

RESPONSE & RECOVERY

Determine the scope of the disaster. How much area is affected? What is the effect on services?. How much of the staff is affected?

Is the disaster localized to the floor, or does it include the whole building? Is the disaster larger? Are people's lives affected as with flood, hurricane, etc.? If so, a longer lead time is required to get recovery operations under way. Lots of human-factor problems crop up when the disaster is widespread. Stress and adrenaline levels may be too high for some workers to perform efficiently. The need for outside assistance is a must with a wide-area disaster. The outsiders have no emotional connection to the collection or area and no concerns about family safety. Therefore, they can work and provide leadership and recommendations concerning the recovery of the library that are not hampered by human-factors.

Start the disaster response process with decisions about what to do, and get the disaster response team members and staff in place. Call for outside assistance. Determine the scope of problem. Decide if the library or information center will close until the immediate disaster is under control.

Send the designated staff to the second location if the disaster is long-term. If the library is renting a vacant office, this staff should arrange for the rental of equipment, shelves, telecommunications equipment, office furniture, and supplies.

Determine what type of assistance the consultant and disaster recovery company will provide.

Communicate with the staff, clients, and vendors, and let them know the situation and how to contact the library or information center.

Once the response and recovery operations are complete, determine whether the information center will return to the home location at one time or be phased in. Determine how the area will be cleaned and reorganized. Allocate staff and time to get services back to normal.

Recognition of the staff and volunteers for time and effort during the disaster is essential. Disaster response work is a thankless job, so recognition is much appreciated.

Hold a postmortem or disaster response review. Solicit constructive comments from all those who participated in the disaster response and recovery operation. Examine what worked and what did not. Discuss how to correct the problems for the next disaster. Revise the disaster response plan accordingly.

As operations return to normal, check the building and collections for mold and environmental problems. Look at changes in routine as positive. Discuss whether

some of the "jury-rigged" or "shortcut" changes should be incorporated into the daily operating procedures. Perhaps the disaster permitted improving and updating of technology and equipment. Use this as a starting point for some internal changes in the department's operation.