

5 Tips in 5 Minutes!

In just 5 minutes, learn 5 preparedness tips that will help ensure you're prepared in the event of an emergency, traumatic event, or disaster.



- 1. Fire Drills** are excellent ways to ensure that everyone knows the protocol for evacuating the building. Do you have a meeting place? Are there people designated to call 911 or local emergency management personnel? Who announces the evacuation and, if applicable, what will you do about your livestreams? Are your exits clearly marked and unobstructed? Are there people to assist mobility impaired persons? Do you have a fire alarm and do you know how to activate it? Do you have a fire extinguisher and do you know where it is? How will you alert others in the building if there is an emergency (on Sundays and during the week)? Do you/your renters share emergency exit information at the beginning of services and events?
- 2. A Snow Policy** should be determined and communicated before the need arises. Who makes the call whether or not to hold services and how is that information disseminated? Will it be on your website? Social Media? Church voicemail? Do you have a group e-blast or text message? Is there a phone tree? Do the pastor, administrator, moderator, and sexton know how to change the church voicemail? Does someone live near the church to see if the street and lot have been plowed? Who clears the sidewalks/steps? Pastors, what's the plan if you can't make it in?
- 3. Emergency Contact** information is crucially helpful in a number of situations. For example, in the event of a natural disaster, if congregants can't be reached, it's helpful to be able to contact family members for information. If there is an event in the building, it's helpful to be able to contact family members immediately. If a congregant transports another for church, Bible Study, etc... and there is an event such as a fall, it's helpful to be able to contact family members immediately. Does the office/pastor have Emergency Contact information? And is it available outside of the building via thumb drive or in the cloud?
- 4. Financial Records** are critical to running a church. Often, they're maintained by one or two people and locked in the church office. If there's ever a reason that the building is deemed unsafe (God forbid!) due to fire or a roof collapse, what happens to those records? Are they backed up in the cloud? On a thumb drive? Is there more than one copy? Who has access? Technology changes frequently--is the format still viable?
- 5. Insurance** is crucial. Does the church have insurance? Have you reviewed your policy recently? Have you made any additions to your building? Do you have enough insurance? Are you covered for the things you do in your building (ie: if you serve alcohol at events, is that in your policy)? If you have renters, do they have their own current insurance? Do you have a copy of your policy outside of the building? Do you have your agent's contact information outside of the building?

For more helpful preparedness resources, please visit [Disaster Ministries - Maine Conference United Church of Christ \(maineucc.org\)](https://maineucc.org). *Rev. Estelle Margarones chairs the Maine Conference Disaster Resource and Response Team*