

H.O.W. Ready

COOP Planning for Houses of Worship – It's not just planning for the next hurricane!

The changing threat environment and recent emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, technological emergencies, and terrorist attack-related incidents, have shifted awareness to the need for a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) capabilities that enable organizations to continue their essential functions across a broad spectrum of emergencies.

Did you know there have been 14 “active shooter” incidents since to 2003 in the United States?

- ▶ March 8, 2009 – Maryville, IL
- ▶ Feb 18, 2009 – Garden Grove, CA
- ▶ July 27, 2008 – Knoxville, TN
- ▶ Dec 9, 2007 – Colorado Springs, CO
- ▶ Aug 12, 2007 – Neosho, MO
- ▶ May 20, 2007 – Moscow, ID
- ▶ July 28, 2006 – Seattle, WA
- ▶ May 21, 2006 – Baton Rouge, LA
- ▶ Feb 27, 2006 – Detroit, MI
- ▶ Aug 29, 2005 – Sash, TX
- ▶ April 9, 2005 – College Park, GA
- ▶ March 12, 2005 – Brookfield, WI
- ▶ Dec 18, 2004 – Atlanta, GA
- ▶ Oct 5, 2003 – Garden Grove, CA

Did you know fires are the most common disaster faced by Houses of Worship?

- ▶ An average of 1,300 House of Worship fires are reported each year
 - ▶ Causing \$38 million in property loss.
- ▶ The leading cause of House of Worship fires is arson (25%)
- ▶ 30% of House of Worship fires are the result of mechanical failures
 - ▶ Faulty wiring and
 - ▶ Improperly functioning heating systems
- ▶ Of Houses of Worship that reported fires
 - ▶ 65% had no smoke alarms



COOP planning is simply a "good business practice"—part of the fundamental mission of agencies as responsible and reliable public institutions. For years, individual house of worship have try and figure out their response to emergencies within the confines of the organization while in the middle of the disaster.

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston has COOP training available designed specifically for houses of worship. The HOW Ready Manual provided in the training gives houses of worship the template to create their own personalized COOP plan to respond to the next crisis or disaster



One recent participant, Rev. Alan Van Hooser of Groves United Methodist Church says, “The instructor’s enthusiastic and informative training gave us the framework to deal with security, shelter- in-place, fire, theft and numerous other potential situations. Without the training, our local churches’ emergency response planning would not have become a reality.”

For more information or to schedule a training, please contact Jennifer Posten at jposten@imgh.org or 713-533-4909. Follow Jennifer at http://twitter.com/IM_ODPR