

WYOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE ACTION PLAN



For Local Church Use:	Office Phone	Home Phone
Our Church's Disaster Coordinator Name:		
District Superintendent Name:		
District Disaster Coordinator Name:		
District Disaster Coordinator Name:		

When the information in the above box is complete, leave a copy of the plan in a prominent place in the church. Additional copies may be obtained at the "Forms" tab on the annual conference web-site (www.wyomingconference.org) or from the Conference Center.

Definition of "Disaster"

[from United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)]

A disaster is a severe disruption of personal and community life, involving a significant number of people and causing spiritual emotional, physical and social crises to which the Church can respond with God's love and help. Such disasters may include tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, toxic poisoning and other community-wide occurrence.

The Role of the Annual Conference

A disaster-impacted annual conference "owns" the way it responds to the disaster. UMCOR does not manage or perform the work of recovery.

The following priorities define our United Methodist disaster response ministry:

- Assistance is given regardless of a person's color, economic status or religious affiliation.
- Emergencies in marginalized and minority communities with in a majority are given special consideration.

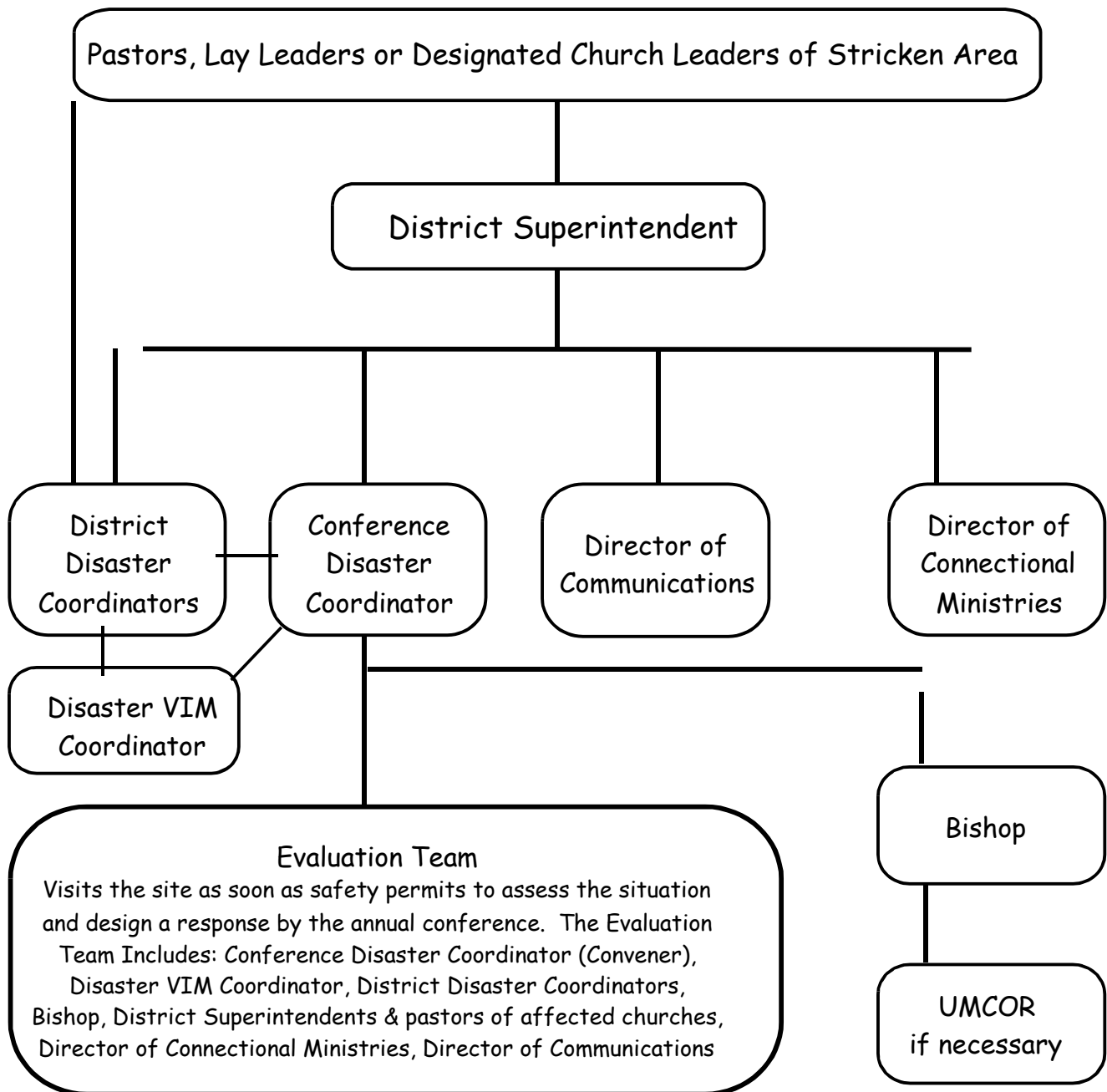
The Role of UMCOR

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) exists as a resource through which our connectional church empowers local ministries to respond to disasters.

UMCOR seeks to provide relief for acute human needs that might otherwise go unheeded. This assistance may come in the form of cash allocations, specialized services, volunteer ministries or other avenues of mission service. UMCOR provides for the needs of people, not those of churches.

Wyoming Annual Conference Disaster Response Plan

Communication & Response: Who to Contact



Checklist of Responsibilities

Local Church: Pastor, Lay Leader or the church's Disaster Coordinator

- ' Assess the general situation and physical needs of the people in the affected area.
- ' Notify the District Superintendent and/or a District Disaster Coordinator.
- ' Provide specific needs assessments of any damage to churches or parsonages, within 24 hours if possible.
- ' Refer all media requests regarding the bishop's or the annual conference's responses to the Director of Communications. {See page 5}

District Superintendent(s)

- ' Notify Conference & District Disaster Coordinators.
- ' Notify the Conference Director of Communications, who- in conversation with the Bishop and the Director of Communications- will direct all press releases and media relations.
- ' Notify the Director of Connectional Ministries.

Conference Disaster Coordinator

- ' Contact the bishop.
- ' Coordinate an assessment team to physically review the disaster area as soon as safety permits.
- ' Notify the Disaster VIM Coordinator, particularly if assistance from VIM teams can be utilized.
- ' The Assessment Team is to be comprised of:
 - ' Conference Disaster Coordinator (Convener).
 - ' Disaster VIM Coordinator.
 - ' District Disaster Coordinators.
 - ' Bishop.
 - ' District Superintendent(s) & pastor(s) of the affected church(es).
 - ' Director of Connectional Ministries.
 - ' Director of Communications.
- ' If the Disaster Coordinator is a clergyperson, the bishop may relieve the pastor of her/his local church duties, with pay, and arrange for a temporary substitute to fill in until s/he returns.

District Disaster Coordinator

- ' Notify the other coordinator for the affected district.
- ' Share responsibility for contacting churches in the affected area.
- ' Contact Conference Disaster Coordinator with the information gathered.
- ' Contact the Disaster VIM Coordinator with the information gathered.

Disaster Volunteer in Mission (VIM) Coordinator

- ' Consult with Conference & District Disaster Coordinators to assess needs where VIM teams could help.
- ' Contact persons who have indicated a willingness to help in disasters.
- ' Consult with the Northeast Jurisdiction VIM Coordinator as needed.
- ' Work with the Director of Communications to publicize needs and how VIM teams and individuals could help to meet them.

Bishop

- ' Consult with Conference Disaster Coordinator to determine need for UMCOR involvement.
- ' Request UMCOR assistance as appropriate.
- ' Consult with Director of Communications to prepare statements and press releases as appropriate.

Director of Connectional Ministries

- ' Assist the Conference Disaster Coordinator in any way possible.
- ' Assist the Bishop and District Superintendents in any way possible.
- ' Assist the Director of Communications in any way possible.

The Director of Communications will:

- ' Gather information about the incident/event.
- ' Coordinate the communications effort with regard to the disaster both internally and externally.
- ' Prepare public statements for approval by the bishop.
- ' Prepare background information handouts for the media, including ways in which persons can volunteer to assist and make contributions to aid disaster-impacted victims.
- ' Advise support staff on how to handle calls relating to the crisis.
- ' Maintain a file of media contacts, news clippings and other information about the incident/event.

The Conference Center & District Support Staff will:

- ' Direct calls as instructed and, as needed, log messages related to the crisis. Transmit them to the Director of Communications, District Superintendent and/or Disaster Coordinators.
- ' Assist information flow as directed.
- ' Watch for and clip newspaper articles. Transmit them to the Director of Communications. When possible, log and transmit information about radio and television news reports .
- ' Not attempt to answer questions, even if they have information. This is the sole responsibility of the designated spokesperson(s).

{ The services of the Conference Chancellor generally are not needed in an immediate disaster. Nonetheless, Assessment Team members should be alert to situations where the Chancellor's counsel would be advisable or helpful, particularly if a team member suspects there might be legal implications. }

The Conference Chancellor/legal counsel will be available to:

- ' Provide information on liability and legal issues related to the crisis.
- ' Review statements and releases for legal implications.
- ' Provide a list of other lawyers to be contacted if s/he cannot be contacted or is out of the area.

Remember:

- ' ***The Annual Conference Disaster Response Team members are not First Responders. They do not rescue or engage in lifesaving work requiring specialized training and certifications.***
- ' The community "owns" the disaster.
- ' However, it is important to establish a United Methodist presence, to continually assess needs and to have a coordinate response to the disaster.

- ' The Bishop and/or the Director of Communications are the only persons authorized to speak to the media regarding the annual conference's damages from or responses to a disaster. If a reporter asks about district or annual conference damages or responses, **DO NOT SAY** "No Comment."
 - ' Do say something like:
 - ' "We're looking into the situation. I understand you have a job to do and I understand that you have to get the facts. I don't believe I know enough information at this time to tell you. As soon as we have information, we will have someone call you immediately. When is your deadline?" **or**
 - ' "I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our Director of Communications can best help you. If you give me your contact information, deadline and topic you are calling about, I will have him return your call as soon as possible."
 - ' Then complete a Media Inquiry sheet (page 6) and contact the Director of Communications, District Superintendent or District Disaster Coordinator as soon as possible.

- ' Each local church should consider establishing a Disaster Coordinator and Disaster Response Team to be ready and prepared in the event of a disaster.

Media Inquiry Log Sheet

{ Complete and fax or e-mail to the Director of Communications as soon as possible }
{ Conference Center Fax: 607-757-0752 ; Dir. of Communications: dperry@wyomingconference.org }
{ Use a new sheet to log every call or contact }

Day & Date: _____

Time: _____

Name of caller: _____

From: _____
<name and type of outlet; e.g. newspaper, TV station, wire service, etc.)

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail: _____

Is follow up required? ___Yes ___No

If yes, be specific:

Summary of conversation:

Signature