

**Santa Rosa, CA April 1906**  
**The Methodist Church provides a beacon of hope**



## **The California-Nevada Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan**



**Prepared by the  
Disaster Response Ministry Planning Team  
California-Nevada Conference  
United Methodist Church**

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# The California-Nevada Conference Plan for Disaster Preparedness and Response

## Introduction

The American Red Cross defines a disaster as: “*An emergency that causes injury or loss of life and property damage, and a disruption in which survivors cannot manage without spiritual, monetary, or physical assistance.*” Disaster preparedness and response must be a vital part of our church mission. We are called to love one another. One of the ways we can show the love and act as the hands, feet and face of Jesus is through the efforts we make in the community and around the world.

The church is not just four walls and a roof. People may never attend church but, in a disaster or time of loss, they immediately turn to the church for help. In a disaster situation the church can become not only a spiritual but also a resource hub of the community.

There are four levels used to describe the severity of disasters. These levels become important as the geography and amount of devastation determine the extent of response.

- **Level I:** A **small** local disaster affecting one to thirty households, which is within the capabilities of local community resources to handle.
  - Relief: Initially the local church may need some help from the district or conference. Volunteers from within the community and nearby churches will assist with crisis counseling, cleanup and emergency repairs. The bishop may request the churches within the conference take a special offering. One or two ERT/Care teams may be brought in to work alongside local volunteers.
  - Recovery: One or two people could perform all of the management functions-i.e. provide ministry of caring, manage cases, and coordinate volunteer management, donations, and networking of resources.
- **Level II:** a **medium-sized** disaster affecting 40 to 150 households, which is beyond the capabilities of local community resources to handle.
  - Relief: Local churches must have assistance. The bishop should solicit an offering from its churches as soon as possible. A segment of the Conference Disaster Response Center is mobilized for assessment and management. Site management of volunteers must be in place as soon as possible for crisis counseling, cleanup and emergency repairs.
  - Recovery: An interfaith or United Methodist recovery team is necessary, with a paid director or a skilled, long-term volunteer whose expenses are reimbursed. The team will administer the operation, assisted by volunteers and a paid case manager.
- **Level III:** These are **large** disasters, in terms of severity or geography, which cause significant damage and destruction and will usually receive a presidential declaration. A disaster this size within the conference area requires full mobilization of the Conference Disaster Response Center.
  - Relief: Resources from the conference and UMCOR are essential. The Disaster Response Center will perform full operational functions. A conference-wide appeal

must be made for funds, appropriate in-kind donations and volunteers. UMCOR money will also be needed, as will be Early Response Teams and Information & Referral (I&R) workers.

- Recovery: Paid staff for case management within community-based recovery organizations, and conference-wide coordination of volunteers is necessary. Numerous teams of short-term volunteers for repair and rebuilding are important and will be needed for a year or more.
- **Level IV: A catastrophic disaster** is defined by Public Law 93-288 as: *“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.”*
  - Relief: The entire conference response organization must be mobilized. A number of people in conference leadership positions will probably be victims themselves. UMCOR mentors may be necessary to fill slots of those in conference disaster leadership who are unable to function. A conference-wide appeal must be made for funds, appropriate in-kind donations, Early Response Teams (ERTs) and Care teams. UMCOR money will also be needed, as will be Information & Referral (I&R) workers. Perhaps a denomination-wide special appeal will be made.
  - Recovery: as in Level III, hired staff for leadership positions is needed rather than utilizing long-term volunteers. Again, case managers and workers will be necessary. Numerous teams of short-term volunteers are required over a period of several years.

To ensure timeliness, provide the maximum available resources, avoid redundancy and provide an effective and appropriate response, the church must be ready, at all levels, when disaster strikes. This means planning and preparation *before* disaster strikes.

The visible presence of the church is essential in any type of disaster, regardless of the extent of damage. The conference, districts, and local churches with their many volunteer groups are vital links to a huge network of caring responders from faith based organizations. Together they will provide to people in need three types of response:

- **The spiritual response** addresses the issue of seeing how God’s presence is available in the midst of suffering, despair and grief. The primary task is to be present in the midst of suffering and spiritual crisis, acting as an agent of reconciliation with spiritual support and encouragement. The bishop will be there providing an “awesome presence.” Local pastors wearing clerical collars provide a visible example of the presence of the church. Teams of people trained in giving spiritual and emotional care (Care Teams), Stephens ministers and chaplains are available, and UMCOR is willing to train more people at the local church level. Allow the Holy Spirit to work through you by just being there.
- **The emotional response** can address the problems of loneliness, shock, disbelief, delayed grief, and a multitude of related emotions that accompany those disasters that affect the lives of people. Pastors, Stephen ministers, and other lay leaders can seek UMCOR training to better assist them for meeting the needs of people in such trying times.

- **The physical response** will be more immediately seen and needed. Trained individuals and teams are needed, such as ERTs, and Care teams, volunteer management, teams to man shelters and mass feeding locations, all of which help meet physical needs and thus alleviates some of the spiritual and emotional anxiety. No matter how inadequate you may feel your skills and talents are in responding to people in need, never underestimate the power of presence. The physical response must address itself to facilities, finances and an unending list of unique needs that may or may not be immediately seen.

With this in mind the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church has organized this plan as a structure to facilitate the ability of the conference, the districts and the local churches to be in ministry to persons in need as a result of a disaster.

### **Purpose**

1. To resource and equip local United Methodist churches as they assist their communities and individuals to prepare, respond and recover from disaster.
2. To provide immediate relief for acute human need and to respond to the suffering of persons in our communities caused by natural or manmade disaster.
3. To work cooperatively with the appropriate conference units, ecumenical bodies, interdenominational agencies and local government agencies in the identification of, advocacy for, and assistance with ministries for disaster recovery.
4. To provide direct communication from the conference to the national offices of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission to obtain needed resources and assistance for disaster-stricken areas inside the conference, or to provide available resources and assistance to areas in need outside of the conference.
5. To initiate printed, audiovisual, electronic, web-based and other resources intended to interpret, support, and communicate with other conferences and churches concerning appeals for help and information related to ministry for disaster response.
6. To work cooperatively in promotion of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

*"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)

## California-Nevada Conference Disaster Response

When a disaster is imminent or has occurred, local authorities take immediate steps to warn and evacuate its citizens, alleviate suffering, and protect life and property. The disaster authority and responsibility is centered in the Office of Emergency Services. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will call upon the American Red Cross (ARC), Salvation Army and other government recognized disaster response agencies for support. After the initial emergency response, Volunteers Organizations Active in Response (VOAD) and similar volunteer groups respond. If the situation exceeds local relief resources, regional, state and federal assistance can be asked for. When federal assistance is requested and the United States President declares a “federal disaster,” the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will bring support.

In the event of a disaster, resources available to the local church (i.e. volunteers, money, expertise, etc.) are oftentimes limited. This is where the connectional system of the United Methodist Church can provide support and resources to the local church to respond effectively and appropriately. With additional training, planning and preparation, the following individuals and teams could be active in disaster response in the California-Nevada Conference as a positive force, independent of the nature, size and location of the disaster:

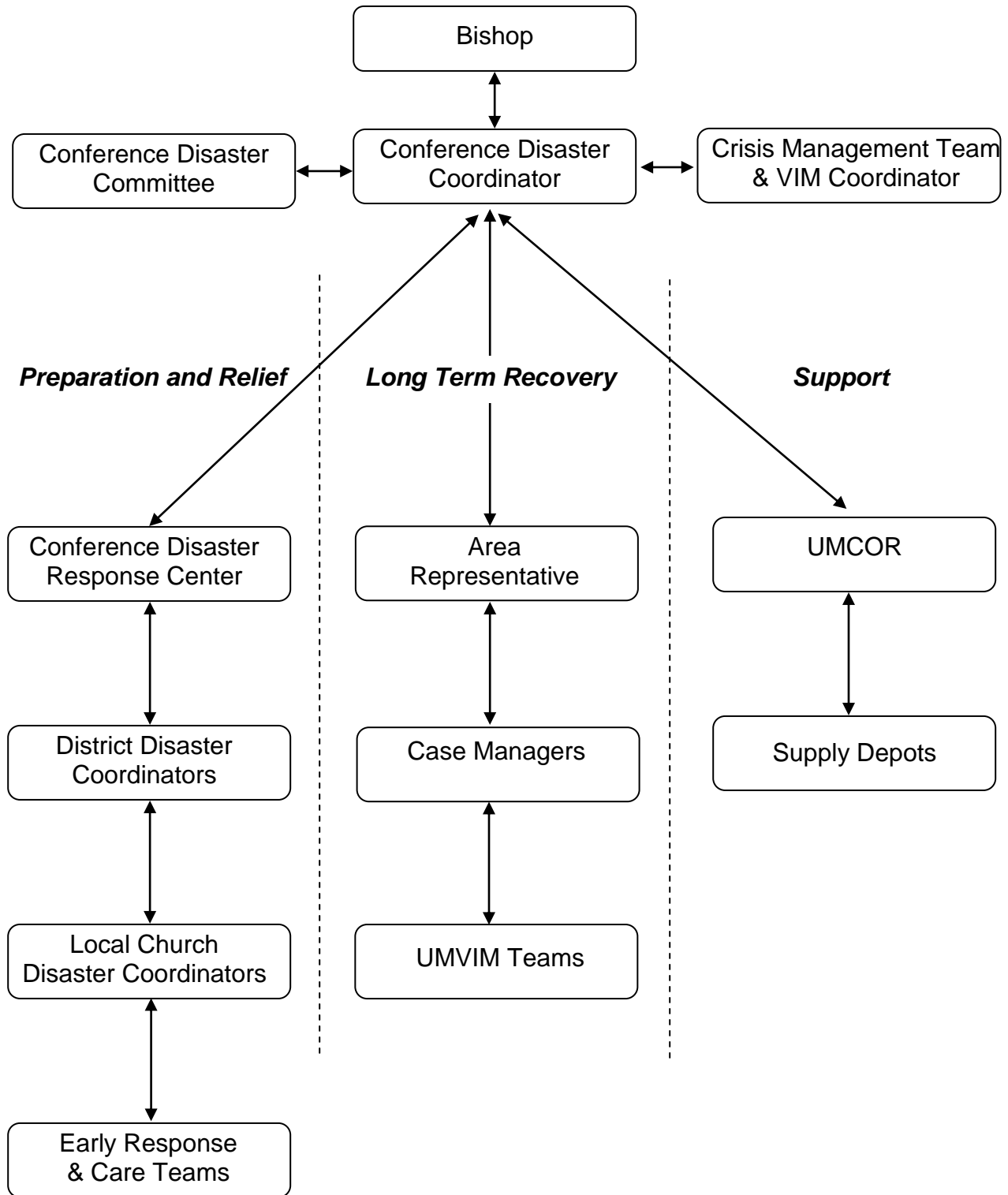
- Bishop VIM Coordinator and District Superintendents
- Conference Disaster Coordinator and District Disaster Coordinators
- The Conference Disaster Response Committee
- Disaster Response Center staff (DRC)
- Volunteers in Mission
- Local Church Pastors
- Local Church Disaster Coordinators

The goal of the California-Nevada Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan is to help conference, district and local church leadership learn about disaster response needs and resources in their areas, evaluate their disaster response capabilities and develop plans and protocols to assist local churches in responding to the community following a disaster through preparing their facilities, training their members, securing supplies, and responding to the needs of their congregation and community.

This plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in disaster response in the California-Nevada Conference as well as outlining processes to ensure the seamless flow of information and assistance to those affected by disaster.

Each district and local church within the California-Nevada Conference is expected to create their own Disaster Response Plan, unique to their particular locale, circumstances and resources.

# CA-NV CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Bishop**

Leadership by the resident bishop is extremely important. For many, a bishop's appearance at the disaster site symbolizes the "awesome presence" of Christ and the commitment of His church to relieve the suffering. Don't dismiss or minimize the values of symbols to people who are hurting. The bishop's role as a symbol of a caring church cannot be filled by anyone else!

Communities receiving a visit are grateful that their pain was important enough for the bishop to set aside routine business. Unfortunately, district superintendents and other well-intentioned staff may try to "protect" a bishop's time by wrongly advising that it isn't necessary to go to a disaster area. This protection does much damage to the conference in the long run. A disaster is a tragedy and the conference cannot conduct "business as usual" in the aftermath. Don't delay too long, as a visit long after the crisis looks silly and gives the impression that the bishop couldn't be bothered to come when the people really needed it.

### **Stage 1: Planning and preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Appoint, or have the conference nominating committee select, a conference Disaster Response Coordinator. Don't restrict the search to clergy; they may not have the time.
2. Appoint a Disaster Response Committee to oversee the conference Disaster Preparation and Response Plan. Conference staff represented on this committee should include: the Disaster Response Coordinator, the UMVIM Coordinator, a fiscal officer, a communicator and a cabinet representative. Be sure that you are represented on the committee and/or informed about its work. Encourage laity to be on the committee.
3. Inform whoever acts on your behalf when you are out of the office that he or she has the responsibility to implement the disaster response plan when disaster strikes (this authority should also be given to your Disaster Response Coordinator) including contacting UMCOR for assistance. (Only a bishop or designee can make this request.)
4. Make sure the conference has a property protection plan similar to that of a local church.
5. Provide appropriate assistance to the Disaster Response Coordinator in establishing the Conference Disaster Response Center. This may require that a conference room, offices, telephones and other office equipment be reassigned to the Response Center function when the plan is implemented.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster is Imminent**

1. Implement the conference Disaster Preparation and Response Plan.
2. Provide whatever staff is available to assist the Disaster Response Coordinator in establishing the Conference Disaster Response Center.
3. See that your family and that of the staff take whatever actions are appropriate to prepare for the event.

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – Immediately After Disaster Strikes**

1. Assess damage to your household and check the status of your family. If you are a victim, do not rely solely on your own judgment, listen to others. If you cannot perform your duties, notify your office and get help.

2. Let your office know where you are and have them notify the conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
3. Notify UMCOR of the event and its impact; let them know the conference disaster plan has been implemented. (UMCOR Emergency Response Office: 202-548-4002)
4. Immediately appoint a supply pastor for any clergy who are more than minor victims of the disaster. Pastors who are themselves victims must be allowed time to focus on their recovery. Supply pastors would serve a minimum of one or two months and the reason for their appointment must be explained to the local church membership. Disaster funds may be used for this purpose.

#### **Stage 4: Relief**

1. As soon as possible make a site visit to survey the extent of damage and confer with local pastors and officials regarding needs. Other people on the site visit should include the Disaster Response Coordinator, VIM Coordinator, Director of Communications, and the local District Superintendent.
2. Appoint temporary assisting pastors to any congregations which have been impacted when it is clear that their pastor in charge may be overwhelmed by duties of both church and community as relief and recovery takes place. Look among the ranks of the retired pastors, so this person is not threatened by representing the system and has the benefit of the “long look” gained by many years in the pastorate. The assistant should be on site for a month or two, and then be available for up to a year, rotating in and out under the direction of the pastor in charge.
3. See that whoever on the staff carries the disaster response liaison portfolio is relieved of other duties for as long as is appropriate.
4. Provide additional temporary support staff.
5. Have the conference communications office publish daily updates in the relief phase.
6. Appoint a temporary assistant district superintendent to those districts that are hardest hit. Those extra set of hands are very important in times of disaster.
7. If you are a victim too, have an assistant who can share your load.
8. Request an emergency grant (\$10,000) from UMCOR if on-hand resources are perceived to be insufficient to meet immediate needs for relief.
9. As soon as possible, consider a conference-wide financial appeal. If you wait, donors will assume that the church is not involved financially and will donate to other disaster agencies.
10. Remember that the conference office cannot act as if it were “business as usual” if the disaster is large or catastrophic.

#### **Stage 5: Long Term Recovery**

1. Have all involved leaders meet periodically for reports and evaluations.
2. Have the conference communications office publish timely updates in the recovery phase.
3. Publicly acknowledge workers and work done.
4. Plan for a service of praise and memorial a year from the date of the disaster.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Conference Disaster Response Committee**

The Conference Disaster Response Committee's primary role is to provide the administrative framework that enables the rest of the conference offices, plus district and local teams to respond effectively and in a timely fashion.

The Conference Disaster Response Committee manages and oversees administrative issues of disaster preparation and response for the conference leadership team. This includes:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of policies and procedures for disaster response in the California-Nevada Conference;
- Establishing short term and long term strategies for disaster response, including guidelines for the role of the conference and local churches in long term recovery and determining if advocacy is needed at the state level;
- Administering the grant process, including grant criteria, approvals, accountability structure and audits;
- Identifying staff needs.

The Conference Disaster Coordinator serves as the chair. District Disaster Coordinators and others representing either disaster response expertise or regional representatives sit on the committee. Regional representatives serve as the “eyes, mouth and ears” helping to interpret the work of the committee to local pastors and laity and can perform the initial on-site assessments of their area as soon as possible after disaster strikes. Conference staff represented on this committee should include a fiscal officer, a communicator and a cabinet representative. They need not serve actively on the committee, but need to be involved and informed.

Conference decision-makers - the bishop or assistant, cabinet representative, lay leader, council director, conference fiscal officer and conference communicator – should be involved and informed, though not necessarily need to serve actively on the committee.

An executive group should be formed and empowered to make decisions, especially on release of funds up to a certain level, without having to poll the entire group.

This committee is not “operational.” This is important! Members of the committee do not grab shovels and jump into the mud, nor do they micro-manage the disaster response effort. This group sets broad policies and procedures related to the disaster response effort/

Some who serve on the Conference Disaster Response Committee may have the desires, skills and time to give to the relief effort. However, this group as a whole, which should be composed of top-level conference and district leaders, does not have the time nor is it suited to do a good job of managing or performing normal day-to-day disaster operations. The team's purpose is to set policy and monitor progress as it supervises and supports operations. The Conference Disaster Response Center runs the relief phase response as described in the section *Roles and Responsibilities of the Conference Disaster Response Center*.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Conference Disaster Coordinator**

The Conference Disaster Coordinator is:

- The point of contact for coordinating disaster response and disaster-related efforts at the conference level.
- An advocate for the District Disaster Coordinators and for local churches in their conference relative to disaster issues
- The Incident Coordinator of the Conference Disaster Response Center.
- Responsible for collaborating with the VIM Coordinator to provide adequate pools of trained volunteers to serve in the relief phase (ERTs and Care teams) and the recovery phase (UMVIM teams).

### **Stage 1: Planning and preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Develop a Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.
2. Develop and equip a Conference Disaster Response Center (DRC) operations location and a team to staff it. The work area should be flexible to adjust to the number of people mobilized for the DRC staff, and have the necessary communications equipment, maps and charts.
3. Work with District Superintendents, District Disaster Coordinators and local churches to assist them in the preparation of their disaster response plans.
4. Provide the district offices and District Disaster Coordinators with information on who to contact in the conference office in the event of a disaster and, if more than one person needs to be informed, the order they should be contacted.
5. Participate in and build relationships with agencies active in disaster response in the conference (VOAD, COAD, LTRO, OES, interfaith organizations, etc.) If you are unable to participate yourself, select a representative so that The United Methodist Church continues to be recognized, at all levels, as a valuable partner in the disaster response community.
6. Collaborate with the VIM Coordinator to provide disaster training in the conference. This may include identifying training opportunities, serving as the trainer or designating a member of your team to be a trainer, following up after training events, etc.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster is Imminent**

1. Implement the conference Disaster Preparation and Response Plan.
2. Activate your DRC Team and confirm communications capabilities.
3. Set up and secure the DRC and, if the disaster is likely to have a severe adverse impact on the district office, identify an alternative location to work from.
4. Check for updates from OES, the media and other sources.
5. Check in with the state Office of Emergency Services office or other disaster agencies.

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – After Disaster Strikes**

1. Assess damage to your household and check the status of your family. If you are a victim, do not rely solely on your own judgment, listen to others. If you cannot perform your duties, notify the bishop and your office and get help.
2. Assume the role of Incident Coordinator for the DRC and manage DRC operations.
3. Assist the office of the bishop in developing a site visit soon as possible. The purpose of the visit is to survey the extent of damage and confer with local pastors and officials regarding needs. Other people on the site visit should include the VIM Coordinator, Director of Communications, and the local District Superintendent.

### **Stage 4: Relief**

Continue as Incident Coordinator for the DRC and manage DRC operations. Develop a system to rotate team members in and out of their positions so they are not working over 12 hours at a time. Remember to take care of yourself so that you continue to be able to lead the others.

### **Stage 5: Long Term Recovery**

1. Prepare to close out the DRC and transition to long-term recovery operations.
2. Identify staff to work in recovery. Appoint Area Representatives to work in the field, if appropriate.
3. Collaborate and cooperate with agencies and organizations involved in long-term recovery to provide assistance and training as appropriate.
4. Administer the grant process developed by the Conference Disaster Administrative Team.
5. Function as liaison between the Conference and UMCOR.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Conference Disaster Response Center**

The goal of the Disaster Response Ministry of the California-Nevada Conference is to effectively manage the resources available to our churches when disaster strikes, including information, supplies, volunteers and financial assistance. This resource management is coordinated through the Disaster Response Center where Disaster Center staff and volunteers work closely with the district and church disaster coordinators, and outside relief agencies to ensure clear lines of communication and effective coordination of resources. The center is located in the conference offices at 1276 Halyard Drive in Sacramento.

The CDRC runs the initial relief phase of the conference's response operation. For planning purposes, we will plan for a catastrophic event, the worst case scenario. Lesser events would require lesser actions on the part of the conference. The relief phase is fast-paced. Its work is done on a broad scale, providing only a temporary fix to as many survivors as possible. Figuratively speaking, the CDRC could be viewed as the first aid station of disaster response, putting on bandages and stopping bleeding to provide safety, sanitation and security. Determining the status of churches and districts plus pastors and staff throughout the area; determining the immediate needs and coordinating outside resources to provide help, coordinating with local and state Offices of Emergency Service, informing UMCOR and others of details and needs are all functions of the Disaster Response Center in a major disaster. The bishop makes the formal call for help from UMCOR, but does not need to be burdened with passing on details and follow-up information.

Disaster operations are organized differently in the relief and recovery phases. The relief phase, when the disaster seems to have a life of its own, is very fluid and almost chaotic at times. Consequently, a more deliberate and structured management system is required. The Incident Command System (ICS) or as the United Methodist Church prefers to call it: The Incident Coordination System is required. In California, the ICS is required of all governmental agencies under the state's Standardized Emergency Management System.

ICS breaks disaster response management into manageable segments, specifically the five functions of leadership, planning, logistics, operations, and administration/finance.

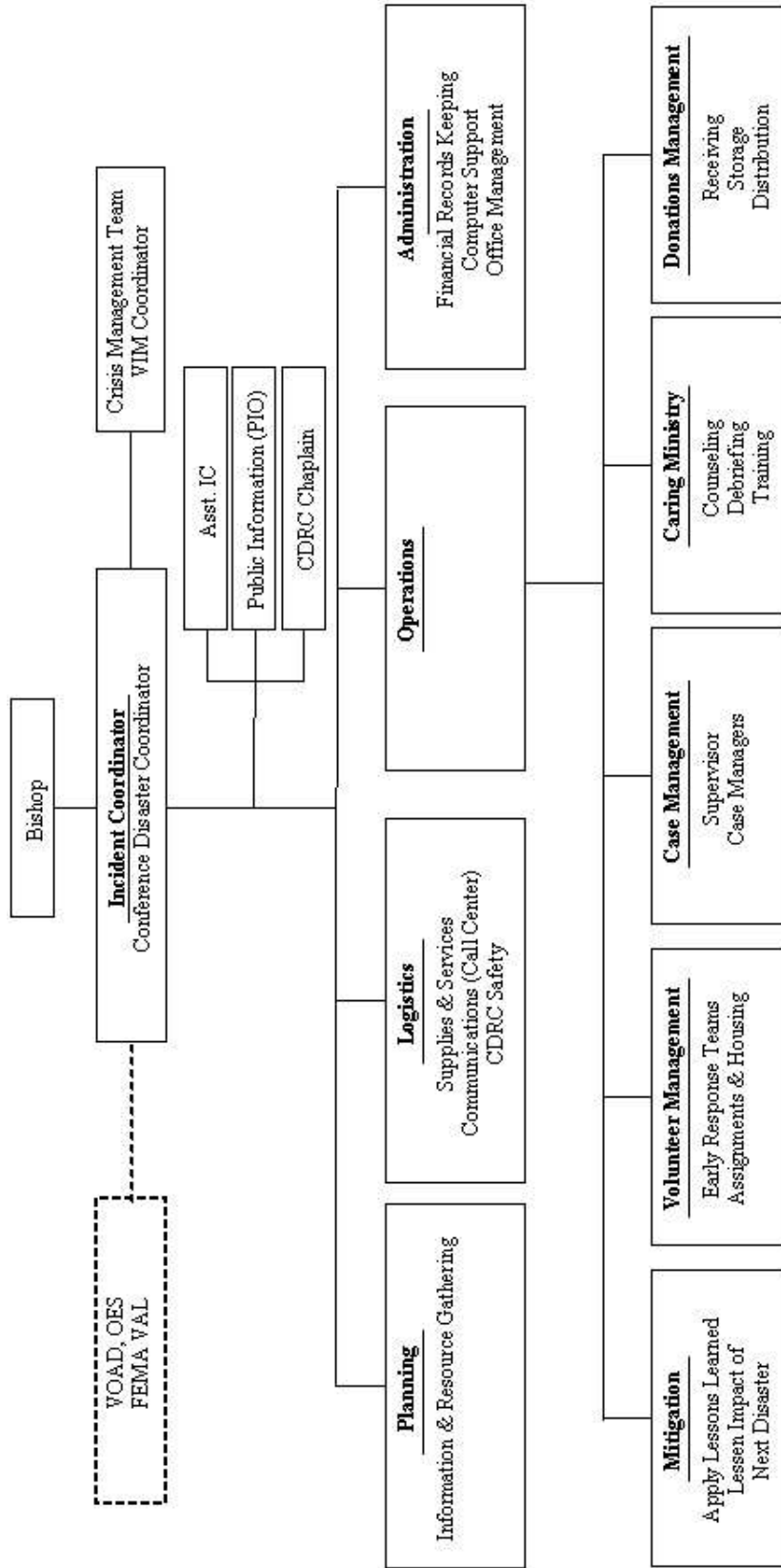
Each function does not necessarily require independent staffing. Initially, or in a small event, one or two individuals may perform several functional roles. As the complexity of the response increases, so does the size of the staff. When things calm down, the ICS structure can scale back and reduce its size to one or two people to perform all the functions.

ICS depends on functions, not people. Over time, people can be rotated into the CDRC to perform a particular function as others are rotated out to return to their normal lives.

Page 12 shows a chart of the CDRC structure in a full-scale operation.

All staff and volunteers involved in disaster response have the immediate and primary responsibility to first secure the safety of their families and property in the event of a disaster. They must first care for their own before they can care for others. They should then notify their team leader or immediate supervisor as to their status and ability to help. The team leader or supervisor should then notify the Disaster Response Center, as appropriate.

As the initial flurry of chaotic activity is replaced by calmer, more informed and more capable actions by the local churches involved in the disaster, the conference Disaster Response Center can reduce its efforts to over-all coordination between churches and districts, acting as a call center, working with conference communications to disseminate information through various means, and working with the VIM Coordinator to determine volunteer needs, where and what skills; sources to fill the needs and assisting in the administrative and logistical details of bringing volunteers into the disaster area.



**Conference Disaster Response Center Organizational Structure  
(Full-scale Operation for large or catastrophic disaster)**

### **Stage 1: Planning and Preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Establish and equip a work area for the Disaster Response Center. Develop the means to convert adequate work space from normal day-to-day operations to a disaster footing, including multiple phone lines, computer connections (wireless or wired), working tables, maps and charts.
2. Identify an alternative location to establish the Disaster Recovery Center if the primary site is untenable as a result of the disaster.
3. Develop procedures for all functional positions in the Disaster Response Center's ICS structure.
4. Collaborate with District Disaster Teams to establish potential sites for supply depots, distribution sites, etc, which may be needed following a disaster.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster is Imminent**

1. Confirm communication channels with bishop's office, crisis management team, VIM Coordinator, UMCOR and District Disaster Teams.
2. Provide timely information updates to the above as appropriate.
3. Set up and secure the Disaster Response Center work area and, if the disaster has had a severe adverse impact on the conference facility, relocate to the secondary site and notify all appropriate people of the new site and communications channels.

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – After Disaster Strikes**

1. Serve as the communications hub for the conference's disaster response, including:
  - a. Managing incoming calls (requests for assistance, offers of assistance, provide critical news using scripts, etc.)
  - b. Coordinating the shipment and receipt of supplies
  - c. Deploying volunteers.
2. Conduct a "roll-call" of the district offices in the impacted areas, starting with the hardest hit area first, obtaining an initial situation report and ensuring that each District Disaster Team has the correct phone number to the Disaster Response Center. If telephone service is out, use alternative means of communications.
3. Prepare situation reports and critical news briefings for the Conference Disaster Coordinator to present to the bishop and the crisis management team in coordination with the Communications Officer.
4. Implement steps to provide a church presence in the disaster area as soon as local emergency service officials allow.
  - a. Request all pastors to wear clerical collars for increased visibility.
  - b. Request that the bishop visit appropriate disaster sites and communicate to the media that the church is present and active in the area.

### **Stage 4: Relief**

1. Determine if communication capabilities have been restored in the affected areas.

2. Monitor situations reports received from State OES, NVOAD, FEMA, ARC, CWS, etc., and disseminate information throughout the conference, as appropriate.
3. Provide an initial situation report to UMCOR national headquarters.
4. Continue as communication hub.
5. The VIM Coordinator shall:
  - a. Obtain volunteer management support,
  - b. Prepare Emergency Response Teams and Care Teams for deployment,
  - c. Activate and deploy Early Response Teams and Spiritual & Emotional Care Teams as requested.
  - d. Contact Western Jurisdiction VIM Coordinator for additional support as needed.
5. Assist VIM Coordinator in administration and logistics of creating volunteer work teams assigned to work areas.

### **Stage 5: Long Term Recovery**

1. Close out all Early Response Teams and Care Teams. Convert them to standard UMCOR teams if they desire to remain in the field.
2. Complete all required after-actions reports and conduct a meeting with the Crisis Management Team, Disaster Response Committee and the Disaster Response Center staff to discuss what went well and what needs to be improved upon.
3. Close out the active operation of the Disaster Response Center, reducing the staff down to an appropriate size to assist the Conference Disaster Coordinator and VIM Coordinator handle the long-term recovery tasks of volunteer management, and case management.
4. Assist in returning the Disaster Response Center to its pre-disaster condition.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the District Superintendent**

The District Superintendent (DS) is responsible for oversight and supervision of churches and local pastors in the district where they serve. Therefore, in the event of a disaster affecting their district, it is imperative that the District Superintendents are kept informed so that they, in turn, can inform the Bishop as well as minister to those in their care. Including the DS on the District Disaster Team facilitates communication and ensures that the DS has input into the response effort.

### **Stage 1: Planning and preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Appoint a District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) and work closely with the DDC to recruit a District Disaster Team.
2. As part of the District Disaster Team, and in concert with the conference, develop a District Disaster Response Plan.
3. Be familiar with the conference disaster plan and its application for your area.
4. Encourage churches in your care to have a written disaster plan for their church.
5. As appropriate, promote the connection between churches and the conference, reminding them that the Conference Disaster Coordinator has resources available to help serve their congregation and their community.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster Strike is Imminent**

1. Confirm communication channels with the Bishop's office, the Conference Disaster Recovery Center, the District Disaster Team, and clergy in the district.
2. Determine which churches are going to be the most vulnerable.
3. Assist the District Disaster Coordinator in setting up a District Disaster Team work area and, if the disaster is likely to have a severe adverse impact on the district office, identify an alternative location to work from.

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – After Disaster Strikes**

1. Assess damage to your household and check the status of your family. If you are a victim, do not rely solely on your own judgment, listen to others. If you cannot perform your duties, notify the bishop and your office and get help.
2. Communicate with the Bishop and District Disaster Coordinator.
3. Contact pastors in affected areas to assess spiritual, physical and emotional needs and address with appropriate resources.
4. Implement steps to provide a church presence in the disaster area as soon as officials allow. Request all pastors to wear clerical collars for increased visibility.
5. If it is safe to do so, perform an early assessment of the affected area with the DDC, the Bishop, Disaster Recovery Center staff and/or other conference personnel as appropriate.
6. Report on the condition of the community and church properties to appropriate conference personnel (the Disaster Response Coordinator, or the Bishop's office).

#### **Stage 4: Relief**

1. If a pastor is a victim, a supply pastor must be appointed immediately. The appointment must be for a minimum of one or two months and the purpose must be explained to the membership. If the pastor needs to be relocated from a damaged home, see that the church takes steps to recruit volunteers to help clean up, pack and take items to storage, but do it in such a loving way that the family remains in charge of their affairs. Disaster funds may be used for this purpose. Lacking locally available disaster funds, the Conference Disaster Response Center can advise about available funds.
2. Monitor all church pastors as best as possible, being alert to signs of burn-out and/or excessive spiritual and emotional stress. If pastors are likely to be overwhelmed by church and community needs during the disaster response, appoint a temporary assistant pastor to provide an extra set of hands. The congregation will need an explanation. Disaster funds may be used for this purpose.
3. Continue contact with affected areas and site visits as appropriate. Continue the request for all pastors in the impacted areas to wear clerical collars for increased visibility.
4. Coordinate care and resources for affected clergy and pastoral families.
5. Utilize Care Teams to address the spirituals and emotional needs of local caregivers.
6. If you are likely to be overwhelmed by the scope of the disaster, find an assistant as well as a trusted counselor for yourself. Be aware of the length of time recovery takes. Since you need to be very involved and vary visible, you cannot conduct business as usual for some time. Again, disaster funds may be used.

#### **Stage 5: Long Term Recovery – District Superintendent**

1. Continue to support and refer clergy and families who need professional services for spiritual and emotional care.
2. Publicly acknowledge those who have been working in the disaster and the work they have done.
3. Within the impacted areas, encourage local church participation in long term recovery as appropriate. Bringing the impacted folks together to go out and care for each other is healthful therapy.
4. Encourage churches in unaffected areas to provide support to the impacted areas, through the donation of money, supplies, equipment or through UMVIM teams. .
5. As appropriate, communicate with the Conference Disaster Response Center and/or Long-Term Recovery staff regarding unmet needs that arise or areas that may need additional resources or other assistance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the District Disaster Coordinator**

The District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) is the point of contact for coordinating disaster response and disaster-related efforts at the District level. The DDC is a partner and advocate for the local churches in their district as it relates to disaster issues as well as liaison to the District Office and the Conference Disaster Response Center (CDRC).

The structure of the District Disaster Team should be based on the ICS model and should resemble that of the CDRC, remembering that the number of people to perform the functions should be based on the needs of the district.

### **Stage 1: Planning and preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Develop a District Disaster Team (DDT) that includes your District Superintendent. The superintendent should not be the district disaster team leader, though the superintendent is encouraged to be an active part of the team.
2. In concert with the Conference and your District Disaster Team, develop a District Disaster Response Plan.
3. Determine a suitable location where you can set up a Disaster Team work area that will function as the district's communication and coordination center between the local pastors and churches and the Conference Disaster Response Center. A conference room at the district office should suffice.
4. Identify an alternative location to work out of in case the disaster has a severe adverse impact on the district office facility,
5. Work with local churches to assist them in the preparation of their disaster response plans.
6. Provide the local church pastors with information on who to contact in the event of a disaster and in what order they should be contacted.
7. Participate in and build relationships with agencies active in disaster response in your district (VOAD, COAD, LTRO, OES, interfaith organizations, etc.) If you are unable to participate yourself, select a representative from the district team so that The United Methodist Church continues to be recognized, at all levels, as a valuable partner in the disaster response community.
8. Serve as communicator and liaison with the conference Disaster Response Center.
9. Identify locations for supply depots, identify and inventory available equipment, update forms and procedures as necessary. Collaborate with other District Disaster Teams for location of supply depots, distribution sites, etc.
10. Working with the Conference Disaster Coordinator, coordinate disaster training in the district. This may include identifying training opportunities, serving as the trainer or designating a member of your team to be a trainer, following up after training events, etc.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster in District is Imminent**

1. Activate your District Disaster Team and confirm communications channels within the district and conference.
2. Check for updates from the Disaster Response Center.

3. Check with local EOC, Emergency Services office or other local disaster agencies.
4. Set up and secure the District Disaster Team work area and, if the disaster has a severe adverse impact on the district office, relocate to the alternative location, communicating to all involved persons the new communications channels (phone numbers, etc.)..

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – After Disaster Strikes**

1. Assess damage to your household and check the status of your family. If you are a victim, do not rely solely on your own judgment, listen to others. If you cannot perform your duties, notify the district superintendent and get help.
2. Implement the District Disaster Plan.
3. Communicate status and immediate needs to the conference Disaster Response Center.
4. Establish communications with local churches in your district, started with the most severely impacted areas first. Inquire about the safety of the pastor(s), staff and families. Obtain an initial status report on the estimated amount of damage and other conditions and ensure appropriate phone numbers are known. Implement alternative communications if the telephone systems are out.
5. If appropriate, coordinate and participate in early assessment of the affected area with other conference personnel (District Superintendent, the Bishop, Conference Disaster Response staff, etc.)

### **Stage 4: Relief**

1. Determine if telephone communication capabilities have been restored.
2. Identify special needs and activities with the Disaster Response Center and local agencies.
3. As appropriate, continue to coordinate and participate in assessment of the affected area with other conference personnel (District Superintendent, the Bishop, Disaster Response Center staff, etc.).
4. Working in concert with the volunteer district UMVIM Coordinator:
  - a. Identify affected areas for placement of volunteer ERTs and Care Teams.
  - b. Identify a local volunteer manager for each area to receive and coordinate volunteers.

### **Stage 5: Long-Term Recovery**

1. As appropriate, work with Conference Disaster Coordinator to provide information and resources to assist in establishing a long-term recovery presence in your area.
2. Continue church presence and relationship building with local agencies in your district.
3. Once a community begins long-term recovery, the focus of the DDC and the District Team transitions back to mitigation and preparedness.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Church**

The point of contact at the community level for all United Methodist assistance in a disaster is the local United Methodist Church. However, the local church is not expected to respond alone or in a vacuum as there are many resources available to assist the church. By working with the church disaster team, the District Disaster Coordinator and the conference Disaster Response Coordinator, many of the connections are easily accomplished.

A disaster may take considerable time (years) to resolve. The local church should recognize and acknowledge its limitations in response. The District Disaster Coordinator and the conference Disaster Response Coordinator will also work with the local church to identify the church's role in long term recovery, should that be necessary in the community.

Churches in the conference do not work directly with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), a resource agency of the general church. When invited by the Bishop, UMCOR provides resources and assistance to the California-Nevada Conference through the Bishop, who will delegate day-to-day operations to the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.

The local church Disaster Coordinator is the point person for ensuring fulfillment of the roles and responsibilities of the local church.

This portion of the conference plan describing roles and responsibilities of the local church is not intended to be the only local church plan. A detailed disaster plan covering all stages needs to be developed for each and every church. The booklet "*The Local Church Disaster Planning Guide*" is an excellent place to start the planning effort.

### **Stage 1: Planning and preparation – Before Disaster Strikes**

1. Working with the pastor or designated church leadership, identify a Disaster Coordinator and recruit a disaster team. The pastor should not be the local church disaster team leader, though the pastor is encouraged to be an active part of the team. If the pastor is not part of the team, ensure that the pastor is informed and updated regarding activities before, during and after a disaster.
2. Develop a local church plan that includes:
  - a. Caring for people
  - b. Caring for church facilities
  - c. Caring for community
  - d. Caring for others in the conference and beyond
3. The pastor and the Board of Trustees should annually review insurance coverage.
4. The Board of Trustees should make an annual inventory of church property and contents and provide a safe repository of valuable records.
5. Communicate with your DDC regularly to ensure knowledge of the church plans in the event of a disaster.
6. Send a copy of your plan to the District Disaster Coordinator and the Conference Disaster Coordinator.

7. Make full use of resources from other disaster-related organizations, such as your local Office of Emergency Services or Police and Fire Departments, the American Red Cross, and others. First Aid and CPR training, shelter management and certification of facilities are all available from your local chapter of the American Red Cross, and should be taken advantage of prior to any disaster.
8. Encourage your church to support the Bishop's appeals regarding disaster relief (supplies, collections, food drives, aid to other conferences, etc.)
9. Encourage your church to support the annual "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering. This is UMCOR's primary source of funding for their work in disasters and other endeavors.

### **Stage 2: Warning – Disaster is Imminent**

1. Working with the church disaster team, confirm communication channels and review response plans within the church, the district and the conference.
2. Check for updates from the district and the conference web sites.
3. Set up a disaster team work area and, if the disaster is likely to have a severe adverse impact on the church, be prepared to identify an alternative location to work from.

### **Stage 3: Emergency Response – After Disaster Strikes**

1. Implement the church Disaster Plan including:
  - a. Checking on the safety of the pastors, the staff and their families;
  - b. Assessing damage to church property;
  - c. Assessing safety of members of the congregation and property damage within the congregation;
  - d. Assessing overall damage to the community you serve.
2. Report your assessment to the DDC and/or the DS. If they are not yet functional, report your findings to the conference Disaster Response Coordinator or the office of the bishop.
3. Identify someone to take the Bishop, DDC, DS, and/or other personnel on a tour of affected area should such a visit be scheduled.

### **Stage 4: Relief**

1. Determine if telephone communication capabilities have been restored.
2. Continue to implement the local church Disaster Plan.
3. Establish the immediate needs for food and shelter to the community.
4. If buildings are damaged file a claim with the insurance carrier.
5. Keep strict and separate accounting of disaster funding and document all expenditures and receipts of money.
6. Concentrate on making folks safe, sanitary and secure by meeting the basic needs of food, water, and shelter.
7. When permitted, organize care teams to check on the most vulnerable church members and clean-up teams to go into neighborhoods; contact the DDC to request ERT and Care Teams when appropriate. Report what level of support you can provide incoming disaster workers, particularly if you cannot support them and they need to be self-sufficient and self-supporting.

8. Prepare to receive work teams that may show up to help.
9. Contact other faith based operations and coordinate your efforts.

### **Stage 5: Long-Term Recovery**

1. Working with your DDC and the conference Disaster Response Coordinator, determine the level of involvement appropriate for your church in Long-Term Recovery.
2. Develop a procedure for referrals of people who contact the church asking for assistance.
3. Develop a procedure for managing volunteers who contact the church.
4. Develop a procedure for handling supplies offered to the church.
5. If your church is not in the impacted area, determine the level of involvement your congregation can make in long-term recovery by providing work teams, supplies, funds, etc.

## **Guide to Acronyms:**

ARC	American Red Cross
CDC	Conference Disaster Committee
CDRC	Conference Disaster Response Center
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disaster
CWS	Church World Services
DDC	District Disaster Coordinator
DDT	District Disaster Team
DS	District Superintendent
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOC	Emergency Operations Center (state & local government)
ERT	Early Response Team
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
LTRO/C	Long Term Recovery Organization/Coalitions/Committees
NVOAD	National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster
OES	Office of Emergency Services (state & local government)
SEC	Spiritual and Emotional Care Team
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UMVIM	United Methodist Volunteers in Action
VOAD	Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster