

Preparing to Preserve:

A 1-2-3 Guide to Building Relationships with Emergency Officials

Historic preservation can be a powerful catalyst for recovery and revitalization in the wake of natural and man-made disasters. It restores the fabric of a community, especially the familiar landmarks of one's neighborhood – churches, schools, stores, front porches, parks – which provide a tremendous source of comfort and hope for survivors. It also supports the quick return of life, commerce, and a sense of normalcy to the community.

Long before disaster strikes, use this guide to reach out to emergency management officials and first responders. Work with emergency officials to ensure that the built environment is not further degraded through inadvertent response actions, demolition, or neglect.

1 Introduce yourself and your organization to your community's Emergency Operations Manager and ask about the emergency planning process.

Find out what skills might be needed to staff your community's Emergency Operations Center.

Host a tour of historic sites and districts for emergency officials, police officers, fire fighters, emergency preparedness planners and Emergency Operations Center personnel.

2 Ask to be included in hazard mitigation and emergency management planning for your community. Offer to take part in the testing and review of the plan and to advocate for its adoption.

Use the "Emergency Planning: Model Checklist for Historic Preservation," sample building assessment forms, demolition, and salvage policies to insert historic preservation into the Mitigation and Emergency Plans.

Join Alliance for Response to partner with cultural institutions advocating for emergency planning for heritage resources.

3 Recruit volunteers with expertise in architecture, cultural landscapes, and historic preservation to serve on Damage Assessment Teams.

Encourage historic preservationists to take Community Emergency Response Team training.

Develop a plan to involve trained volunteers in mitigation, response, and recovery efforts in historic districts.