Emergency Action Plan

Fire
Active shooter
Weather

A guide for staff, ushers, volunteers, members, guests and visitors

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

March 20, 2019
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FOREWORD - Low frequency, high risk

A wide variety of emergencies, both human-caused and natural, may require the sanctuary and surrounding spaces to be evacuated, or may require a “shelter-in-place” response. These emergencies include fires, explosions, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, toxic material releases, radiological and biological accidents, civil disturbances, and workplace violence. While these are low frequency events, when they occur they put people and property at great risk, so it is important to be ready.

Different threats require different responses. For example, you may want to join everyone in one designated area inside the Treehouse if threatened by a tornado or perhaps a chemical spill on an adjacent highway, but you will need to evacuate to an exterior location during a fire. An active shooter incident may require you to flee, or to shelter-in-place, depending upon circumstances.

This Emergency Action Plan will describe how to respond to different types of emergencies. It is divided into three sections based on type of threat: fire, active shooter or weather.
FIRE - Emergency evacuation plan

Introduction

If you discover a fire or the fire alarm sounds, your first priority should be life safety. Activate an alarm (if it’s not already going off), call 911, and evacuate. Fight the fire if possible, but don’t put yourself or others at unnecessary risk. Move quickly. Be aware of main and alternate exit routes, and the location of fire extinguishers. Be quiet so you can hear instructions. Help those around you who may need assistance. If an exit is blocked, use an alternate exit route. If all routes are blocked retreat to an office or room toward the outside of the building, where you can be rescued through a window if necessary. Close all doors along the way, to keep smoke out. Remain calm.

Sunday morning

If the FIRE ALARM sounds on Sunday morning or at any other time of high occupancy in the Sanctuary

- When the alarm sounds, evacuate the Treehouse using the closest emergency exit route or stairway. Do NOT use the elevators.
- Make your way to the parking lot and await further instructions.
- Call 911 and report the alarm.
- Do NOT re-enter the building until the all-clear is given by Fire Department or other authorized personnel.

Any other time

If the FIRE ALARM sounds at any time other than Sunday morning or any other time of low occupancy

- When the alarm sounds, evacuate the Treehouse using the closest emergency exit route or stairway. Do NOT use the elevators.
- Make your way to the parking lot for roll call and headcount.
- Call 911 and report the alarm.
- Do NOT re-enter the building until the all-clear is given by Fire Department or other authorized personnel.
FIRST FLOOR EXIT DOORS. There are four clearly marked exit doors, one from the Social Hall (door 1), one from the Front Office (door 2), and two from the Sanctuary (doors 3 and 4).

- **SOCIAL HALL (DOOR 1).** Exit the Social Hall through exit door 1, turn right and proceed past the restrooms. Turn left at the elevator lobby and exit the building through the front door.
- **FRONT OFFICE (DOOR 2).** Exit the Front Office through exit door 2, go straight through the elevator lobby and exit the building through the front door.
- **SANCTUARY (DOOR 3).** Exit the Sanctuary through exit door 3, turn right and proceed down the hallway and through the double doors. Turn left and exit the building through the loading dock door.
- **SANCTUARY (DOOR 4).** Exit the Sanctuary through exit door 4, go straight and exit the building through the loading dock door.
- **ALTERNATE EXIT ROUTE.** If the front door is blocked try the loading dock door. Conversely, if the loading dock door is blocked try the front door. If both doors are blocked, go down to the Terrace Level.
TERRACE LEVEL. If you cannot exit the First Level through either the front or loading dock doors, use either Stair 1 or Stair 2 to go down one floor to the Terrace Level. If exiting Stair 1 go straight, and follow the marked emergency exit route to exit the rear of the building. If exiting Stair 2, turn right and follow the marked emergency exit route to exit the rear of the building.
Information for ushers

Fire Warden
In the event of a fire on Sunday morning, or any other time when ushers are present, you as an usher will assume the role of Fire Warden. As a Fire Warden you will be responsible for managing the quick, efficient and safe evacuation of a section of the sanctuary, social hall and/or other space within the Treehouse as needed and appropriate. You will work in partnership with another Fire Warden to direct congregants and visitors to the designated place of assembly, with one of you leading and the other following behind to ensure that everyone evacuates. As part of a team of ushers you may have responsibility for implementing the PEEP (see below).

Chief Fire Warden
One usher will be designated the Chief Fire Warden, with overall responsibility for coordinating the efforts of all Fire Wardens. The Chief Fire Warden will be responsible for checking offices, bathrooms, and other spaces before being the last person to exit an area. The Chief Fire Warden will also be tasked with ensuring that fire doors are closed when exiting. The Chief Fire Warden will meet the fire and rescue service when they arrive, to provide them with any information they require.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
You will need to be aware of any staff, volunteers, members or visitors who may require additional assistance in evacuating the Treehouse. Please help those with vision or hearing impairment understand what is happening, and what is required of them for a safe and successful evacuation. For those with mobility impairment a wheelchair is available in the front office. If necessary, enlist the assistance of others who are willing and able to help, to ensure that everyone is safely evacuated.

Assembly area
The primary assembly area is the parking lot in front of the building for exit routes from the First Floor through the front door or the loading dock door. For exit routes down to the Terrace Level and out the rear of the building, the assembly area is the open area between the woods and the building. Gather in the assembly area as far away from the building as possible and await further instructions.

Area of refuge
If it is not possible to exit the building through the First Floor front or Terrace Level rear exit routes, assemble inside the building in an area of refuge. The designated area of refuge on the Terrace Level is the corridor leading to the rear exit of the building. Areas of refuge on the First Floor include the Sanctuary and the Social Hall. Stay close to the outside of the building in case it is necessary to rescue you through the window.
Information for staff

Assembly area
If you’re able to exit the First Floor through the front door of the loading dock door, assemble in the parking lot. If you must exit through the Terrace Level back door, assemble in the open area between the woods and the building.

Area of refuge
If you’re not able to exit through either the First Level or the Terrace Level, assemble inside the building in an area of refuge. The designated area of refuge on the Terrace Level is the corridor leading to the rear exit of the building. Areas of refuge on the First Floor include the Sanctuary and the Social Hall. Stay close to the outside of the building in case it is necessary to rescue you through the window.

Head count
Take a head count after the evacuation. Identify the names and last known locations of anyone not accounted for and pass them to the official in charge. Accounting for all employees following an evacuation is critical. Confusion in the assembly areas can lead to delays in rescuing anyone trapped in the building, or unnecessary and dangerous search-and-rescue operations.
ACTIVE SHOOTER - Run, hide, fight

Introduction

Active shooter refers to the perpetrator of a type of mass murder marked by rapidity, scale, randomness, and often suicide. The United States Department of Homeland Security defines an active shooter as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims."

Most incidents occur at locations in which the killers find little impediment in pressing their attack. Locations are generally described as “soft targets” that carry limited security measures to protect members of the public. In most instances, shooters commit suicide, are shot by police, or surrender when confrontation with responding law enforcement becomes unavoidable. Active shooter events are often over in 10 to 15 minutes. According to New York City Police Department (NYPD) statistics, 46% of active shooter incidents are ended by the application of force by police or security, 40% end in the shooter's suicide, 14% of the time the shooter surrenders and, in less than 1% of cases, the violence ends with the attacker fleeing.

Active shooters do not negotiate, but instead attempt to kill as many people as possible, often to gain notoriety for themselves or for a cause they presume to represent. Active shooters generally do not lie in wait to battle responding law enforcement officers. Few law enforcement officers have been injured or wounded responding to active shooter incidents, and fewer still have been killed. As noted, more often than not, when the prospect of confrontation with responding law enforcement becomes unavoidable, the active shooter commits suicide.

In police training manuals, the police response to an active shooter scenario is different from hostage rescue and barricaded suspect situations. In a hostage rescue and barricaded suspect situation, responding police officers often deploy with the intention to contain the suspect within a perimeter, gain information about the situation, attempt to negotiate with the suspect, and wait for the arrival of specialist teams like SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics). However, in an active shooter situation the tactical imperative is to respond and engage the killer without delay. Every moment that passes means that additional lives are at risk.

If you find yourself in an active shooter situation, you have basically three potential responses: run, hide or fight (sometimes referred to as “avoid, deny or defend”).
Run

Your first choice should be to avoid the shooter. Run and escape, if possible. Getting away from the shooter or shooters is the top priority. Leave your belongings behind and get away. Help others escape, if possible, but evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow. Warn and prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be. Call 911 when you are safe, and describe shooter, location, and weapons if possible.

Hide

If escape is not possible, deny the shooter the opportunity to make you a victim and hide. Get out of the shooter’s view and stay very quiet. Silence all electronic devices and make sure they won’t vibrate. Lock and block doors, close blinds, and turn off lights. Don’t hide in groups—spread out along walls or hide separately to make it more difficult for the shooter to find you or anyone else. Try to communicate with police silently. Use text message or social media to tag your location, or put a sign in a window. Stay in place until law enforcement gives you the all clear. Your hiding place should be out of the shooter’s view and provide protection if shots are fired in your direction.

The following list of Treehouse rooms includes an assessment of their suitability as hiding places in the event of an active shooter incident.

Social Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room 1 (K-2, Drama)</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room 2 (Childcare)</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room 3</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room 4 (6-8)</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room 5 (3-5, 9-12)</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copier Room</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Close and lock the door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Work Area</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Room is usually locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Office</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>If unlocked, enter and lock the door; hide under desks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked but could be blocked from inside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sanctuary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Office</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>If unlocked, enter and lock the door; hide under desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet Room</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Door can’t be locked from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No furniture to hide under or behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors’ Office</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Room is often locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers’ Office</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Room is often locked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fight

*Defend* yourself as an absolute last resort, and *fight*. Commit to your actions and act as aggressively as possible against the shooter. Recruit others to ambush the shooter with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, books, etc. Be prepared to cause *severe or lethal injury* to the shooter. Throw items and improvise weapons to distract and disarm the shooter.

Afterwards

If you are able to flee the building, or in the aftermath of an active shooter incident, KEEP YOUR HANDS VISIBLE AND EMPTY—arriving police officers are looking for someone with a gun, and you want them to know that it’s NOT YOU. Law enforcement’s first task is to end the incident, and they may have to pass wounded and injured people along the way when seconds count. Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, and/or handguns, and may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation. Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety. Follow law enforcement instructions. Evacuate in the direction they come from, unless otherwise instructed.

Take care of yourself first, and then you may be able to help the wounded before first responders arrive. If the wounded and injured are in immediate danger, help get them to safety. While you wait for first responders to arrive, provide first aid. Apply direct pressure to wounds and use tourniquets if you have been trained to do so. Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and keep them warm.

Finally, consider seeking professional assistance for you and others to cope with the long-term effects of the trauma.
WEATHER - Thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods

Introduction

Severe weather can happen any time during the year. Severe weather can include hazardous conditions produced by thunderstorms, such as heavy rain, damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, flooding and flash flooding, or winter storms with associated freezing rain, sleet, snow and strong winds.

Thunderstorms & lightning

*Thunderstorms* are dangerous storms that include lightning and can include powerful winds over 50 mph, create hail, and cause flash flooding and tornadoes. *Lightning* is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. Although most lightning victims survive, people struck by lightning often report a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms. In most places, thunderstorms can occur year-round and at any hour, but they can be especially frequent and severe in the spring.

When thunder roars, go indoors! Pay attention to weather reports, watches and warnings of thunderstorms. If you are under a thunderstorm *warning*, find safe shelter right away. During a thunderstorm, a sturdy building is the safest place to be. When indoors, avoid running water or using landline phones. Electricity can travel through plumbing and phone lines. Unplug appliances and other electric devices.

Afterwards, listen to authorities and weather forecasts for information on whether it is safe to go outside, and instructions regarding potential flash flooding. Watch for fallen power lines and trees. Report them immediately.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground, and bring intense winds over 200 mph. They can destroy buildings, flip cars, and create deadly flying debris. The Southeast has a greater risk for tornadoes than other areas in the U.S. Know the signs of a tornado, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar (similar to a freight train).

Unfortunately, there do not appear to be any outdoor warning sirens in the vicinity of the Treehouse. If you are under a tornado *warning*, find safe shelter right away. Stay in the interior of the Treehouse, or go down to the Terrace Level. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside
walls. During an actual tornado, take additional cover by shielding your head and neck with your arms, and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around you.

After a tornado passes, if you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.

If you are okay and the power remains on, keep listening to the NOAA Weather Radio, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) over regular broadcast channels, and local authorities for updated information. Save your phone calls for emergencies; phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.

Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves. Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.

Floods

Floods are a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. Floods are the most common natural disaster in the United States. Floods may result from rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges, and overflows of dams and other water systems. They can develop slowly or quickly; flash floods can come with little or no warning. Floods can cause power outages, disrupt transportation, damage buildings, and create landslides. Failing to evacuate flooded areas, entering flood waters, or remaining after a flood has passed can result in injury or death.

Turn around, don’t drown! If you are under a flood *warning*, find safe shelter right away. Do not walk, swim, or drive through floodwaters. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away. Determine how best to protect yourself based on the type of flooding. Evacuate if told to do so. Move to a higher floor above the Treehouse (there is a second and third floor above the First or Lobby Level). Go on the roof only if necessary. Once there, signal for help.

Afterwards, listen to authorities for information and instructions. Return to the building only when authorities say it is safe. Snakes and other animals may get inside. Wear heavy gloves and boots during clean up. Be aware of the risk of *electrocution*. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off the electricity to prevent electric shock. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water. Avoid wading in floodwater, which can contain dangerous debris and be contaminated.