

## DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

*Commentary:*

Prior to hosting an event or attending an event (away from the parish or school) as a group, the group leaders must make sure they have prepared a plan in case of an evacuation or large-scale catastrophe. Even though the chances of something happening might be remote, it is the obligation of the person in charge to have created and communicated this plan to participants. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Develop and post an escape plan for facilities
- Leaders must know the number of participants and their location at all times
- Leaders must communicate the designated meeting place in case of an evacuation
- For off-site event, communicate with drivers how to proceed in an evacuation
- Establish policy and guidelines for contacting parents/guardians in the case of an emergency
- Make sure there is a published/distributed list of rooming assignments
- Know the procedure to activate an emergency plan (phone tree)
- Assemble two crisis management teams; one team travels with the delegation (on-site team) and the other remains in your diocese (home team). All team members should be available throughout the duration of the delegation's travel to and from and participation in the event.
- The teams can include diocesan or parish staff, parents of participants, or other adult volunteers. If possible, include pastoral care workers (priest, religious, or other trained lay minister) on each team. Each team should have a leader and one back up. Each team member should be given a listing of a manageable number of participants, including their on-site housing assignment, emergency contact and emergency contact's phone number.
- During your pre-trip site inspection, determine the location of an emergency check-in point during a crisis at the event site, and/or at an alternate site, if the event site is unavailable. Participants should be told the check-in point(s) and informed as to whom they should report at that location in the event of a large-scale emergency.

The following information should be available to both teams :

- Location of the event (how the home team can reach on-site team)

- Location of the nearest phone (for on-site team)
- Nearest doctor or medical facility
- Nearest authority (police, park office, sheriff, etc.)

The plan should have the following elements:

- Who is in charge
- Action(s) to be taken in an emergency
- Alternatives
- People and agencies to notify
- Location of law enforcement
- Fire and health facilities
- Evacuation procedures

Information you need to report an incident:

- (Who) who was involved
- (When) date and time of incident
- (Where) location and community
- (What) nature of the illness or emergency
- (How) how did it happen

Name of Event:	
Date of Event:	
Name of Person Completing Checklist:	

On -Site Team:

In the event of a large-scale crisis situation, team members should report to the agreed upon meeting place with their participant list and begin checking-in delegates. As quickly as possible, but within a few hours of the onset of the crisis, the whole group should account for all delegation members. Missing or extra participants should be reported to the group leader or to the home team leader.

To help alleviate a deluge of calls coming to the group leader or home leader and to put worried minds at ease, leaders may also wish to instruct participants with cell phones to call their emergency contact persons/family/loved ones and tell these persons that indeed they are safe, and then allow others to use their telephones for the same purpose. Those not carrying cell phones may be encouraged to place such calls using other available telephones where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

Home Team:

Once informed of a crisis, Home Team members should begin calling the emergency contacts for the participants on their list. If participants are missing, injured or worse, Home Team members should visit the famil(y/ies). NOTE: Group leaders should make sure that Home Team members who might be called upon to visit the famil(y/ies) of injured participants have the appropriate pastoral training to handle the situation.