

# Emergency Operations Plan Unitarian Church of Charleston

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is to provide for the safety and well being of the church staff, congregation and anyone else present on the grounds of the Unitarian Church of Charleston (UC-Chas). This EOP provides general information for preparation, evacuation, and recovery as well as specific guidance on how to prepare, respond, and recover from all emergencies. The EOP further outlines the role of key personnel to execute the emergency protocols.

## **Organization of the Safety Steering Committee and Safety Team**

The Safety Steering Committee (SSC) of the church will report to the Vestry. Its purpose is to ensure UC-Chas prepares, responds, and recovers from emergency or disaster incidents and provides the safest environment possible for congregants, visitors and staff. The committee will utilize the EOP to implement safety strategies. Members of the committee will work with UC-Chas leadership and staff to train key personnel, greeters, ushers, and congregants on the protocols in the EOP. They will conduct on-going assessments of the EOP and its implementation. The SSC will recruit additional members to serve on the Safety Team. Safety Team members will be identified via their nametags and will be able to assist the Incident Commander (IC) in an emergency. In addition, the SSC will ensure an IC is present at all scheduled church functions (see section on Incident Command).

*Acknowledgement of the Planning Team (2015):* Carol Tempel (chair), Ron Bruce, Janet Watts, Danny Reed, Lisa Hajjar, Richard Hayes, Maureen Porter, Sheila Scarbrough, James Selvitelli, and Joe McCormack

## **Incident Command Protocol**

During any emergency, it is essential for all present to remain as calm as possible and receive clear instructions. Thus, one knowledgeable, skilled person will be designated as IC at all times. The responsibility of the IC is to recognize an emergency situation and ensure the appropriate actions are initiated and communicated to congregants and visitors.

- ICs will receive training on UC-Chas's EOP and standard emergency command.
- ICs will be routinely scheduled between members of the Vestry, church staff and Safety Steering Committee members.
- Greeters, ushers, church staff members, and tenant will receive training on emergency recognition and IC activation.
- At the onset of an emergency, IC will be activated by rechargeable, mobile hand radios or whistle as needed.
- The IC will instruct those present on EOP strategy via microphone or bullhorn.
- The IC, as allowed by their own safety, will ensure those present complete the EOP.
- The IC will liaison with Charleston City Emergency personnel.

## **Evacuation Protocol**

In the event either the Sanctuary or Gage Hall needs to be evacuated, this basic plan will be followed. For the plans of Active Shooter and Fire, some changes should be noted; please see the individual EOP for details.

### **Preparation**

- An evacuation plan will be created in advance and posted throughout the facility. In the Sanctuary, rows 1-5 and the choir will leave through the back door; the rest of the room will leave out the front door. Those in the balcony will exit through the door located on the churchyard side. Downstairs Gage Hall will be evacuated by half leaving nearest the kitchen and bathroom area back doors; the rest of the room will leave out the front and handicap access doors. Upstairs Gage Hall will be evacuated through the front and back doors.
- A symbol will be created (chalice) to signify the location for evacuated parents/children to reunite. Children and parents will be trained to look for this symbol.
- Location of reunification of children and parents will be Charleston Day School (primary location) or the alley behind Gage Hall (secondary location).

### **Event**

- The IC will signal the need to evacuate.
- If children and parents are separated, parents will be instructed on how to meet their children. Other congregants will be instructed to leave the premises.
- During evacuation events, all congregants, visitors and staff should proceed to identified exits as calmly as possible.
- RE teachers will check their roll call list of children.
- The IC will work with local emergency personnel to ensure complete evacuation

### **Recovery**

- The IC and church leadership will work with local emergency personnel to determine if the building is safe to re-enter.

## Preparation Protocol

Preparation for emergencies is essential for successful response and recovery. The Safety Steering Committee will be responsible for the following:

- Updating the EOP at least annually.
- Regularly scheduled training for staff, UCC leadership and congregants.
- Identification and communication with Medical Subgroup.
- Scheduled regular risk assessments of UCC grounds.
- Regularly update the emergency phone numbers.
- Update the caring committee's list for helping others.
- Conduct routine testing of all emergency equipment and supplies (e.g. fire extinguishers, hand-held radios, bull horn, AED's, first aid kits). Update the information of the equipment and supplies on the "just in time cards" as needed.
- The IC will regularly check in with the church administration and provide updates to the Safety Steering Committee.

## **Recovery Protocol**

- UCC leadership will work with Charleston Emergency Personnel to determine if the Church grounds are safe for occupancy.
- UCC leadership and staff will work with insurance carrier for recovery of lost property.
- Emotional support will be offered to those affected in the congregation, as determined by ministry.
- The Vestry Chair and Church Staff will identify the person(s) who will handle the press and media after the event.
- Safety Steering Committee will review each emergency for opportunities for improvement.

# Specific Emergency Operation Plans

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## **Medical Emergency Plan**

### **Preparation**

- Personnel-Members of the congregation will be identified and contacted regarding their wish to serve on Medical Subcommittee of the Safety Steering Committee. These persons will receive basic information on Medical EOP so that they may be called upon during times of medical emergency.
- Equipment-AEDs will be installed in conspicuous places in both the sanctuary and Gage Hall. AEDs will be stocked with appropriate pads and will be checked on a regular basis for battery power and pad expiration. First aid kits will be installed close to the AEDS. These kits will contain a minimum of dressing supplies for mild to moderate wounds.
- Training-Annual training will be provided to UCC leadership, staff and interested congregants in use of equipment and medical emergency response. “Just in time” cards will be placed with the AED and supplies. Basic life support (BLS) classes will be offered regularly.
- Environment-The church grounds will be assessed regularly for fall risk and injury risk, such as childproofing areas and facilities maintenance. Ergonomics risk assessment of tasks performed by church staff will be performed regularly.

### **Response**

- Initial response will be by bystanders to stabilize the patient physically (laying them down or positioning them comfortably after a fall. IC will ensure 911 has been called as appropriate.
- Volunteers from Medical Subcommittee will attend to the patient.
- IC will be in charge of crowd control and will designate someone to guide EMS to the location of the injured/ill person.

### **Recovery**

- Sexton will supervise restocking of emergency equipment.
- Minister, staff will lead any debriefing/emotional support as needed.

# Fire Emergency Plan

## Preparation

- Store combustible materials in fireproof containers or cabinets.
- Have an approved fire safety system in place that includes smoke and fire detectors and automatically contacts the Fire Department. This system should be evaluated by an outside contractor and tested at least annually.
- Maintain currency of all fire extinguishers on church grounds, and train the staff on how to use them.
- Give an updated list of church contacts to the alarm service provider yearly.
- Have semi-annual fire drills.
- Review rental agreements to verify that they limit (or prohibit) the use of combustible materials by groups renting church facilities.

## Response

- Automatic system or IC alerts Charleston Fire Department.
- Contain fire if possible by closing smoke doors.
- Evacuation per Evacuation Protocol. In case of flames inside the Sanctuary, consider evacuation through windows.
- Fight limited fire as appropriate with fire extinguishers (grease fires in kitchen, contained fires in trashcans, etc).

## Recovery

- IC and UCC leadership work with Fire Department, insurance carrier to determine when building can be re-entered.
- UCC leadership works with carrier to restore burned area.
- Sexton responsible for ensuring fire extinguishers recharged, as needed.

## **Domestic Violence/ Child Abduction Emergency Plan**

### **Preparation**

- Identify families in RE with the potential for domestic violence issues based on past history or self-identified threats.
- Notify staff and affected teachers if specific individuals are barred from contact with children.
- Ask congregation to inform appropriate church staff if they have restraining orders placed against other individuals.
- Develop a plan to deal with these individuals and provide appropriate training and assign authority figure(s) to deal with these situations.
- Install panic alarm or other means of communication to identify active threats.

### **Response**

- Activate panic alarm or otherwise notify appropriate individuals (e.g., RE Director) of imminent threats.
- Have a plan to keep the affected child (ren) in a safe place.
- Have trained church staff and members respond to aggressor to diffuse situation, if danger appears to be minimal (i.e., no weapons are evident).
- Notify police (Call 911) to respond to domestic violence situation if there is the potential for violence.

### **Recovery**

- Confirm that the perpetrator has left the church property or site of church function.
- Provide first aid to individuals if needed.
- Provide some privacy for the affected individual if requested or provide someone to stay with them and offer comfort; offer an escort home or safe place to go temporarily.
- Follow up with police if necessary.

# Active Shooter/ Criminal Activity Emergency Plan

## Preparation

- Assess the safety of church facilities (e.g. sanctuary, Gage Hall, Protocol, parking lot, churchyard, and Charleston Day School) for vulnerabilities such as doors and windows, equipment, location of safe areas, evacuation plan and routes, and assembly points.
- Address the deficiencies noted in the assessment such as installing locks, marking exits, acquiring safety equipment (e.g. Security cameras, alarms, phones), preparing an evacuation card and code system, and other practices.
- Establish a Safety Team with leader(s) and/or hired personnel to oversee the sanctuary, buildings and grounds to monitor and alert the staff and police of danger.
- Establish safety protocols and train key persons (e.g. greeters, ushers, worship committee, vestry members, and church staff) to recognize and evaluate potential threats and develop a plan for notification to the IC or the police.
- Train the church staff on proper conduct during an active shooter crises (e.g. recognizing the sound of gunshots, reacting quickly, evacuating the area, hiding places, acting against the shooter as a last resort, calling 911, reacting and having critical information available when law enforcement arrives, and adopting the survival mind set during the crises.
- Train the congregation on what to be aware of and report potential risk and what to do during an active shooter event. “If you see something, say something”.
- Recognize potential internal/external threats (e.g. domestic conflict, harassment, other threats) and communicate those to key persons or church staff or IC within the congregation.
- Discuss safety issues with event planners and work with the police for security needs.
- Continue on-going risk management assessment and training.

## Response

- Minimize the loss of life by having key personnel, congregation and the tenant know how to evacuate quickly, hide, remain motionless, and/or take action (if necessary).
- Prepare congregation on protocols when law enforcement arrives.
- Provide medical care as per Medical Emergency EOP.
- Evacuate as per Evacuation Protocol; however, depending on location of shooter, hiding should be considered first.

## Recovery

- Help the congregation develop resilience and coping skills to recover in a healthy manner after the event.

## **Acts of Nature Emergency Plans: Earthquake, Tornado, Wind, and Hurricanes**

### **Earthquake**

#### **Preparation**

- Annually communicate earthquake emergency information.

#### **Response**

- Inside buildings: implement drop, cover, and hold. Instruct people to turn or move away from glass areas and place themselves under pews, desks, tables, or cushions. Stay away from heavy light fixtures and electrical wires.
- Outside: find a safe place away from falling objects (e.g. trees, power lines, buildings). Stay in the open until the earthquake is over.

#### **Recovery**

- Evacuate the building when the earthquake is over.
- Check all utilities, water, and electrical systems.
- IC and UCC leadership work with Fire Department, insurance carrier to determine when building can be re-entered.
- UCC leadership works with carrier to restore damaged area(s).

## **Tornado**

### **Preparation**

- Annually communicate tornado emergency information.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions or an approaching storm.

### **Response**

- Inside Sanctuary: implement drop, cover, and hold. Instruct people to turn or move away from glass areas and place themselves under pews, desks, tables, or cushions. Stay away from heavy light fixtures and electrical wires.
- Inside Gage Hall: go to pre-designated safe areas on the first level (e.g. stage, bathrooms, closet wall) and stay away from windows.
- Outside: find a safe place away from falling or blowing objects (e.g. trees, power lines, buildings, church yard masonry, etc.). Try to get to the closest sturdy building or the lowest possible area and drop, cover and hold. If possible, get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt, and drive off.

### **Recovery**

- Evacuate the building when the tornado is over.
- Check all utilities, water, and electrical systems.
- IC and UCC leadership work with Fire Department, insurance carrier to determine when building can be re-entered.
- UCC leadership works with carrier to restore damaged area(s).

## Wind

### Preparation

- Church Administrator to notify the following: Minister, Vestry Chair, Sexton, Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee, Chair of Caring Committee, and Chair of Churchyard Committee.
- Church Administrator to notify the Protocol tenant that a storm is eminent and power to church buildings will be shut off.
- Church Administrator to verify that the Church Office computer has been backed up.
- Sexton and Chair of Buildings and Grounds are to ensure the following:
  - a) Gas is turned off in Gage Hall. There is an inline shutoff valve for the oven in the kitchen, and two inline shutoff valves in the Utility Room at the rear of Gage Hall on the ground floor, one at the gas water heater and one at the gas air handler units (AHU's).
  - b) Electrical power is secured in the Sanctuary, Gage Hall and the Protocol . Turn off all heating and air conditioning equipment and electronic equipment such as computers, copiers, etc. prior to opening the main power breakers. Wrap plastic bags around electronic equipment to keep out wind blown water. For the Sanctuary the breaker is located in the electrical building behind the Sanctuary. For Gage Hall the breakers are located in the Utility Room at the rear of Gage Hall. For the Protocol the breaker is located in the main room on the ground floor.
  - c) Secure the windows of Gage Hall. Plywood is located in the work shed adjacent to the parking lot and in the attic of Gage Hall. **Safety Steering Committee will request that Buildings and Grounds Committee determines the best procedure for securing Gage Hall windows: verify that the correct amount of plywood and necessary fasteners are currently available, determine the feasibility of having the Sexton and a team of volunteers board up the building prior to a storm, and investigate using other safety measures in lieu of plywood.**
  - d) All windows and doors are to be locked and secured.
  - e) Any unsecured items on Church grounds are to be picked up and stowed inside.
  - f) Sanctuary and Gage Hall artwork and artifacts are to wrapped and placed in a safe place.

### Response

- For their own safety church staff and members are asked not to attempt any response during a storm and are encouraged to find shelter or evacuate if requested by city authorities.

### Recovery

- A recovery team will be formed consisting of the Minister, Vestry Chair, Church Administrator, Sexton, Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee, Chair of the Caring

Committee, and Chair of Churchyard Committee. This team will ensure the following actions are taken:

- a) Inspect the property for damage as soon as possible.
- b) Take immediate action to mitigate damage such as removing water, temporary roof and window repairs, etc. Call on additional church members for help as needed.
- c) Notify insurance carriers and arrange for damage estimates.
- d) Contract for repairs as needed.
- e) Restore utilities after inspections and approval of the Chair of Building and Grounds Committee.
- f) If necessary, find an alternative venue for UCC services and events while Church buildings are being repaired.

## Other Possible Emergencies

### Bomb Threat

#### Preparation

- Train staff on how to receive information from a caller (e.g. detonation time, location of bomb(s), type of bomb(s), voice characteristics, background noises, reason for the threat, etc).

#### Response

- Report a called in threat to a church staff member and call 911.
- Do not touch suspicious packages.
- Evacuate threatened people including the tenant from the area cautioning them to stay clear of buildings, trashcans, cabinets, etc.

#### Recovery

- IC, church staff, and/or police will determine when the building is safe for re-entry.
- Follow-up with the recovery plan protocol.

Approval page

## Phone Directory

In the case of an emergency, call 911.

For non-emergencies, the following phone numbers may be used.

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Danny Reed</b>	<b>843-801-2399</b>
<b>Sexton</b>	<b>Joe McCormick</b>	<b>843-870-3618</b>
<b>Office</b>	<b>Sandra Selvitelli</b>	<b>843-723-4617</b>
<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Sandra Selvitelli</b>	<b>843-743-5178</b>
<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Jeff Kinsey</b>	<b>678-579-2111</b>
<b>Vestry Chair</b>	<b>Judy Manning</b>	<b>404-216-9294</b>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds Co-chairs</b>	<b>Ron Updike Erica Hattings-Brodeur</b>	<b>843-400-0172 860-830-2981</b>
<b>Caring Committee Co-chairs</b>	<b>Kay Haun Mary Ann Terry</b>	<b>843-819-7128 843-364-6612</b>
<b>Incident Commander</b>		
<b>Police</b>		
<b>Fire</b>		
<b>Sheriff</b>		
<b>MUSC Hospital</b>		
<b>Roper Hospital</b>		
<b>St. Francis Hospital</b>		
<b>SCE&amp;G</b>		<b>800-251-7234</b>
<b>Charleston Water Works</b>		<b>843-727-6800</b>
<b>Security System</b>	<b>Sonitrol</b>	<b>843-747-0904</b>
<b>Insurance Company</b>	<b>Anderson Insurance /Karia Hartin Policy #:</b>	<b>843-725-4931</b>
<b>Lock Repair</b>		
<b>Window Repair</b>		
<b>Taxi (yellow cab)</b>		
<b>Electrician</b>		
<b>Plumber</b>		
