



Conserve O Gram

September 2005

Number 21/9

Be Prepared: Develop a Museum Emergency Operations Plan

Introduction

It's always "disaster season" somewhere in the country. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornados, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and wildfires can cause tremendous damage. So too can human-caused incidents, such as structural fires, accidents, and crime. Whether naturally or human-caused, all can injure visitors and staff, and damage or destroy collections, historic structures, and other park resources. Disasters do happen. They can occur anytime; and not just to "the other guy."

If your park is threatened, what will you do? Does your park have an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to deal with such crises? If so, is it up to date? Does your plan include all relevant information pertaining to the protection of the park's museum collection and associated cultural and natural resources?

If you answered no to any of these questions then it's time to begin planning and programming for an EOP. NPS *Management Policies* (2001) 8.2.5.2 "Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Operations" requires each park to develop an Emergency Operations Plan "to ensure an effective response to all types of emergencies that can be reasonably anticipated." Every EOP should include a section pertaining specifically to the protection of the museum collection and other cultural resources (a Museum EOP [MEOP]).

Note: NPS Museum Checklist standard E8 references the park EOP.

If your park does not have an Emergency Operations Plan or if your EOP does not include information concerning the museum collection, you can request Museum Collection Preservation and Protection (MCP) program funds to correct this deficiency.

First Steps

1. Refer to *Museum Handbook*, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning. Chapter 10 will familiarize you with:
 - principles of museum emergency planning
 - the types of emergencies that you may encounter
 - risk analysis
 - things to include in a MEOP
2. Contact your Regional/SO Curator for assistance in revising or initiating an Emergency Operations Plan. He/she can advise you on how to proceed, including:
 - Access to sample PMIS Project Statements to document the need and program costs

- Assistance in developing your project proposal, timelines, and budgets
- Copies of EOPs produced for other parks in your region.
 - Examine these parks' EOPs to educate yourself on the various threats, countermeasures, responses, and other applicable issues.
 - You may be able to adapt their plan for your use in the short-term, until you are able to prepare a comprehensive EOP for your park. **Note:** This is a short-term option only. You need to develop a plan specifically-tailored for your park.
- Information concerning museums or other institutions (non-NPS) that may have contingency plans applicable to your situation
 - Contact these institutions to acquire copies of their emergency plans. You may be able to adapt their plan for your use in the short-term, until you are able to prepare a comprehensive EOP for your park.

In the Interim (Before You Obtain Funding for an EOP)

Once you've prepared a PMIS Project Statement to implement or update an Emergency Operations Plan for your park, take the following steps as soon as possible:

1. Develop an Emergency Telephone List (see *Conserve O Gram 21/10* for a sample).
2. Invite all of your local emergency respond-

ers (fire department, law enforcement, and emergency medical staff/paramedics/EMTs) out to your park to tour the facilities. It's extremely important that you make sure that all responding personnel are aware of any special needs, issues, hazards, etc. that they may confront at the park during an emergency.

- Conduct a special "behind the scenes" tour for all of the emergency responders. Then have a barbecue and let everyone "get acquainted." You'll make some important new friends. You'll also be helping to protect park resources.

Also: Make sure that **all** park emergency staff are likewise thoroughly familiar with the special needs of the museum collection during an emergency.

3. Develop an Emergency "Flip Chart" including

- additional emergency contact information
- response procedures

Have copies of the "Flip Chart" in every office in plain sight near a telephone. See *Conserve O Gram 21/11* for a sample.

4. Assemble relevant emergency planning information

5. Conduct your own "risk assessment"

- What are the risks at your park to visitors, staff, facilities, and resources?
- What is the likelihood that a particular

risk will occur?

- Prioritize each risk. For example; at a remote park, crime may not be a high risk, but perhaps lightning and wild-fires are.
- How can you mitigate the risk? If the mitigation costs are high, what short-term measures can you implement for better protection until you receive additional funds?

Refer to Sections B. and C. of *Museum Handbook*, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning for a discussion of various risks and a discussion of risk assessments. You should also consult your:

- Chief Ranger
- Park Law Enforcement Rangers
- Regional/SO Curator
- Fire Management Officers (Structural and Wildland)
- Park Safety Officer
- local emergency management officials

Once again, implementing these and other suggestions does not eliminate the need for an EOP. They are short-term measures to implement until your park has an approved Emergency Operations Plan in place.

For Additional Information

Other individuals and organizations that you can contact for help include:

Park staff

- Emergency Operations Coordinator
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT)
- Law Enforcement Staff
- Maintenance Staff

Regional Office Staff

- Regional Chief Ranger
- Regional Law Enforcement Specialist
- Regional Risk Management Office

Local Agencies

- Police/Sheriff Department
- Fire Department
- County Emergency Preparedness Office
- EMT Personnel
- HAZMAT Agency
- Health Department

State Agencies

- Emergency Preparedness/Civil Defense Office
- Adjutant General’s Office/National Guard
- State Fire Marshal’s Office
- State Police

State Health Department

State Department of Environmental Protection

Federal Agencies

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); <http://www.fema.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency; <http://www.epa.gov>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration; <http://www.osha.gov>

United States Coast Guard; <http://www.uscg.mil>

United States Fire Administration; <http://www.usfa.fema.gov>

Nonprofit Organizations

American Red Cross; <http://www.redcross.org>

American Society for Industrial Security International (ASIS); <http://www.asisonline.org>

International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection (IFCPP); <http://www.ifcpp.org>

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); <http://www.nfpa.org>

National Safety Council; <http://www.nsc.org>

Resources in Print

Bennett, K. Sharon (ed.). *SEMC Disaster Response Handbook*. Baton Rouge: The Southeastern Museums Conference (2000). Available for \$40.00 (\$35.00 for members) from the Southeastern Museums Conference, PO Box 9003, Atlanta, GA 31106, (404) 378-3153.

Dorge, Valerie and Sharon L. Jones (comps.). *Building an Emergency Plan: A Guide For Museums and Other Cultural Institutions*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute (1999). Available for \$39.95 from the Getty Bookstore, (800) 223-3431, <http://www.getty.edu/bookstore/titles/emerg.html>.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry*. Washington, DC: Federal Emergency Management Agency. On the web at: <http://www.fema.gov/library/bizindex.shtm>.

Griffith, Carl and Rick Vulpitta. *Effective Emergency Response Plans: Anticipate the Worst, Prepare for the Best Results*. National Safety Council (2001).

Layne, Stevan P. *The Cultural Property Protection Manual*. Denver: Layne Consultants International (2002). Available for \$25.00 from the International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection (IFCPP), (800) 257-6717, <http://www.ifcpp.org>.

Lewis, Steve. *Disaster Recovery Yellow Pages*. Newton, MA: Systems Audit Group, Inc. (2002). Available in either print or CD-Rom format for \$98.00 from Systems Audit Group Inc., 25 Ellison Road, Newton, MA 02459, (617) 332-3496, <http://www.disaster-help.com>.

National Fire Protection Association. *NFPA 1600: Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs*. Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association (2004).

National Park Service. *Museum Handbook*, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning. Washington, DC: National Park Service (2000). On the web at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/mushbkI.html>.
_____. *Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Response*. Washington, DC: National Park Service (1993). Available on the web at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/primer/primintro.html>.

National Safety Council. *On-Site Emergency Response Planning Guide*. Itasca, IL; National Safety Council (2003).

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations*. OSHA Publication 3088. Washington, DC: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (2001). Available on the web at: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3088.pdf>.

_____. *Principal Emergency Response and Preparedness: Requirements and Guidance*. OSHA Publication 3122-06R. Washington, DC: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (2004). Available on the web at: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3122.pdf>.

Steven P. Floray
Museum Specialist
National Park Service
Park Museum Management Program
Washington, DC

The *Conserve O Gram* series is published as a reference on collections management and curatorial issues. Mention of a product, a manufacturer, or a supplier by name in this publication does not constitute an endorsement of that product or supplier by the National Park Service. Sources named are not all inclusive. It is suggested that readers also seek alternative product and vendor information in order to assess the full range of available supplies and equipment.

The series is distributed to all NPS units and is available to non-NPS institutions and interested individuals online at http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/cons_toc.html. For further information and guidance concerning any of the topics or procedures addressed in the series, contact the NPS Museum Management Program, 1849 C Street NW (2265), Washington, DC 20240; (202) 354-2000.