available assistance and services via tv, radio, and social media.

Our Police Department offers security surveys to houses of worship.

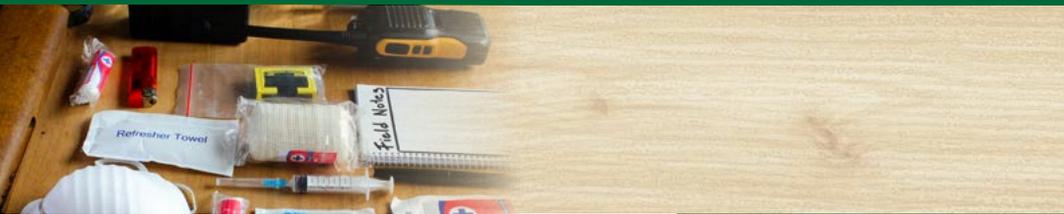
These surveys assess a house of worship's security level to verify its current level, modify policies if needed, and offer ways to improve security.

Security surveys must be requested. Houses of worship need to contact their district's Crime Prevention Officer or Community Outreach Officer to schedule a survey.

For more information on how to request a security survey visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/security-surveys-assess-house-worship-safety>



PREPAREDNESS (BEFORE)



- ❑ Build a planning team.
- ❑ Complete the House of Worship Disaster Resilience template in this guide.
- ❑ Gather disaster supplies.
- ❑ Create first aid/medical kits.
- ❑ Encourage congregants to make their own emergency kits.
- ❑ Review the designated shelter-in-place and lock down locations.
- ❑ Educate congregants and visitors on safety protocols.
- ❑ Train your staff on the emergency plans.
- ❑ Update and test your plan through regularly scheduled drills.
- ❑ Build ties with your community and agencies that can help you recover quickly.
- ❑ Consider how your house of worship may be able to help congregants and their families with support and resources if a crisis occurs (e.g., food, housing, childcare, wage advances).
- ❑ Sign up for Fairfax Alerts to stay informed.
- ❑ Sign up your house of worship for Community Connect.
- ❑ Follow @ReadyFairfax and @FairfaxCounty on social media.

ORGANIZE HOUSE OF WORSHIP EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Ensure your staff and key congregants know the location of these supplies and practice using them during training.

- First aid kits/medical supplies
- Water
- Food and food preparation tools
- Lighting (*flashlights, batteries*)
- Communications (*chargers, weather radios*)
- Tools
- Personal protective equipment
- Back-up power
- Additional supplies

PRACTICE/ EXERCISING

Houses of worship should practice their plan to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the plan and understand their role. The house of worship may choose from several different types of exercises to practice the facility emergency operations plan such as preparedness workshops or seminars with the congregation. Below are descriptions of the different types of exercises the house of worship may choose to conduct:

- **Tabletop exercises** are small group discussions that walk through a scenario and the courses of action a house of worship will need to take before, during, and after an incident. This activity helps assess the plan and resources, and facilitates an understanding of emergency management and planning concepts.
- **Drills** use the actual house of worship grounds and buildings to practice responding to a scenario.
- **Functional exercises** are similar to drills but involve multiple partners. Participants react to realistic simulated events (ex: a bomb threat, or an intruder with a gun), and implement the previously established plan.

The house of worship will make a decision about how many and which types of exercises to conduct after consideration of the costs and benefits. Once the exercise is completed, the house of worship should debrief and develop an after-action report that evaluates results; identifies gaps or shortfalls; and document lessons learned. This will lead into a discussion of how the plan and documents will be modified, if needed, and specify who has the responsibility for modifying the plan.

COUNTY TRAININGS

Department of Emergency Management and Security

- Introduction to Preparedness
- Until Help Arrives
- Business Preparedness Workshop
- Plan, Prepare, Protect - House of Worship Resilience Guide Workshop

Department of Public Safety Communications

- Help Us Help You Session - What to do when you call 9-1-1
 - » Text 9-1-1
 - » Tips for calling 9-1-1 plus Q&A
 - » Practice calling and texting 9-1-1
- About Language Services
 - » Listen to 9-1-1 call with tele-intepreter

Police Department

- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE)
- Hidden in Plain Sight
- Facility site assessments

Fire and Rescue Department

- Community Risk Reduction
- Hands only CPR



RESPONSE (DURING)



- ❑ Decide if evacuation is necessary or shelter-in-place.
- ❑ Activate staff and volunteers to help the injured.
- ❑ When safe, observe the building(s) for damage and/or hazards.

<i>Shelter in Place</i>	<i>Lockdown</i>	<i>Evacuate</i>
If you are not in immediate danger, stay where you are. Select a small, interior room with no or few windows, and take refuge there.	Lockdown is securing or protecting individuals from an immediate threat, inside or outside, and should not last more than a few hours.	Evacuation could be from a building or an area. You might have time to prepare, and others might call for immediate action.
Steps	Steps	Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions from authorities • Follow your emergency plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock all doors/windows or block with heavy items • Turn off lights, close blinds/curtains, stay low • Silence all electronics • Wait for the "all clear" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and don't run • Do not use elevators • Do not break windows in a fire – oxygen feeds fires
Reasons	Reasons	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts of violence/terrorism events, or civil disturbance • Chemical, biological, or radiological events • Severe weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts of violence/terrorism events • Civil disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical spill or gas leak • Visible smoke or fire • Bomb threat • Suspicious mail • Localized flooding



RECOVERY (AFTER)



- ❑ Perform a detailed facilities assessment of impacts to utilities, special equipment, inventory, etc.
- ❑ Provide staff and congregants with instructions on how to obtain information about house of worship operating status.
- ❑ File an insurance claim as soon as possible.
- ❑ Restore operations/productions.
- ❑ Communicate frequently with key stakeholders (staff, vendors, congregants).
- ❑ Document lessons learned.
- ❑ Update resilience plan/templates.
- ❑ Restock kits and supplies.

There are many lists readily available to help you identify important actions to take before, during, and after a crisis. Consider what specific priority actions your house of worship needs.





COMMUNICATING WITH STAFF, SUPPLIERS, AND CONGREGANTS

Effective communication is critical to ensuring disaster resilience. During disasters, communicating with staff, suppliers, congregants, and the general public is challenging. After an event, communicating regularly, clearly, and transparently with all the staff, congregants and key stakeholders is critical.

The following tips will help you begin creating a crisis communications approach and a plan.

- Keep your emergency contact list current with multiples ways to reach each person (personal phone and cell number, email, address; emergency contact information; evacuation plan and contact; social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Consider an alert mechanism to keep your congregants, suppliers, and stakeholders informed and regularly updated in multiple ways (e.g., email, text messages). Test it regularly.
- Use existing social media platforms to communicate online (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Have procedures in place to work with the media.
- Identify a spokesperson and backups to be the only public voice of your congregation. Create key messages and talking points specific to the intended audience (e.g. staff, vendors, etc.).
- Update the communications plan often.
- Train staff and provide new hires with the communications strategy.
- Monitor outside communications to determine what is working well and what is needed.

**COMMUNICATE,
COMMUNICATE,
COMMUNICATE!**



FAIRFAX COUNTY THREATS AND HAZARDS

While we cannot eliminate hazards, we can lessen their potential impact to your house of worship operations, staff, congregants, and buildings.

Fairfax County is vulnerable to a wide range of hazards that have the potential to damage or destroy property and disrupt the economy. Hazards may occur in isolation, or more commonly, in ripple-effect clusters. For example, a thunderstorm may produce lightning that causes a structural fire. A hurricane may trigger a flood as well as a power outage and create medical emergencies for your staff or congregants.

The Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan and other sources were used to identify the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to Fairfax County (the highest probability of causing the most severe impacts to exposed lives and property). The analyses were based on detailed reviews of prior hazard/threat history, as well as forecasting and probabilistic modeling tools. The following are the most likely threats and hazards, not ranked in order.

Natural hazards:

- Earthquake
- Extreme heat
- Fire (landscape)
- Flooding
- Hurricane or tropical storm
- Coastal flooding
- Thunderstorm
- Tornado
- Winter storm or extreme cold

Human-caused hazards “Everyday”

(including accidents and intentional acts):

- Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear release
- Civil disorder
- Cyber attack
- Dam failure
- Hazardous materials release
- Emerging infectious diseases
- Terrorism or act of violence

emergencies:

- Medical emergency
- Power outage
- Structural fire

Have you thought about the possible threats and hazards that may impact your house of worship location and, specifically, your house of worship? Start by familiarizing yourself with the threats and hazards that may threaten your community, your immediate location, and most importantly, your own house of worship. Learn what steps to take to reduce the possible impacts to these hazard threats and take action to build resilience!

We encourage you to learn about all the threats and hazards that your house of worship is exposed to, as threats and hazards have different risk characteristics. They may be:

- More – or less – likely to occur in your house of worship location.
- Harder or easier to forecast or predict.
- Create more (or less) impacts to your house of worship when they occur.
- May occur in isolation or trigger one impact in a cascading effect. (For example, severe weather might result in flooding or in a power outage.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE THREATS AND HAZARDS THAT COULD AFFECT YOUR HOUSE OF WORSHIP, visit the Fairfax County DEMS website at [fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg) and the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/emergency-plans>).



SELECTED THREAT/ HAZARD PROFILES AND ACTION CHECKLISTS

Details on how to understand, mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover from the county's threats and hazards are found in the many online resource listed in this Guide. Four key threats and hazards to Fairfax County Houses of Worship are profiled below along with easy-to-use checklists to guide your actions to take before, during, and after an event.

- Acts of Violence/ Terrorism
- Cyber Attack
- Flooding
- Thunderstorm



ACTS OF VIOLENCE/ TERRORISM



WHAT IT IS

Terrorism refers to the use of force or violence against persons or property for purposes of intimidation, coercion, or ransom. A terrorist assailant might use everyday items such as firearms, knives, or vehicles; purpose-made weapons such as improvised explosive devices; or weapons of mass destruction such as toxic or poisonous chemicals, biological weapons, or radiological-release devices.

An active assailant is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people, typically in a confined and populated area, and typically through the use of firearms. Such an individual may or may not have terrorist motives, and they may or may not have accomplices.

KEY TERMS

- The **National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS)** is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's threat advisory system, which provides timely information about credible terrorist threats.
- **Sheltering-in-place** is selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there.
- **Lockdown** means securing a building or physical space against intruders.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Train staff and congregants to recognize the sounds of danger, act, and forcefully communicate danger and necessary action (e.g., “Gun! Get out!”).
- Become familiar with “Run, Hide, Fight” or “ALICE.”
- Consider writing an active shooter “lockdown” response protocol specific to your house of worship.

During (Response)

- Use Run, Hide, Fight and/or ALICE principles. (*see box*)
- Lock and barricade doors.
- Keep occupants calm, quiet and out of sight.
- Silence cell phones.
- Be out of an assailant’s view and take adequate cover and protection.
- Place signs on exterior windows to identify location of injured persons.
- If safe, contact 911 with clear, accurate information and stay on the line until the police arrive.

ACTIVE VIOLENCE RESPONSES:

“Run, Hide, Fight” (www.dhs.gov)

- **Run:** If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate.
- **Hide:** If you can’t evacuate, find a place to hide.
- **Fight:** If you can’t run or hide, attempt to disrupt or incapacitate the assailant.

“ALICE” (www.alicetraining.com)

- **Alert:** Become aware, overcome denial, get ready to act.
- **Lockdown:** If you can’t evacuate, barricade entry points to the room you are in.
- **Inform:** Communicate information out, if it is possible and safe to do so.
- **Counter:** Create noise, movement, distance, and distraction (this may be distinct from “fighting”).
- **Evacuate:** When safe, remove yourself from the danger zone.

During (When police arrive)

- Guide occupants to raise arms and spread fingers out.
- Comply with all instructions from law enforcement officers.
- Have resources available such as building plans, location of staff, utility access, and control over cameras, locks, and alarms.

After (Recovery)

- Once the scene is secured, support first responders in any request they may have.
- Establish primary liaison(s) between the house of worship and on-scene authorities.
- Be prepared to offer details about the house of worship (for example, size, history, staff, ownership).
- Help establish trust and a sense of control.
 - » Provide necessary information to affected staff and congregants.
 - » If reunification with loved ones is not possible, provide timely, accurate, and relevant information to them.
 - » Establish a safe location for family members to gather separately away from media.
 - » Ensure effective communications with those who have language barriers or need other accommodations, such as sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired.
- Coordinate with local authorities before releasing any information to the public and media.





CYBER ATTACK

WHAT IT IS

Unlike physical threats that prompt immediate action, cyber threats and attacks are often difficult to identify or comprehend. Cybersecurity involves preventing, detecting, and responding to cyber incidents. Virtually all modern organizations – including governments, hospitals, corporations, banks, and utilities – rely on computer systems for their operations and data management and are therefore vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

The so-called “attack surface” that may be vulnerable to bad actors can include computer hardware, tablets, phones, and many other web-enabled devices and appliances in the so-called “internet of things.” Among the dangers of cyber-attacks are intruders erasing entire systems, holding data or operating systems for ransom, stealing confidential or personal information, breaking into systems and altering files, or using a computer or device to access contact lists and attack or infect others.

KEY TERMS

- A **Cyber Attack** may originate from individuals, networking groups, terrorist groups, or countries, and may cause severe (and dangerous) problems for government, houses of worship, utilities, and the general public.
- **Hacking** is a direct attack against a system “through the wires” in which an attacker (be they live or an automated “bot”) gains direct access to secured/restricted data or operations. Often the pathways that allow such hacks are opened via “phishing” or download scams.
- The **Internet of Things** includes web-enabled devices and appliances including refrigerators, sound systems, clocks, thermostats, security systems, coffee makers, etc.
- **Phishing** consists of broadly disseminating email or text communications in the hope that a few recipients will click somewhere in the message (for example an attachment, a link, an “enable macros” button) that activates a virus or other malware. A targeted phishing campaign – for example, against a particular government or utility – is called **spear-phishing**.

- **Social engineering** involves exploiting the vulnerabilities of a user, rather than their system, to circumvent IT security measures. Examples include phishing, email scams, and other cons. Users are often the most easily defeated element of IT security architecture.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Consider developing and implementing a cyber security training for staff.
- Keep your organization’s firewall turned on and updated.
- Install or update antivirus/antispyware software.
- Require your staff to use strong, unique passwords, and change them on a regular basis.
- Seek out and promptly install all updates to your computer operating system, firmware, software, and antivirus.
- Encourage your staff to be careful with what they download, and never click on an attachment, link, or macro in an unsolicited email or text.
- Turn off computers when not being using.
- Always verify the source of emails, and if in doubt delete them.
- Be suspicious of emails from known contacts that seem “off” – misspellings, strange syntax or word usage, generic language, weird link URLs – many hacking campaigns will impersonate known emails.
- Screenshot suspicious content before deleting it, for analytics.
- Ensure your house of worship regularly backs up data to an external hard drive or the Cloud.

During (Response)

- Disconnect an infected device from your house of worship network.
- Urge staff to inform your IT staff of any suspected or confirmed attacks on their devices and provide a screenshot.
- If an incident incurs in loss of financial, personal, or medical information, file a police report.

After (Recovery)

- Run appropriate scans and utilities to remove any infections.
- Ensure the house of worship’s computer devices are not infected and wipe the hard-drive and reinstall all software if there is any doubt.
- Notify anyone that could be adversely affected, including your house of worship’s credit accounts, bank accounts, staff, family, and friends. Change all related accounts and all passwords.
- Monitor your house of worship’s credit report, banking statements, investments, and credit card statements.



FLOODING

WHAT IT IS

Flooding is one of Fairfax County’s most common hazards. Depending on its depth and velocity, flooding can be a nuisance or a disaster. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near a body of water, downstream from a dam, or in other areas known to flood in previous storms.

KEY TERMS

- A **Flood Watch** means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood in your area.
- A **Flood Warning** means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate do so immediately.
- A **Flash Flood Warning** means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately; do not wait for instructions.

FAIRFAX COUNTY FLOOD INFORMATION:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/
stormwater/flood-information](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/flood-information)

FLOOD ZONE AND FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/dfirm

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Clean gutters, ditches, and storm drains around your property.
- Disconnect electrical appliances.
- Know if your house of worship is in a floodplain.
- Report any storm drain obstructions.
- Apply for flood insurance. Consider this even if you are not in the 100-year floodplain (the FEMA-designated “Special Flood Hazard Area”) – many recent floods have exceeded the 100-year and 500-year marks!
- Stay informed about your local weather forecast.
- Consider having a way to virtually meet, in case the weather makes it unsafe to travel.

During (Response)

- If you encounter rising water, move to higher ground immediately.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- Don’t drive through flood roads - “turn around, don’t drown.”

After (Recovery)

- Don’t drive through flood roads - “turn around, don’t drown.”
- Do not drink from floodwaters or eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. “When in doubt, throw it out.”
- Do not drink or wash with water from a flooded well until it is tested and found to be safe to use.
- Remove all porous items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried. These items can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home.



THUNDERSTORM

WHAT IT IS

Thunderstorms are large, localized weather events. They are most common in summer but can occur in any season. All thunderstorms produce lightning and have the potential to produce tornadoes, strong winds, hail, wildfires, and flash flooding- the last of which is responsible for more fatalities than any other thunderstorm-related hazard.

Lightning is of concern because of its unpredictability- lightning often strikes beyond what is perceived to be the storm, sometimes occurring as far as 10 miles away from the rainfall.

KEY TERMS

- A **Thunderstorm Watch** means there is a possibility of a thunderstorm in your area.
- A **Thunderstorm Warning** means a thunderstorm is occurring or likely will occur soon.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Safeguard religious outdoor items by bringing indoors ahead of the storm.
- Unplug any electrical equipment such as sound systems, amplifiers, microphones, and projectors.
- Clean gutters, ditches, and storm drains around the building.
- Remove dead or rotting trees or limbs that might fall.
- Report any storm drain obstructions.

During (Response)

- Upon seeing lightning or hearing thunder, immediately move indoors or into an enclosed vehicle. If services are taking place outside, move them inside until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.
- Encourage congregant members to stay until the weather clears, if it appears not safe to drive. Stay in the vehicle and close the windows.
- If you cannot get inside or reach a safe building, avoid high ground, tall or isolated trees, poles and masts, and large metal objects (including fences and bleachers).
- Stay away from any open water that is on the property.

After (Recovery)

- Continue with activity or proceed where you are going when it is safe.
- Avoid any downed power lines.
- Report your outage. Never assume a neighbor has reported it.

HOUSE OF WORSHIP RESILIENCE PLANNING TEMPLATE

The template is for your house of worship use. It has five sections that guides you through the resilience planning process and prepares you and your house of worship if a disruption should occur.

- A. Plan to Stay Open
- B. Emergency Contact and Communications
- C. Evacuation
- D. Shelter-in-Place
- E. Share, Practice, Train, and Review

There is an online version of this form at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg. If you fill out this form electronically, data entered during your current session will not be saved automatically. If you need to stop working on your plan, please make sure to save your work. Fairfax County does not access, collect, maintain, or disseminate any information entered on the online version of this template.

If you need assistance completing this template or would like to attend a no-cost house of worship resilience planning workshop, please contact the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security at 571-350-1000 or DEMS-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov.



This template is for private, non-governmental use. Fairfax County does not access, collect, maintain or disseminate any information entered on this template.

Note: Add additional pages, if needed, if using this template in hardcopy format.

Section 1 – Plan to Stay Open

House of Worship:

Address:

City/ State/ Zip Code:

Phone:

If this location is not accessible we will operate from the location below.

House of Worship Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Phone:

Our House of Worship Online:

Twitter:

Facebook:

LinkedIn:

Instagram:

The following person is our primary crisis manager and will serve as the house of worship spokesperson in an emergency.

Primary Emergency Contact:

Phone:

Alternative Phone:

E-mail:

If the person is unable to manage the crisis, the person below will succeed in management:

Secondary Emergency Contact:

Phone:

Alternative Phone:

E-mail:

The following natural and man-made disasters could impact our house of worship:

EMERGENCY PLANNING TEAM

The following people will participate in emergency planning and crisis management.

WE PLAN TO COORDINATE WITH OTHERS

The following people from neighboring houses of worship and our building management will participate on our emergency planning team.

OUR CRITICAL OPERATIONS

The following is a prioritized list of our critical operations, staff, and procedures we need to recover from a disaster.

Operation/ Staff in Charge/ Action Plan

SUPPLIERS

If this company experiences a disaster, we will obtain supplies/materials from the following:

Supplier Name:

Street Address:

City/ State/ Zip Code:

Phone:

E-mail:

Contact Name:

Account Number:

Materials/ Service Provided:

If this supplier experiences a disaster, we will obtain supplies/materials from the following:

Company Name:

Street Address:

City/ State/ Zip Code:

Phone:

E-mail:

Contact Name:

Account Number:

Materials/ Service Provided:

If this supplier experiences a disaster, we will obtain supplies/materials from the following:

Company Name:

Street Address:

City/ State/ Zip Code:

Phone:

E-mail:

Contact Name:

Account Number:

Materials/ Service Provided:

CYBER SECURITY

To protect our computer hardware, we will:

To protect our computer software, we will:

If our computers are destroyed, we will use back-up computers at the following location:

RECORDS BACK-UP

Point of contact responsible for backing up our critical records including payroll and accounting systems:

Back-up records including a copy of this plan, site maps, insurance policies, bank account records and computer back-ups are stored onsite:

Another set of back-up records is stored at the following off-site location:

If our accounting and payroll records are destroyed, we will provide for continuity in the following ways:

Section 2 – Emergency Contact and Communications Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Dial 9-1-1 in an Emergency.

Poison Control:

Insurance Provider:

Communications

We will communicate our emergency plans with staff in the following ways:

In the event of a disaster we will communicate with staff and congregants in the followings ways:

Note: Add additional pages, if needed, if using this template in hardcopy format.

Staff Emergency Contact Information

The following is a list of our staff and their individual emergency contact information:

Name of Staff/ Phone Number/ Emergency Contact

Section 3 – Evacuation Plan

EVACUATION PLAN FOR LOCATION:

If we must leave the building quickly:

1. Warning System:

We will test the warning system and record results _____ times a year.

2. Assembly Site:

3. Assembly Site Manager & Alternate:

a. Responsibilities Include:

4. Shut Down Manager & Alternate:

a. Responsibilities Include:

5. Name of POC responsible for issuing all clear:

Evacuation Checklist:

We have located, copied, and posted building and site maps.

Exits are clearly marked.

We will practice evacuation procedures _____ times a year.

Section 4 – Shelter-in-Place Plan

Shelter-in-Place for Location:

If we must take shelter quickly (things to consider):

1. Warning System:

We will test the warning system and record results _____ times a year.

2. Storm Shelter Location:

3. “Seal the Room” Shelter Location:

4. Shelter Location & Alternate:

a. Responsibilities Include:

5. Shut Down Manager & Alternate:

a. Responsibilities Include:

6. POC responsible for issuing the all clear:

Shelter-in-Place Checklist:

We have talked to staff about which emergency supplies, if any, the house of worship will provide in the shelter location and which supplies individuals might consider keeping in a portable kit personalized for individual needs. We have located, copied and posted building and site maps. We will practice shelter procedures _____ times a year.

Section 5 – Plan to Share, Practice, Train, and Review

SHARE

When you have completed your plan, please print several copies and place them in key locations around the building, and ask emergency planning team to keep a copy at home.

PRACTICE

You need to train and practice with your staff on how to complete assigned responsibilities. Make sure to use the training and review section below. Once your staff is trained, you should conduct an exercise to test your staff’s ability to respond to the emergency.

Training & Review Dates:

Date:

Type of Training/ Review:

Personnel Activated:

[Click to add additional training/ reviews]

REVIEW DATES

Identify when your house of worship reviews your plan, note the modifications made, and when it was saved to a back-up server.

Date of Review:

Modifications:

Date Saved to Server:

[Click to add additional Reviews]

PLAN DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE

The contact person for this **House of Worship Resilience Guide** and the accompanying template is

_____ is responsible for maintenance and update of this plan. The plan will be updated annually and in response to lessons learned from exercises or actual disasters.

Printed copies of this **House of Worship Resilience Guide** and any future updates will be distributed to identified individuals within the house of worship. Elements of this plan will also be made available to staff and team members through the following means:

PLAN MODIFICATION REGISTER

Changes made to the plan are reflected below.

DATE OF CHANGE	PAGE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE
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CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Every house of worship in Fairfax County should be prepared before a disaster. Part of your preparedness planning should include identifying resources that may be available to assist you before a disaster hits as well as with recovery. The more prepared you are, the less support you will potentially need and the less losses (and heartache) you will have.

GOVERNMENT

- Fairfax County Website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov
- Fairfax County Emergency Blog: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
- Fairfax County Cable TV: Channel 16
- Fairfax County Government Radio: 571-350-2160 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicaffairs/radio
- Fairfax County Social Media: @FairfaxCounty
- For non-emergency communication, you can stay connected by signing up for the Emergency Preparedness Newsletter in Fairfax Alerts as well as follow the Department of Emergency Management and Security on social media @ReadyFairfax
- Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives:
Department of Economic Initiatives | Department of Economic Initiatives (fairfaxcounty.gov)
- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems
- Fairfax County Police Department:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police
- Fairfax County Health Department:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/fairfax-county-health-department

NATIONAL

- Faith-Based and Volunteer Partnership Resources: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/faith-volunteer>
- FEMA Assistance for Houses of Worship: <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/fema-assistance-houses-worship>
- Protecting Houses of Worship: <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/protecting-houses-worship>
- Safety for Faith-Based Events and Houses of Worship: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/17_0531_NSI_SAR-Faith-Based-Events-Houses-Worship.pdf

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

AGENCY	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Emergency (Police or Fire)	911	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911
Text to 911	911	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/text-to-911
Police-Out-of-Area Emergency	703-691-2233	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police
Poison Control	800-222-1222	www.poison.org

NON-EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police-Non-Emergency	703-691-2131	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/calling-non-emergency
Fire and Rescue Department	703-246-2126	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems
TTY/TDD	703-877-3715 or 571-350-1939	
Department of Emergency Management and Security	571-350-1000	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement
Public Works and Environmental Services	703-324-5033	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes
Health Department	703-246-2411	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health
Animal Shelter	703-830-1100	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter
Fairfax Alerts	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts	
Emergency Blog	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog	
Herndon Police Department	703-435-6846	https://www.herndon-va.gov/departments/public-safety
Vienna Police Department	703-255-6366	www.viennava.gov
City of Fairfax Police	703-385-7924	www.fairfaxva.gov/government/police

UTILITY RESOURCES

AGENCY	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Fairfax Water	703-698-5613	www.fairfaxwater.org
Dominion Energy	866-366-4357	dominionenergy.com
Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative	703-335-0500	www.novec.com
Washington Gas	800-752-7520	www.washingtongas.com
Washington Gas Emergency Line	844-927-4427	
Columbia Gas of Virginia	800-544-5606	www.columbiagasva.com
Xfinity	800-934-6489	www.xfinity.com
Cox Communications	703-480-2830	www.cox.com
Verizon	800-837-4966	www.verizon.com
AT&T	800-288-2020	www.att.com

REGIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCE	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
VDOT	511	www.511virginia.org
211 Social Services	211	www.211virginia.org
Call Before You Dig	811	www.va811.com
Virginia Relay	711	www.varelay.org

NATIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCE	WEBSITE
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	www.fema.gov
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov
Ready.gov	www.ready.gov
National Weather Service	www.weather.gov
National Hurricane Center	www.nhc.noaa.gov

RECOVERY RESOURCES

RESOURCE	TYPE OF RESOURCE	WEBSITE
Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP)	Provides disaster survivors with information and a means to access and apply for disaster assistance through various federal programs	www.disasterassistance.gov
Cable and Consumer Services Consumer Affairs Branch	Report Fraudulent Houses of Worship	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer
Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Stormwater Management	Storm Drains and Sewer Lines	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/flood-information
Department of Labor	Unemployment assistance due to disaster	www.dol.gov
Disaster Assistance Program	Disaster assistance	www.disasterassistance.gov
Environmental Protection Agency	Flood cleanup/ mold prevention	www.epa.gov
Internal Revenue Service	Disaster assistance and emergency relief for individuals and houses of worship	www.irs.gov
Land Development Services	Inspections and permits	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/
Occupational Safety and Health Administration	Hazard cleanup	www.osha.gov
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	Mental Health	www.samhsa.gov



**IF WE CAN'T
REACH YOU,
WE CAN'T
ALERT YOU!**

Fairfax County's FREE alert system sends you important information during an emergency

CUSTOMIZE YOUR FAIRFAX ALERTS:

- Get alerts on up to 10 devices such as a cell phone, home phone or email
- Receive alerts for 5 geographic locations such as home, work and school
- Weather, traffic and emergency alerts
- Mobile app available

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts

In the know, on the go.



Photo credits: Fairfax County Economic Development Authority and Visit Fairfax

To request this information in an alternate format, contact the Department of Emergency Management and Security at 571-350-1000, TTY711, or DEMS-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement

DEMS-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov