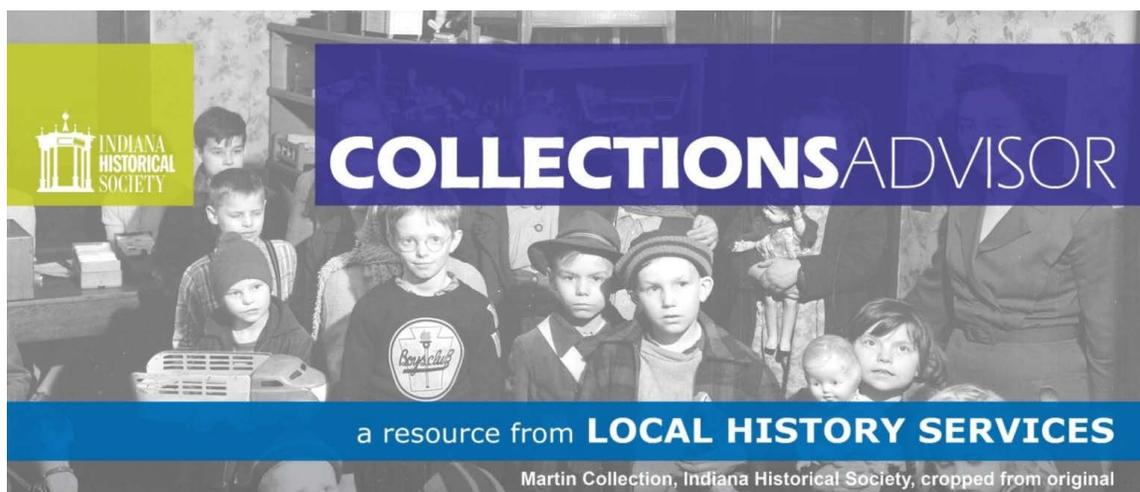


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Disaster and Emergency Preparedness: What do you do when disaster strikes?

by Tamara Hemmerlein, director, Local History
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Everyone hopes that things at your museum, library or historic site always go smoothly. The visitors come; they enjoy themselves and they leave happy. Everyone is accounted for at the end of the school tour and the bathrooms are still intact. The event was a success and will be talked about for years to come. In a perfect museum world, all of that would be true.

In the real world, disasters and emergencies will happen. When disaster strikes, the last thing you want to do is wish you had a plan.

Disaster and emergency planning is not a quick or easy process, but you don't have to start with a blank slate; there are lots of resources available online to help you. The information below is a quick and simple checklist that you can use to begin your planning. You should personalize any plan to fit your organizational needs. Remember to review the plan annually and revise it if necessary.

TRAIN for disasters and emergencies! The plan is ineffective if no one knows about it or if no one has been trained.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness - Before

- **Prevention**

- Assess the disaster risks at your museum
- Mitigate risks when and where possible
- Prioritize collections based on type of materials, vulnerability to damage and historical value
- Locate support networks and resources
- Develop disaster response and recovery plans
- Learn about the [Incident Command System](#) in general and in your area
- Train staff and volunteers to use the disaster



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Southside of Peru flooded, 1913.
Inbody Collection, Indiana
Historical Society

plan

Disaster Preparedness - During

- **Response**
 - Take appropriate actions to provide temporary care and to prevent avoidable damage and injury
 - Notify first responders if necessary
 - Use your disaster/emergency response plan phone call list to notify staff and volunteers
 - Follow your plan

Disaster Preparedness - After

- **Salvage**
 - Remove collections from damaged area
 - Restore objects to as close to original condition as possible
- **Recovery**
 - Begin to return to operational status and pre-disaster conditions
 - Learn from any mistakes that were made
 - Revise your disaster/emergency preparedness plan

Resources

[dPlan is an online disaster planning tool for cultural and civic organizations](#)

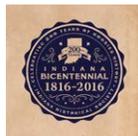
[ERS app is the mobile version of the popular Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel](#)

[The Pocket Response Plan \(PReP\)™ is a concise document for recording essential information needed by staff in case of a disaster](#)

[Smithsonian Institution Archives: Select resources for disaster prevention](#)

[FEMA Incident Command System resource center](#)

[The Getty Conservation Institute: Building an Emergency Plan](#)



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