DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

David Tremain
• Emergencies and disasters can and do happen
• Most emergency situations can be avoided
• Many effects of emergencies and disasters can be mitigated
• Most institutions are not well prepared
“By failing to prepare, you’re preparing to fail.”
PLANNING...

- **What** should be done
- **Who** should do it
- **When** it should be done
- **Where** it should be done
- **Why** it should be done
- **How** it should be done
KEY ASPECTS OF EMERGENCY PLANNING

• Preventing the event from occurring, or
• Mitigating its effects if it should not be preventable
• Cohesive teamwork and collaboration
• Ensuring the right people are involved and properly trained
GETTING MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

• Management needs to be at the table
• Convincing management
  – Emergency planning not a whim
  – Emergencies cost $$$
• Consider the museum to be a business (BCP)
Who needs to be involved?
Everybody was sure that Somebody would look after it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did. Somebody got angry about it because it was Everybody’s job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody would not do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.
The Planning Committee

- Management
- Curatorial staff
- Registrar
- Head of Security

- Facilities Manager
- Administrator/Finance
- Conservator
What needs to be done?

- Assign tasks
- Collect and collate information
What needs to be protected?

- Rare or valuable items (irreplaceable)
  - Type specimens, Field notes
- Vulnerable items (i.e. to water, soot)
  - Skins, Hides
- Replaceable items
- (Potentially) Hazardous items
  - Mounted specimens treated with Arsenic (As) or Mercury (Hg)
  - Mounted botanical specimens treated with DDT, PDB
  - Radioactive minerals
  - Wet specimens
Sensitivity of objects

- Sensitive to fluctuations in temp. and RH
- Sensitive to moisture
- Sensitive to light fading
- Politically sensitive
- Fragile and cannot be moved easily
- Large/heavy that cannot be moved easily
- Small and easily stolen
What does it need to be protected from?

• Identify hazards:
  – Risk Assessment
  – Carry out inspections
  – Collect information
AGENTS OF DETERIORATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENT</th>
<th>CAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Physical Force</strong></td>
<td>Cumulative: Improper handling or support</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Shock, vibration, abrasion or gravity)</td>
<td>Catastrophic: Earthquake, war, floor collapse</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thieves, Vandals, Displacers</strong></td>
<td>Intentional: Criminals, staff, protesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unintentional: Staff, users, pests</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fire</strong></td>
<td>Accidental: Deficient wiring, construction, gas leak, natural/environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intentional: Arson, bomb threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td>Environmental: Heavy precipitation, flooding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human related: Fire hoses, burst water pipe</td>
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</tbody>
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“[T]errorism is a global problem... As long as there are people who are not happy with their lot in life, as long as the United States is perceived to somehow be the cause of this unhappiness, there will be terrorism.”

Cofer Black – former Director, Counterterrorism Center (CTC), CIA
Where can I get this information?
U.S. Organizations

- **FEMA**: Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **DHS**: Department of Homeland Security
- **NOAA**: National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration
- **NWS**: National Weather Service
- **NOS**: National Ocean Service
- **NIFC**: National Interagency Fire Center
- **CDC**: Centers for Disease Control
- **USGS**: U.S. Geological Survey
- **NCDC**: National Climatic Data Center
- State and local authorities
U.S. Organizations

- **NFPA:** National Fire Protection Association
- **AIC:** American Institute for Conservation
- **Heritage Preservation**
  - Heritage Emergency National Task Force
- **AASLH:** American Association for State & Local History
- **NTHP** National Trust for Historic Preservation
- **Department of the Interior**
  - National Park Service
  - Office of Managing Risk etc
- **Smithsonian Institution**
- **ASIS:** American Society for Industrial Security
- **FBI Field Office**
- **US Army Corps of Engineers**
- **World Wide Web**
What needs to be done?

• Meet with
  – Fire
  – Police
  – Insurance
  – City officials
  – Local Emergency Measures Organization

• Form an Emergency Response Team (ERT)
What needs to be included?

- Procedures for:
  - Evacuation
  - Mitigating various types of emergencies
  - Responding to various types of emergencies
  - Salvaging artifacts
What needs to be included?

- Key telephone numbers
- Inventory and priority list
- List of equipment and supplies
- Access to emergency funding
- Alternate site
“One of the simplest ways to ensure help will be available in the event of a major disaster is to develop an emergency response network within your local community. The goal of such a network is to enable its members to pool together their human and material resources to overcome a crisis.” Michael O’Malley
What makes a good Emergency Preparedness Plan?

- Written
- Portable
- Accessible
- Practical, Effective, Efficient
- Clear, Concise, Simple
- Flexible, Revisable
- Comprehensive, Relevant
- Supported by Management
DO’S AND DON’TS

• DON’TS
  – Bury important information
  – Staple pages together
  – Use spiral bindings
  – Ignore security information
  – Be too general
  – Waffle or philosophize!
DO’S AND DON’TS

• DO
  – Use ring binders
  – Use coloured cover
  – Make waterproof copies
  – Separate each section:
    • Use colour code for each section
    • Use tabs
    • Use primary and secondary headings
  • Use footers/headers
  – Include a Table of Contents
  – Date it
  – Identify who prepared/revised it
  – Include procedures for all known eventualities
  – Keep copies offsite
Training options

• Hands on
• Demonstration
• Scenario-based
  – with role-playing
• Table-top exercises
• Training video
PLANNING
Writing the plan

Risk Management
Salvage priorities

Emergency Response Team
Resources

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROCESS

Salvage

RESPONSE
Writing the plan

POST-DISASTER PLANNING

• Hazard ID
• Prevention
• Mitigation