

Eastern  
Pennsylvania  
Conference  
Of The  
United Methodist  
Church



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## **GUIDELINES FOR DISASTER RESPONSE**

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## GUIDELINES FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

### SECTION ONE: Scope and Purpose

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these friends of mine, you did for me." — Matthew 25:40 (modified)

**I. Purpose of Plan:** To have in place, a structure that clearly explains who does what and when and under which circumstances when a disaster strikes within the conference. The conference disaster response plan provides guidelines, suggestions, and specific assignments for various conference personnel who will be involved in the response to a disaster.

The resources available to the local church (i.e. volunteers, money, expertise, etc.) are limited and the need for the connectional system to support and undergird these efforts to alleviate human suffering is necessary. With this in mind, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church (EPA) is setting up a structure that will enable the local churches to minister to persons in need as a result of a disaster.

Our purpose:

- To provide immediate relief of acute human need and to respond to the suffering of persons in our communities caused by natural, ecological, civil and man-made disaster.
- To work cooperatively with the appropriate conference units, ecumenical bodies, and interdenominational agencies in the identification of, advocacy for, and assistance with ministries for disaster response.
- To work cooperatively with United Methodist Communications in promotion of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference Disaster Response offering.
- To initiate printed, audiovisual, electronic, and other resources to interpret, support, and communicate with conferences and churches concerning appeal for help and information related to ministry for disaster response.
- To assist and train district coordinators and local church disaster coordinators to address emerging and ongoing issues related to disaster relief.

**II. What is a Disaster?** A specific event resulting in overwhelming physical, economic, and/or emotional damage to a community. Geography and the amount of devastation determine the extent of disaster response. There are four levels of disaster that guides the planning of the efforts:

**Level 1: small, local disaster**

Involved a limited number of households (1-30). Local churches and districts provide assistance and notify the district superintendent.

**Level 2: medium-sized disaster**

Involves an entire community or several scattered communities (affecting 50-200 homes). The District Superintendent (DS) or designated District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) provides assistance by organizing district response. Conference and perhaps United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) resources are needed.

**Level 3: disaster covering a wide geographic area requiring a massive response by state and national agencies**

Disaster Response Coordinator and the Disaster Response Committee organize a conference-wide response to the crisis and assists districts and local churches. The Conference will request assistance from UMCOR. The affected area is usually eligible to receive a presidential declaration of emergency and will be eligible for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Level 4: catastrophic disaster as defined by Public Law 93-288**

“An event resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries; extensive damage or destruction of facilities that place an overwhelming demand on state and local response resources and mechanisms; a severe impact on national security facilities and infrastructures that sustain them; a severe long-term effect on general economic activity and severe effects on state, local and private sector initiatives to begin and sustain initial response activities.” As in a Level III disaster, the

Disaster Response Coordinator and Disaster Response Committee organize a conference-wide response to the crisis and assists districts and local churches. The Conference will request assistance from UMCOR. The affected area is usually eligible to receive a presidential declaration of emergency and will be eligible for aid from FEMA.

**A. Phases of Disaster Response:** There are six phases of disaster response:

- Early Preparation — a time for planning and training
- Imminent Disaster — after alerts, prepare structures, evacuate or take necessary actions.
- Emergency — emergency services in rescue efforts.
- Relief — damage assessments, emergency assistance for needs and media coverage
- Recovery — church becomes more involved with victims using Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRC) to assist in meeting unmet needs.
- Aftermath — assess methods used.

**B. Individuals or Groups Involved with the Implementation of the Conference**

**Disaster Plan:** There are six individuals or groups of conference personnel involved with the implementation of a disaster response. The involvement of these six will depend upon the level of the disaster and activity needed at each phase of a disaster. The six are:

- Resident Bishop
- Disaster Response Coordinator (DRCO)
- Disaster Response Committee (DRC)
- District Superintendents (DS)
- District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)
- Local Clergy

**C. Disaster Response Teams:** EPA organizes and sponsors three types of disaster response teams:

- Assessment/Casework Management Teams – coordinate initial assessments of damage and needs of families
- Early Response Teams (ERT) – Fully self-sufficient teams bringing their own food, water and housing, trained and supported by the Volunteers in Mission and ERT Coordinators, and providing help in the Relief Phase to bring dwellings to a safe, sanitary and secure condition.
- Volunteers in Mission (VIM) teams – Teams trained and supported by the VIM Coordinator providing help in the Recovery Phase to bring homes into a habitable condition.

## SECTION TWO: Situation

### I. Conference Overview

**A. Counties:** The EPA ministers in 17 counties within Pennsylvania. Those counties include:

1. Berks
2. Bucks
3. Carbon
4. Chester
5. Columbia (southern section)
6. Dauphin (1 church - Irish Valley UMC)
7. Delaware
8. Lancaster
9. Lebanon
10. Lehigh
11. Luzerne
12. Monroe
13. Montgomery
14. Northampton
15. Northumberland
16. Philadelphia
17. Schuylkill

**B. Districts:** The EPA divides these 17 counties into 6 districts:

1. Central
2. East
3. Northeast
4. Northwest
5. Southeast
6. Southwest

**C. Churches:** There are approximately 464 churches within the boundaries of the EPA.

## **II. Hazard Analysis**

### **A. Types of Disasters:**

- **Natural disasters:** storms, earthquakes, floods or other natural phenomena
- **Technical disasters:** carelessness, accidental, or intentional abuse of the environment
- **Economic disasters:** sudden loss of income due to shifts in the local economy
- **Civil disasters:** riots or civil disturbances in a community
- **Accidents:** traffic accidents, fires, or other tragic occurrences with broad implications
- **Man-made disasters:** acts of violence or any intentional act that results in physical, emotional and/or spiritual crisis for a community

## **SECTION THREE: Concept of Operations**

### **I. General**

**A. Incident Command System (ICS):** The EPA uses the Incident Command System created by the Department of Homeland Security but we refer to it as the Incident Coordinator System.

ICS is a widely used management tool to organize personnel, facilities, resources, and communications in a disaster. The system establishes prompt coordination of various functions and can be used in any disaster regardless of size, complexity or duration. ICS is a system for delegating specific assignments. Its flexibility permits the insertion of additional resources as the incident grows in complexity. It allows the orderly transfer of personnel into and out of the disaster site. ICS depends on function, not people. Over time, several people may be rotated into the disaster team to perform a particular role while others are rotated out for rest or to return to their normal duties. In a Low Level Disaster, one to three people may perform all of the functions. In Medium and High Level Disasters, it may be necessary to have more than one person per functional area.

*The first UMC Assessment Team to respond to a disaster area is under the direction and leadership of the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator or the senior conference official on the assessment team. Any teams present are considered to be “operational” teams and are organized using the Incident Coordinator System (ICS) model.*

**II. Structure and Functions:** Under the ICS design, the management for a team is divided into five (5) functions. These are:

- **Incident Coordination**
- **Logistics**
- **Operations**
- **Communications**
- **Planning and Training**

In addition to these five functions, there will be (even in Low Level Disasters), need for a variety of support functions. In Medium and High Level Disasters, additional support personnel may need to be employed to assist not only at the Conference level but also at the district or local level.

Persons selected for Operations Teams should be broadly trained in disaster response and also specifically trained in one or more of the Operations Team functions. Since ICS is based on function and not on personnel, one person may provide the leadership and services in a small disaster. But, as that one person faces larger and more burdensome responsibilities, he/she must delegate functional areas to other persons. Basic ICS principles applied to disaster response recognize the importance of having all functional areas represented in the effort, whether combined in one person or handled by several.

### **A. Incident Coordination**

All tasks performed are under the overall direction of a leader called the Incident Coordinator (IC). The individual working as the Incident Coordinator may change during the relief or recovery response, but at any given time there should only be one person in charge of the team. An IC may be the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator,

although others may be needed if the disaster covers several sites and personnel are rotated out for rest. Primary responsibilities of the Incident Coordinator are:

- strategy and tactics
- resource allocation and coordination
- conference and interagency relations
- overall team management
- public information

### **B. Logistics – reports to IC**

This function is responsible for:

- locating, organizing, and providing facilities, materials and services for the team
- team safety
- equipment readiness
- team communications

### **C. Operations – reports to IC**

Persons functioning in this area are responsible for performing the operational tasks of the team. These tasks, depending upon the phase of the disaster, include:

- debris clean up
- emergency repair
- limited building repair
- casework
- caring ministry for children, youth, and adults
- volunteer management
- in-kind donations management

The number of individuals assigned to the operations function will vary with the extent of the disaster, but will serve under the leadership of an Operations or Volunteer Coordinator.

### **D. Communications – reports to IC**

The communications function within the command team must be coordinated with the Conference Communications Coordinator. The communications function includes responsibility for:

- communication among the team members at the disaster site
- communication with conference leadership
- documentation of the incident
- communication with the media
- inter-agency communications
- serving as the official contact point for:
  - all who wish information about UMC involvement with a disaster
  - those who wish to make contributions
  - any other questions

### **E. Planning and Training – reports to IC**

The responsibilities of this function include:

- training of the team

- orientation of volunteers joining the disaster response effort
- providing information for realistic goal setting
- helping plan the 'next step'
- collection, evaluation, and use of the information documenting the evolution of the incident

### **F. Support Functions – reports to IC**

Support personnel are important and become even more essential as the complexity of the disaster increases.

The *most common* support personnel working with the Disaster Response Coordinator on behalf of the disaster response effort include:

- Team Chaplain:
  - to keep the group focused on who they are and what they are to do
  - debrief team members.
- Administrative Assistant:
  - keep files for legal, analytical, and historical purposes
  - provide copy service
  - record offers to help and in-kind donations
- Financial Assistant, who works under the direction of the Director for Administration and Financial Services:
  - keep documentation of funds received and expended on behalf of the disaster
  - maintain a record of the financial costs on all aspects of the disaster
  - process approved requests for grants

*Some teams* may also need:

- technical advisors
- translators
- toxic substances expert
- computer resource technicians

### **III. Expanding and Contracting Teams**

The use of the ICS model, where organization is based on function and not on personnel, allows a few people to provide the leadership in a small disaster. However, in large disasters where responsibilities expand, more people will be involved with each functional area. It is important in the training phase that all persons understand the ICS model and what is included and excluded in each of the major team functions.

## **SECTION FOUR: Assignment of Responsibilities**

### **I. General**



The responsibilities, assignments and suggestions for each of the following six persons or entities involved with the implementation of the conference disaster plan are given for each phase of a disaster:

1. Local Clergy
2. District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)
3. District Superintendent (DS)
4. Disaster Response Coordinator (DRCO)
5. Resident Bishop
6. UMCOR

### **A. LOCAL CLERGY**

#### **Preparation**

- Talk with congregation about being prepared
- Select church coordinator
- Have church establish response plan
- Encourage Early Response Training
- Collect relief supplies
- Receive training in disaster response
- Resources evaluation of the local church

#### **Response**

- Offer Early Response Teams if there are trained teams in your congregation
- Survey congregation/community for needs
- Contact the DS and the DRCO if you have needs beyond the capability of the church
- Setup as relief/distribution center if needed (not shelter)

#### **Recovery**

- Provide housing/meals for volunteers teams working in your community
- Provide coordination assistance for teams
- Keep the DS and the DRCO informed as to progress of recovery
- Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible

### **B. DISTRICT DISASTER COORDINATOR (DDC)**

#### **Preparation**

- Attend meetings of the conference disaster response committee
- Get to know DS and establish a means of communication for emergencies
- Train churches in your district from the Local Church Guide
- Encourage collection of emergency supplies

#### **Response**

- Check with Pastors in your area if affected by the disaster
- Check with DS on damage reports
- If your area is not affected, help with coordination efforts on other districts
- Meet with DRCO to determine response program and options.

- Encourage volunteers from your District

### **Recovery**

- Encourage churches in district to volunteer and/or provide volunteers
- Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and support
- Communicate with DRCO/Committee any needs and concerns for affected area.

## **C. DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT (DS)**

### **Preparation**

- Receive training by the Disaster Response Committee/UMCOR on response procedures
- Establish a communication system with District Disaster Coordinator (DDC)
- Make disaster response training a yearly part of a district pastors meeting

### **Response**

- Gather damage information about churches and the **ENTIRE** community from pastors/DDC in your District
- Meet with Bishop/Disaster Response Committee to determine response.
- Visit affected area as soon as possible after event.
- Call Disaster Response Committee with any requests for assistance.

### **Recovery**

- Encourage churches in district to volunteer for recovery efforts.
- Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and encouragement.
- Have a district pastors meeting ASAP to discuss recovery effort.

## **D. DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATOR (DRCO)**

### **Preparation**

- Collect/store emergency response materials and encourage the local churches to do the same.
- Meet with the conference Disaster Response Committee regularly.
- Meet with District Disaster Coordinators monthly during a disaster; quarterly otherwise.
- Support the Conference Disaster Response Committee's training: casework management, local church preparation and family preparation as well as Early Response Teams (ERT) and Volunteers In Mission (VIM).
- Maintain relations with other disaster response agencies: UMCOR, VOAD, Interfaith, PEMA.
- Attend training/conferences on disaster preparation and encourage committee to do the same.
- Become certified in UMCOR's Casework Management.
- Attend Sager Brown Training and encourage committee to do the same.
- Assist the conference Disaster Response Committee on raising funds for disaster response. Have local churches take the special yearly disaster offering.

### **Response**

- Update the Early Response Team Coordinator with information on declarations/needs so that the conference can respond to affected areas but only after that area has requested assistance.
- Send available emergency response supplies as requested by DDC/DS/local pastors.
- Communicate needs to conference communications, Bishop, and others as necessary.
- Notify the Volunteers In Mission Coordinator when we move into the Recovery Phase.

### **Recovery**

- Update the Volunteers In Mission Coordinator with information to begin the volunteer response to local communities.
- Assist in the establishment of long-term recovery committees (LTRC) who can hire staff, coordinate volunteers and do casework management for clients.
- Communicate needs to those who need to know.
- Work with the local churches and communities for best recovery efforts.
- Keep financial report of expenditures/assets. All monies will be deposited into the conference and the committee should receive a monthly financial update from conference financial staff.

## **E. RESIDENT BISHOP**

### **Preparation**

- Have Cabinet trained by UMCOR at least every 4 years.
- Encourage DS's to have disaster response programs annually at District Pastors meeting.
- Support and encourage collections of emergency response materials

### **Response**

- Notify UMCOR immediately of disaster needs
- Tour damage areas as soon as possible
- Meet with Cabinet, Disaster Response Committee and UMCOR to determine course of action for response.

### **Recovery**

- Encourage conference to participate in response and recovery efforts both physically and financially
- Tour damaged areas whenever possible to offer hope and support.
- Provide assistance for local clergy caught in disaster areas

## **F. UMCOR**

### **Preparation**

- Provides training for conference personnel in disaster response.
- Trains cabinet in UMCOR procedure
- Collects and stores emergency response materials.

## **Response**

- Provides materials support (emergency response supplies)
- Upon the request of the Bishop, provides emergency funding and technical support.

## **Recovery**

- Provides continuing technical support when requested.
- Provides available funding upon written request from Bishop

# **SECTION FIVE: Administration & Logistics**

Disaster Response Funds for/from the Conference fall into three (3) distinct categories: General Administrative Funds and Reserved Funds – which are detailed below. In addition, the conference will establish a system receiving UMCOR funds as requested by the Bishop.

## **I. General Administrative Funds**

The General Administrative Fund is used for the following:

- regular administrative expenses of the committee, not associated with any particular disaster including traveling/mileage expenses
- materials and equipment used for/with disaster relief in general
- disaster training including conferences, workshops, etc.

## **II. Reserve Funds**

The DRC provides guidelines to expedite the relief effort, which are designed to explain the limits of available assistance. All moneys raised for disaster relief will be made available for the relief effort until either the funding runs out or requests are no longer submitted.

All funds collected through Bishop Appeals or direct contributions will be used to assist in current disasters within the bounds of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. This fund will be used for both grants and administrative costs associated with disaster relief. When collections exceed the demands of a current crisis, the remaining funds will be used for future disasters. Excess funds collected specifically for disasters within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference shall be used only with the approval of the DRC. Excess funds collected specifically for disasters within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference will not be used beyond those bounds without the recommendation of the DRC and the expressed approval of the Bishop, and the Cabinet. Such expenditures may only be made when a crisis of overwhelming magnitude strikes which exhausts all church appeals and which demands a moral decision to commit funds designated for local use.

## **III. UMCOR and other church funds**

The Conference will establish a system for receiving UMCOR funds as requested by the Resident Bishop. As a general agency of the church, UMCOR may not enter a conference

without the invitation of the Resident Bishop and involvement of the conference in a leadership role. UMCOR serves as a channel through which the resources of the UMC can assist local ministries.

All UMCOR grants are provided with the understanding that conference money will be used first, before UMCOR money is expended. It is also assumed that UMCOR funds are needed only if projected recovery costs will exceed funds available within the affected conference, including any money raised through special conference appeals for the disaster. UMCOR money is to be used in addition to conference resources, not in place of them.

All requests for UMCOR funds must be accompanied by a proposed budget outlining how disaster money is to be spent. The only exception is the request for the initial grant which can be provided upon request of the Resident Bishop. However, the initial grant amount must be shown in the budget when written. A budget must accompany further requests for funds. Given the fluid nature of disaster, during the early weeks the budget will be revised as the picture of need emerges. Please see the UMCOR Funding Policies and Guidelines for details on requesting UMCOR funds and the process for the ultimate close out of a disaster.

#### **IV. Donations**

Donation management is a complex process which must be carefully planned before the process begins. Donation management begins when the phone is answered and a donor makes the offer or asks the question, “What do you need?” Properly responding to the offer and question will result in better donation management in disaster relief efforts. Please remember that a record must be made of every donation, including: name, address, phone number, amount of the donation, and use preference.

An individual at the Conference level should be designated as Donations Coordinator and provide regular reports to the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and the Conference Director of Administrative and Financial Services.

##### **A. Cash donations v. In-Kind donations:**

Cash donations are usually the best help in a disaster situation. However, it is common for individuals, business, and community organizations to offer food, clothing, clean up items, and building materials. These gifts are called “in-kind” donations. Some of these “in-kind” gifts may be badly needed, but they often arrive in huge quantities. When unnecessary and inappropriate supplies descend on a disaster area, it can become another disaster in and of itself. Never ask for nor accept donations of clothing.

The position of the conference is that cash donations are preferred over in-kind donations. Cash donations will always be accepted. The conference does not have to accept in-kind donations.

Donors of in-kind gifts should be strongly encouraged to contact the UMCOR at the Sager-Brown Center in Baldwin, LA to ascertain if the in-kind gift is needed. Note:

Individuals and churches collecting goods for a particular disaster are expected to pay the cost of transporting those goods to the Sager-Brown Center. It is appropriate to tell donors to send their in-kind gifts to another recognized agency in disaster relief such as the Salvation Army or Goodwill.

## **V. Grant Procedures**

Quickly evolving disaster response operations require considerable flexibility in disbursing money. Paper trails and good accounting are essential for all transactions. While conference procedures must be followed, a way must be established to dispense funds rapidly. In disaster situations, victims cannot wait until the end of the month for checks to be issued. The responsibility for disaster response spending rests with the DR Committee and the DR Coordinator.

The DRC:

- sets the limits of grants
- approves block grants
- considers all waivers

Once the limits of funding are set, the District Superintendent and his/her designated authority has approval for approving household grants within the affected areas. Only when a request exceeds a specified limit will the DR Committee become involved to help determine if the request will be honored. The pastor shall be an important link in the assistance effort. DSs are urged to keep the need for direct involvement in the relief effort before their pastors.

## **Policies**

The DRC must approve any exceptions to policy in advance. The following policies apply:

- Duplicate grants are discouraged.
- Who can apply? ALL individual households.
- Who can make the request? Local pastor, church committee, DS, designated agent or the Bishop
- DRCO will authorize disbursement of all funds through the Conference Director of Finance and Administration.
- A letter will accompany the check which will identify the fiscal agent and the expectations of the expenditure of funds. A quarterly report will be given to the DRC indicating how funds have been dispersed,

## **VI. Types of Grants**

### **A. Block Grants**

Block grants are used by local churches, organizations, and agencies to:

- provide direct relief to the victims of disasters
- administrative overhead
- direct relief as the situation dictates

Unless previous arrangements are made, grant funds remaining after the relief effort ceases will be returned to the DRC. The system of recapture must be clearly explained to

the recipient prior to grant approval. The following conditions for the use of grant monies are:

1. Monies will be spent following the funding policies and guidelines established by UMCOR. They are as follows:

- Designated funds can **only** be used in the named disaster.
- Designated funds can be used in the humanitarian recovery effort except these funds can never be used for the repair or rebuilding of disaster-damaged church property.
- Designated funds will be used in a manner consistent with United Methodist disaster response guidelines — in an appropriate way for disaster-related need throughout the disaster area regardless of a person's race, color, economic status or religious affiliation.

2. An accurate accounting of all expenditures of monies is expected on a quarterly basis and is to be sent to the Disaster Response Coordinator of Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.

3. When all conference monies have been spent, a final accounting will be given indicating how all monies from the recipient organization have been spent.

4. Funds may be transferred to the local account of recipient. Remaining funds will be returned to this conference upon the dissolution of the recipient organization. A grant may be made on a permanent basis with no expectation for return of funds.

### **B. Emergency Living Expense Grant**

These grants are awarded to individual households to defray emergency living expenses for costs such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical expenses. Allowable expenses may also include bills for normal living costs which cannot be met due to the effects of the disaster and which are necessary to the health and well-being of the family.

Requirements:

- All damages must be verified.
- To avoid duplication, check to see if claims were made to Red Cross, FEMA, and other agencies.
- If household receives welfare or food stamps, make checks out to creditors or merchants rather than the household.
- Grants will not exceed \$500.00. Waivers to this limit may be requested.
- Grants may be given twice to the same household, but not within one month of the first grant. Waivers to this limit may be requested.
- Grants are awarded on the basis of household, rather than per family. Multiple families living in the same household shall be considered to be one household.

### **C. Rebuilding Grants**

Rebuilding grants are provided to individual households for rebuilding or repair of structures damaged as a result of the disaster. The fund may be used to purchase building materials.

Requirements:

- The pastor/designee completing the form must personally inspect the damage or verify that the recipient is a disaster victim.
- Grants are awarded on the basis of household, rather than per family. Multiple families living in the same household shall be considered to be one household.
- Check with Red Cross to see if the household has received what they have claimed.
- Recipients should apply to Red Cross or FEMA before submitting a rebuilding grant.

*Note: A Conference grant will reduce the amount of money the household receives from other agencies if it is the duplication of benefits.*

- If household receives welfare or food stamps, make checks out to creditors or merchants rather than the household.
- Grants will not exceed \$3000.00 per household, unless approved by the DR Committee. Waivers may be requested.
- The grant may be supplemented by a grant to a volunteer team assisting the household.
- The DR Committee or the designated Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) will assign the control number.
- Grants are awarded on the basis of household, rather than per family. Multiple families living in the same household shall be considered to be one household.
- Checks are sent in care of the minister who completed the application.
- Whenever possible, checks will be made out to the vendor or institutions to which the money is owed.

## **SECTION SIX: Training and Exercises**

All exercises of this plan and its components will be evaluated by the Disaster Response Committee on a regularly basis, and at least yearly.

Requirements of the DRC:

- identify training and education needs to ensure that all participants meet the standards established in this plan for their positions.
- develop courses and seminars to meet those needs
- develop and provide overall guidance and direction for the conference for disaster response
- provide local churches with information regarding emergency preparedness, response and recovery responsibilities.
- within 90 days after the conclusion of all training sessions and exercises, conduct a course evaluation to determine ways to improve plans and future operations.

## **SECTION SEVEN: Plan Development and Maintenance**



The DRC will:

- prepare and maintain this conference disaster plan as a part of our disaster response responsibilities.
- receive and review recommendations for change of this plan and make sure the changes are published to all positions in the plan.

Miscellaneous:

- a copy of this plan will be available through the conference office.
- we will establish a page on the conference web site that will have copies posted of the conference plan and any other material created by this committee to assist the local church response in disasters.

## APPENDIX

There are many private and church groups plus numerous state and federal agencies organized to respond to disasters. The definitions of the following acronyms will help disaster response workers understand the sponsorship and scope of work of some of the more common organizations and agencies involved in disaster response.

**ARC:** American Red Cross. The ARC “Center Manager” is the person in charge of the Red Cross Service Center. The ARC “Job Manager” directs specific projects.

**CWS:** Church World Service. This is the relief arm of the National Council of Churches. It is also an umbrella for the disaster work of participating denominations. CWS provides some emergency supplies and trained volunteer consultants to assist in the formation of interfaith recovery agencies.

***DRC:** Disaster Response Committee. It is used within this plan to refer to The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church Disaster Response Committee.*

**DRC:** Disaster Recovery Center. The center is where victims can go in person to make application for federal/state assistance. A toll-free telephone application process has largely replaced these centers. Some agencies present are the Social Security Administration, Small Business Administration, Department of Agriculture, Internal Revenue Service, and the affected state’s Department of Human Services.

**ESA:** Employment Security Administration. An agency that provides disaster-related unemployment benefits.

**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA coordinates the Federal Response Plan, which brings together federal agencies with responsibility in disaster assistance to state and local communities. Most help is for the repair of infrastructure, i.e. bridges, roads and river channels. Individual assistance to homeowners is in the form of low-interest loans administered by the Small Business Association. The Individual and

Family Grant program (IFG) also awards some grant money to victims and is a program shared between federal and state governments. FEMA can only come to a state's aid at the invitation of the state's governor and with the approval of the president in the form of a disaster declaration. A declaration is subject to the Stafford Act, which requires that damage be at certain levels to warrant federal participation. The FEMA Disaster Field Office (DFO) is the main office. Direct victim assistance is not normally available here.

**Interfaith:** A community-based, nonprofit, long-term recovery agency consisting of representatives from local faith groups and largely funded by their denomination.

**Salvation Army:** A nonprofit whose international arm is noted for its feeding, casework, warehouse management, and other relief efforts. The Salvation Army is a church denomination and very much a part of the Wesleyan heritage.

**SBA:** Small Business Administration. Disaster survivors must call the SBA in order to be eligible for disaster funds. SBA offers loans up to \$200,000 to repair disaster damaged primary residences. Homeowners and renters are eligible for loans up to \$40,000 to replace personal property such as furniture, appliances and clothing.

**UMCOR:** United Methodist Committee on Relief. Formed in 1940, UMCOR is the avenue through which United Methodists work in refugee relief and resettlement, world hunger and poverty, and disaster response in over 120 countries.

**UMVIM (also VIM):** United Methodists Volunteers in Mission. A program of the church that links volunteers with projects worldwide. UMVIM and UMCOR have developed a partnership for Early Response Teams and other efforts in disaster response.

**VOAD:** Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. This is an assembly of many churches, temples, mosques, and other religious and non religious tax exempt organizations who, in unity, work with the local, state, and national government to bring relief to stricken areas of the United States.