



Planning Ideas & Working with Other Affiliates

**January 22, 2004 – Valdosta, GA
General Session**



WORDS OF WARNING!!!

- The *Planning Ideas* portion of this session will **NOT** give you many answers. Hopefully you will walk away with more questions that have to be investigated and answered back at your facility.


The time you spend in this session will be time well spent if you look beyond what you normally perceive as day-to-day operations. The mind set of “it won’t happen to us” needs to be abandoned if you want to begin comprehensive disaster planning.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

– In no particular order of importance.

- People first. Consider offering to pay staff early when a disaster is imminent and could disrupt the normal payday cycle. Allow employees ample time (or time off) to make disaster preparations to their homes and for their families.
- Check your telephone system. Is there at least one land line phone that will work if the power is out? Payphone on site? You might want to purchase an old rotary phone to have on hand (remember when you were a kid and the lights went out but the phone still worked?). Phone 'systems' are usually fair weather friends.

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- **Maintain an up-to-date copy of phone numbers, computer and Internet logon codes and passwords, employee phone numbers and other critical information in an accessible location. Consider giving copies to senior staff to store at home.**
 - **Develop an employee "telephone tree" to rapidly contact employees in an emergency.**

Remember that your food bank is a serious business that needs to be back up and running as soon as possible. Get on the 'priority list' of the power company to get your lights on fast; make sure the street or highway department knows that your road needs to get cleared and opened quickly; work with law enforcement agencies to understand your business and protect it from possible looting/burglary/theft/etc.


- **Make backup copies of all critical records such as insurance policies, accounting and employee data, as well as customer lists, donors and inventory. Keep a backup copy of your computer's basic operating system, boot files, and critical software. Store a copy of all vital information on-site and a second in a safe off-site location. Consider giving copies to senior staff to store at home.**



Have petty cash available. If power is out over a large area your credit card could be useless. Have cash to pay for fuel or other costs.

Prior to a storm's arrival – top off the fuel in all vehicles. Gas stations could be out of service for many hours or even days. If flooding happens often gas stations run the risk of their tanks taking on water...this does not help your vehicles to run any better.

Before the last person leaves the building.... Unplug everything that is not essential...such as desk lamps, radios, coffee makers, vending machines, fans, TV's, etc. These could cause serious problems if power goes down and is then restored. Unplug any unnecessary modems and phone lines. Make a list of what modems/phone lines were disconnected so that they can all be reconnected once back to normal. Unplug the cable/antenna to all TV's and VCR's. Power surges can be transmitted through these lines.

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- **Just as you do for staff – consider compiling cell phone numbers for your key agencies, volunteers, Emergency Management Office, VOAD partners and on site responders. Update your Board’s contact information too. Again keep copies in a safe off-site area.**
 - **Watch for signs of abnormal stress. Your staff and volunteers will be under a lot of pressure. If you or your management team shows concern over individuals, do not ‘blow it off’. Disaster specific counseling can be arranged through A2H at no cost.**



FACILITIES-BUILDINGS & EQUIPMENT

- **What would you do if your facility were closed for several days, damaged or even totally destroyed?**

What could you absolutely not survive without? Machinery? Computers? The buildings? What can be to assure you never have to live without them?

OPERATIONS

- **What if there was a prolonged power outage?**

What if key suppliers or shippers were shut down even though you are not?

What if the agencies suffered a disaster and no longer needed or could not afford our products?



CRITICAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- **What if your payroll, accounting or inventory records were destroyed?**
- **What if your computer or data base was destroyed?**
- **What if the local phone service were disabled?**
- **Forewarned is forearmed, they say. How can you be forewarned?**

INSURANCE

- **Is the insurance adequate to get you back in operation?**
- **Do you understand what is covered and what is not?**
- **Can you pay creditors and employees during a prolonged shutdown?**
- **How long can we survive if we are shut down?**

FACILITIES TIPS

- Develop contingency plans to remain in operation if your building is unusable. Could you operate out of a secondary location? Could you quickly transport critical items such as computers, inventory, and equipment? Could you save replaced equipment and reactivate it in an emergency?

Make upgrades now that would prevent possible future damage. Strengthening exterior walls, adding a retaining wall, or shoring up a creek bank are relatively minor projects in comparison to losing the building to flood waters.

OPERATIONS TIPS

- **Purchase a backup generator to maintain full operations or critical functions such as refrigeration, lighting, security systems, and computer control in the event of a power failure.**

Have back-up vendors and shippers in place in case your primary ones are disabled. Set up relationships in advance and maintain them. Place occasional orders so that they regard you as an active customer when you need them.

INSURANCE TIPS

- Review your current insurance coverage. Is it enough to get your business back in operation? Will it cover the replacement cost of vital facilities? Make it a regular annual procedure to review and update insurance. Also remember that insurance on mortgaged property probably only covers the lender with nothing left over for you.
- Be aware of your contents insurance. Does it cover the replacement cost of critical equipment?
- Know what your insurance does not cover. Most general casualty policies do not cover flood damage. Many require additional riders for windstorm, sewer backup, or earth movement. Consider adding coverage for likely perils, especially flood insurance.
- Consider business interruption insurance that assists you with operating needs during a period of shutdown. It may help you meet payrolls, pay vendors, and purchase inventory until you are in full operation again. Also be prepared for the extraordinary costs of a disaster such as leasing temporary equipment, restoring lost data, and hiring temporary workers.



Working with other Affiliates

- or – “can’t we all just get along...?”
- Reflection: September 11, 2001.
- The national office yearly collects data from each Affiliate to update contact information and to have a pool of people that can and will help at another facility, when needed.



Disaster planning answers are all around us

- **Our Network contains a wealth of information on disaster planning:**
- The Harry Chapin Food Bank – Ft. Myers, FL
- LA Regional Food Bank
- Second Harvesters – New Orleans
- Harvest Hope Food Bank – Columbia, SC

These are just a few examples of Affiliates that have good, replicable plans in place.



Methods of cooperation ...

- **When a major disaster strikes, the national office of A2H may ask the Network for a variety of things:**
- **PRODUCTS**
- **PERSONEL (at the disaster site or in Chicago)**
- **CONTACTS**
- **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
- **VOAD INTERVENTION & CONSIDERATION**



Working with other ‘others’ -

- The A2H Network is fortunate to have many friends and associates that want us to be successful. Some of these groups have outstanding knowledge that you can access...
- Salvation Army
- The American Red Cross
- FEMA & NVOAD
- The Humane Society of the United States
- The Seventh Day Adventists
- The International Association of Emergency Managers
- UPS and The UPS Foundation



Summations

- **Keep in mind that disaster planning is a process not an end product.**
- **You are part of a larger entity that can be of help to you and may ask help of you.**
- **Local ‘flavor’ will dictate what you do but other resources can be helpful with how you do it. There is much to learn and much assistance is available – just ask.**