

April 2021

# THE CHURCH GUARDIAN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM SHEEPDOG CHURCH SECURITY



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## TOP NEWS STORY

### OXNARD MAN ACCUSED OF SEXUALLY ASSAULTING 3 TEENAGE GIRLS HE MET AS CHURCH VOLUNTEER

An Oxnard man has been arrested on suspicion of various sex crimes, including rape, against three teenage girls he met while volunteering at a local church, officials said Wednesday. Isaias “Carlos” Vasquez, 44, is accused of attacking two girls after luring them to Oxnard area motels under the pretense of cleaning jobs, and sexually assaulting a third girl in a car in the Ojai area, Oxnard police said in a news release.

Source: [CLICK HERE](#)

# TRAINING SPOTLIGHT

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## Severe Weather and Natural Disasters

What would you say is the single greatest threat your church faces? Is it crime from individuals in the surrounding neighborhood? Perhaps it's the threat of abuse for children or at-risk adults within the congregation? Maybe it is the potential for disruptive individuals to enter the church. While all are valid, those are likely not the greatest threats – that title goes to natural disasters.

From fires to flooding to earthquakes, winter storms, droughts, and even volcanic eruptions, nature's awesome power can be devastating to your church's structure, grounds and even congregation. This course delivers vital information on understanding the wide range of severe weather threats that could affect your church structure, grounds and congregation. It is expertly designed to help ensure that you're able to accurately plan for hazardous incidents and severe weather, and to train church staff and congregation members on these threats. Click on the picture below to learn more about the Severe Weather and Natural Disasters Online Training!



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# WEEKLY TEAM BRIEFING

## Dealing with Severe Weather and Disasters

### *Whether the Weather*

Severe weather and disasters was March's theme. The articles in this series were "The Will of the Wind" (All Kinds of Windstorms), "Heat & Cold, Flood & Drought" (Extreme Conditions), "On Shaky Ground" (Tectonic Disasters and Other Geologic Events), and "By Human Hands" (Man-Made Disasters).

A well-known saying by Charles Dudley Warner is, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." A common proverb is, "You can't stop the rain, but you can fix the roof." The focus of this series is knowing what severe weather events to expect and how to protect the church and its members at those times.

There are several types of windstorms, and more than wind itself is involved, including lightning, hail, heavy rain, flash floods, landslides, and storm surges. There are temperature and humidity extremes and dust storms. From beneath the ground come earthquakes, volcanoes, and sinkholes. Not all disasters are natural. Some are technological: traffic accidents, power failures, explosions, computer failures, hazardous materials, and structural failures. Whatever events are more probable in your area there are alerts to heed and measures to take. We may be able to reduce the probability of some of these as well as prepare to deal with them.

### *Lessons Learned*

March's article was "The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting." The lesson learned is "Watch the gate." Be aware of who's coming in and how they act. Be ready to respond if necessary.

*"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22).*

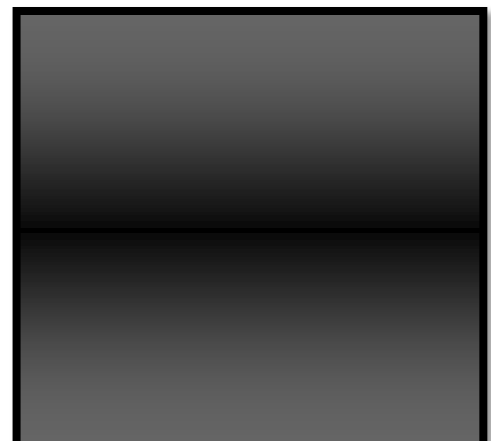
# Weekly Team Briefing Continued

## Action Points

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- ♦ Find out what severe weather, geological events, and technological disasters are more likely in your area and your church's location.
  - ♦ Note: strong earthquakes may be more likely than you realize, and you may be downwind of ash from a volcanic eruption hundreds of miles away.
  - ♦ Volcanic glacial mudflows impacting cities are more likely to originate in the Cascade Mountains and Alaska than elsewhere in North America.
- ♦ Which events, though less likely, are severe enough and with a high enough probability (for instance within 60 years) to warrant some preparation.
- ♦ Be sure that insurance will cover the most likely and the most severe events.
- ♦ Equip the church to receive alerts of severe events and to notify the congregation if needed.

*For [God] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45).*



# The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting

## A MONTHLY FEATURE LOOKING AT CHURCH SHOOTING INCIDENTS

*The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brothers, who kept watch at the gates, were 172 (Nehemiah 11:19).* ~ Temple gatekeepers were selected to live in Jerusalem after the wall was rebuilt.

### A Day of No Peace for Our Lady of Peace

For a long time, churches had been open and welcoming institutions in their neighborhoods, even in large cities and their suburbs. Anyone could walk in to meditate or pray. That's how it was at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Lynbrook, New York on Long Island about two miles east of JFK Airport. Then the peace was broken.

On a Tuesday morning, March 12, 2002, a handful of parishioners gathered for the 9 o'clock mass. In came a visitor, someone no one there knew. He parked his car in front of the church, came inside the front door, left and came back again. Standing in the vestibule, he fidgeted for a while. As the priest finished his homily and turned around, the visitor entered the sanctuary, pulled a .22 rifle out from his trench coat, lifted it to aim, and shot the priest in the back. Then he shot an elderly woman praying in the front pew.



The next four shots hit no one. A former Marine and Vietnam veteran had grabbed the rifle and was wrestling the gunman for it. He had been watching the visitor the entire time and rushed to intercept him when he shouldered the rifle.

Having lost his weapon, the gunman ran out of the church and to his apartment only a block away. The priest and the woman died, but they were the only casualties.

## Off Meds, off the Wall

The shooter, a man in his mid-thirties, was a paranoid schizophrenic who had been released from a mental hospital. He had been unable to hold down a job since his release and had just lost his last one. Apparently, mental health caseworkers either lost track of him or failed to follow up, and he had stopped taking his medications.

The killer had graduated from an all-boys Catholic high school about six-to-eight miles from the church. A blogger sharing a New York Times article stated that the shooter "was victim of pedophile priests." However, although the NYT article highlighted the "death list" found in the shooter's apartment and mentioned his high school, there was no mention of sexual abuse. It did describe his behavior in college and in places he had lived, and it is consistent with mental illness, especially paranoid schizophrenia.

Whatever his motive was, he had a "death list" of musicians and others who led in worship at the church just a block away from his apartment, even though he did not know any of them personally. It seems that this church was targeted because it was the nearest one. Before moving to that neighborhood, he had roomed in a town to the east and attended the local Catholic church there. We do not know about his encounters with priests while a youth, but in 2002 sexual abuse by priests was big news, and a paranoid schizophrenic could have put himself into the stories.

The murder weapon was purchased with a stolen credit card the day after the killer had lost his job. He signed the NCIS form for a background check, and it cleared. This was in spite of his involuntary commitment to a mental health facility and his violation of a restraining order for domestic violence. At that time, many local jurisdictions did not always forward information to the national database. Some still don't. In reference to this case, a 2003 post on a mental health support website said, "But it was [his] lawbreaking acts of domestic violence that would have put him on the NICS database" (we hid his name).

## The Unofficial Watchman

More people would have been injured or killed had it not been for one person, Gerald Denk. The former marine was standing in the back of the sanctuary off to one side where he could see the vestibule through an interior window. He had seen the gunman enter, leave, and return, and kept his eyes on him.

When the visitor pulled out his rifle, Denk ran into the vestibule through a side door, raced around to the main door, and charged the gunman from behind. After Denk had taken the rifle, the gunman ran out the door, up the street, and into the building that had his apartment. Denk followed.

Police arrived, surrounding the building. The killer held out until the police stormed the apartment. He attacked an officer with a knife as he was being arrested.



## Afterwards

How did those on the scene react? What was the legal resolution of this case? And what changes in safety and security were made by the church?

### *That Day*

Church members tried to help the shooting victims, but they died. The school adjoining the church was locked down. Denk and another parishioner (an off-duty policeman) followed the killer to his residence a block away. Responding police were able to besiege the suspect until arresting him. The school lockdown was maintained until the killer's arrest.

Since the pastor-priest had been killed, the diocese provided an immediate temporary replacement. Several months later, a permanent priest arrived who held the congregation together and helped them heal from the hurt of the attack.

### *Trial and Judgement*

The killer was tried for murder, attempted murder, and assaulting a police officer the following year. This was after being found competent to stand for trial. He refused to let his attorney enter an insanity plea, and tried to blame his neighbor for the shootings. However, the evidence against him was solid, and he was convicted. He is serving life sentences in a state prison. If he had allowed the insanity plea, he could have been indefinitely confined to an institution for the criminally insane, essentially the same sentence in a different setting.

### *Security and Safety*

There is no public mention of safety and security measures established since the shooting. Neither has there been a similar incident. However, the church's Facebook page has videos of Sunday masses taken by a set camera. This suggests that there may be other cameras in place. Besides enabling members who cannot attend to be able to view a service remotely, knowing that cameras are watching may be a deterrent to some. Not publicly disclosing other security measures may be intended to keep them confidential.

Each page on the parish website, Our Lady of Peace Church carries this notice: "VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND SCREENING - Please [CLICK HERE](#) for a volunteer background screening update." This links to: Background Screening Update [of] The Office for the Protection of Children and Young People. With this much in place, it would not be a far step to train greeters and ushers in church safety & security, as is now done in many other Catholic churches.

## Lesson Learned

The lesson learned in the 2002 Our Lady of Peace church shooting is Watch the Gate. Levites served as gatekeepers in the Tabernacle, the First Temple and the Second Temple. There were enough of them to always have watchers at each gate. Anyone entering the Temple grounds knew they were being watched. Being Levites, they were officially part of the ministry.

Most churches have greeters at the doors where attenders come in - at least before the worship service begins. Welcoming people to the church is a ministry, but there is more potential than just giving a smile and handing out bulletins. Greeters can answer questions and give directions. They can also be eyes and ears, noticing the demeanor of those coming in, observing behavior of those in the foyer vestibule, and hearing sounds in general and some things that are said.

The incident at Our Lady of Peace would have been even more tragic except for the watchfulness of one person. Gerald Denk was standing in the back corner of the sanctuary during mass, where he could see through the interior window into the vestibule. He noticed the behavior of the young man who came in and did what he could when the rifle was pulled out.

Since the shooter was not personally known to people at Our Lady of Peace and he was not on the public radar, those in the church could not have watched out for him specifically. But someone observing his behavior and mannerisms did become suspicious enough to keep an eye on him. If a greeter or safety team member had stayed in the vestibule that morning, then:

- ♦ The visitor would have known someone was there watching, which may or may not have deterred the attack.
- ♦ The gatekeeper would have been in a position to respond more quickly. As it was, when Denk saw the rifle, he had to exit the corner door into the vestibule, dash to the center door, then turn and go in.
- ♦ If a greeter/gatekeeper had been properly trained, he or she would have been ready to respond.

The lesson learned: *Watch the Gate*.

[Click Here for References](#)



# THE WILL OF THE WIND

## All Kinds of Windstorms

An article in the series *Dealing with Weather and Disasters* based on the *Sheepdog Church Security Training Course Severe Weather and Natural Disasters v3[1]*

## Introduction

Wind and windstorms have become part of our idiom (the way we speak), being used in figures of speech. A few examples are:

- ♦ *"They went through the place like a whirlwind."*
- ♦ *"If I don't get home soon, she'll be Category 5."*
- ♦ *"It looks like a tornado hit this room."*
- ♦ *"He was buried in a blizzard of paperwork."*
- ♦ *"This crisis was a perfect storm."*
- ♦ *"This project faces a headwind."*

Before modern meteorology with satellite images, Doppler radar, computer programs, and real-time communication, we didn't know where the wind came from, what caused it, or when and where it would hit next. Some people thought the wind had a mind and will of its own. Modern science and technology has enabled us to figuratively "read the mind" of the wind (though we are sometimes wrong).



Now we can look at a map showing wind speed and direction along with lines of temperatures and air pressure. Maps can also track the projected paths of a hurricane, supercell, or winter storm. Our mobile phones can sound an alert when there's a tornado warning for where we are.

## IN THE NEWS

Dover, Ohio, September 14, 2008 - Halfway through a Sunday evening service, the power went out for a few seconds then came back on. It took several minutes for the mercury vapor lights to return to full brightness. Then the power went off and stayed off. The service was ended and congregants went outside, where it was still light, then started home. Some had to go around downed trees; some had to detour around blocked roads. The power in most places was out for days.

*The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes (John 3:8).*

What happened? Tropical Storm Ike. As a hurricane, it hit the Gulf Coast just three days before, downgraded to a tropical storm with a 400-mile-plus radius, and headed north. As the leading edge of the storm spread over Lake Michigan, its winds regained hurricane force. Damage in Ohio was widespread and in places severe. "There were 370,000 outages in the state capital of [Columbus](#)." [2][3]

Indiana, Ohio, and Alabama, January 11, 2020 - High winds and rain moved through Indiana and Ohio, and severe weather claimed 11 lives in Alabama. In Ohio, a tornado touched down near Troy, while about 100 miles away, strong winds blew the steeple and several bricks off a historic church in Portsmouth. [4]

Lake Charles, Louisiana, August 27, 2020 - Hurricane Laura was a Category 4 storm when it struck the coast of Louisiana, centered on Lake Charles. Churches in the area were destroyed or heavily damaged. Many of these churches had been hit by Hurricane Rita 15 years earlier. Among the dead was the pastor of a church in Iota. COVID19 pandemic restrictions resulted in no shelters for hurricane evacuees. [5]

Sugarcreek, Ohio, June 5, 2010 - A wedding at a church near Sugarcreek was interrupted when the power went out. A tornado warning was received, and everyone went to the basement hallway until an all-clear was sounded. An EF1 tornado had touched down in a nearby county. It tore into and through Sugarcreek, creating power outages and damaging roofs. [6] This was the eleventh tornado in Tuscarawas County since 1950. [7] The wedding resumed without power. Another tornado (the twelfth) skipped through nearby New Philadelphia on September 17. [8]

## Special Resource

Our special downloadable resource for March is *Emergency Supply List Recommendations (Essential supplies to have on hand in a disaster or emergency event)*. [9] Click [\\*HERE\\*](#) to get it. If you're not already subscribed to our weekly updates and *The Church Guardian* (the monthly newsletter), this will sign you up.

More information is available in the *Security Guide* article "Preparing Your Church for Natural Disasters"[10] and the *Sheepdog Church Security* training course *Severe Weather and Natural Disasters*.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Taking a Blow

For those who have suffered serious damage from a windstorm, "Taking a blow" is not just a pun. It is the reality of feeling like you've been punched. Just ask those who have lost their homes, their shopping places, their schools, their workplaces or businesses, and their places of worship. Most hurtful are suffering physical injury and loved ones and friends being killed.

*Terrors overtake  
him like a flood;  
in the night a  
whirlwind carries  
him off  
(Job 27:20).*

As a Church Safety Ministry, we can't prevent windstorms and the related lightning or hail. We can help church leadership know how to prevent or minimize damage from these weather events. More importantly, we can work toward making strong storms survivable for those inside. If the congregation is building a new structure or renovating/remodeling an existing one, storm survivability can be included in the design. Some improvements may be made to the present church building. The goal is taking the blow without injuries or lost lives.

## Featured Equipment

From the items of equipment recommended for dealing with severe weather we are featuring the [Midland WR300](#), *Deluxe NOAA Emergency Weather Alert Radio*.<sup>[11]</sup> Its features are:

- ♦ S.A.M.E. Localized Programming,
- ♦ 60+ Emergency Alerts, &
- ♦ Alarm Clock w/ AM/FM Radio.

S.A.M.E. means it can bring you weather reports and alerts specific to your location. This radio can also pick up other public emergency alerts, such as hazmat incidents, wildfires, etc. If it is on AM or FM radio, it will automatically switch to incoming alerts.

## Kinds of Windstorms

There are several kinds of windstorms. They fall into four broad categories: Winter Storms, Thunderstorms, Desert Storms, and Cyclonic Storms.

## *Winter Storms*

The first three weeks of March are in Winter, so it is not surprising that most of us still have winter storms coming our way. For a *Church Safety Ministry* this means not putting snow shovels, snow blowers, and salt in storage until the end of the month.

Pacific Winter Storms originate as North Pacific Extratropical Storms that move inland and across the continent. They are usually moderately cold. Temperatures may get into single digits but usually bottom out in the teens. However, a moisture-laden ocean air mass delivers snow. It is common for church services to be cancelled at least a couple of times during the season in Northern and Mountain states. When services are held, Safety Team members need to keep outside walkways cleared and salted and be ready to assist people having a hard time walking outside.

*"... and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you" (Job 1:19).*

Another type of winter storm is Arctic air masses moving south into the United States as Polar Vortexes (Alberta Clippers). When they come far enough south, they move east. However, those coming south into the Intermountain region (between the Cascades and the Rockies) may move west through low points in the Cascades - such as Snoqualmie Pass and the Columbia Gorge - and hit west side communities, such as Seattle or Portland. A Polar Vortex brings extreme cold. States in the Northern Plains are especially likely to have very low temperatures.

## *Thunderstorms*

*But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land (Acts 27:14).*

Thunderstorms[12] are usually in season mid-Spring to mid-Fall in the North and year-long in the South. They are also more diverse in their manifestations - lightning, hail, tornadoes, downbursts, derechos, and flash floods - and are potentially very destructive, more so collectively than all but the most severe hurricanes. For one thing, they are more common and widespread. For another thing, tornadoes have such concentrated power[13], followed by derechos (intense, long-lasting, straight-line winds).[14]

## *Lightning and Hail*

Damage from lightning and hail is not very common but does happen. Lightning often goes straight to the ground from lightning rods on the roof of a church. However, the grounding cable should be firmly connected to the ground rod. This should be checked on patrols following lawn care since they can be damaged by mowers. Then too, some lightning strikes may have more energy than the lightning rods can handle. Church fires have started by lightning.

Lightning damage to electrical systems and electronics is more common. A direct strike is not needed, just one close enough to send a strong surge through electric lines. Have surge suppression in place to protect sensitive equipment. Also, back up vital church data to non-magnetic removable data storage, such as CDs and DVDs.

A hailstorm can damage roofs and vehicles. Have damaged roofs fixed to prevent leakage and water damage.

## *Tornadoes*

Tornadoes, also called cyclones and whirlwinds, are often deadly. Church design can minimize damage from all but the strongest tornadoes. More important is having and identifying areas which can be used as storm shelters. Suitable shelters are interior spaces (no outside walls) with no windows that have a narrow, sturdy ceiling, strong walls, and an inner-opening door which can be barred. Ideally, this is a basement corridor and restrooms. Even better are basement classrooms extending into the ground (when the church is built on a slope).

## *Derechos*

A *derecho* [deh-RAY-cho] is a long-lasting strong wind spawned by a thunderstorm supercell. It can extend for miles bringing damage as severe as an EF0 or EF1 tornado. The damage is all in one direction instead of circular.[15]

## *Desert Storms and Winds*

Desert storms include dust storms and sandstorms (which differ by the content of carried material). Sandstorms can erode building and vehicle surfaces. Dust storms can force dust through door jams and window casings if they're not tight enough. Haboobs (named after similar storms in Sudan) are giant dust storms with dust clouds up to 8,000 feet high moving as a giant wall. They "occur when winds from dying thunderstorms push downward and pick up sand and dirt across desert areas." [14] In the U.S. they usually form in the Phoenix, AZ, area.

Further west, hot winds seasonally blow from deserts through the mountains into western California and southwestern Oregon. They can dry crops and bring extreme temperatures, and sometimes whip small fires into firestorms.

## *Cyclonic Storms*

These are the largest storms on the planet, often hundreds of miles wide. They are called cyclones after the smaller cyclones (tornadoes) because of their rotation. The wind speed increases closer to the center of the cyclonic system and is at its maximum in the eye wall. The eye itself is calm air.

Cyclonic systems[17] may be tropical, subtropical, or extratropical depending on where they form. For instance, Hawaii is in the tropics, Florida is in the North Subtropical Zone, and the Mid-Atlantic states are in the Temperate Zone. Alaska stretches from the Temperate Zone through the Sub-Arctic, to the Arctic Zone.

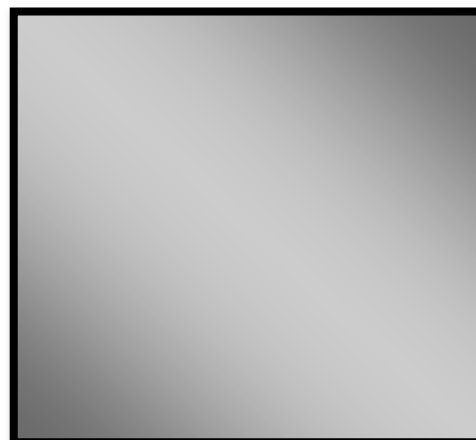
Cyclonic systems are labeled for their wind strength: Depression, Storm, Hurricane. The top-level tropical system is called a hurricane if it forms in the Atlantic Ocean or the northeastern Pacific Ocean, a typhoon if in the northwestern Pacific Ocean, and a cyclone if in the Indian Ocean. Both hurricanes and typhoons have hit Hawaii.

Cyclonic systems form when warm and cool air and/or water currents meet. Tropical systems draw strength from warm ocean waters.

## *Hurricanes*

Hurricane season in the United States usually runs from June to October, but can begin as early as May and last into December. Hurricanes and tropical storms make landfall in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Gulf Coast and Atlantic states, and Hawaii. Rarely does the remnant of a Pacific hurricane reach California. The major threats from a hurricane are high winds, storm surges, massive rain, and tornadoes. Most casualties are by flooding from storm surges and rain, though falling trees and downed power lines have killed many.

		<h1>RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT FOR SAFETY MINISTRIES</h1>  <p>VISIT THE SDCS ONLINE STORE</p>
		
		





## *How can a Church Safety Ministry save lives in a hurricane?*

Days before, when the community is in the projected path of the storm, prepare the congregation for evacuation. Urge them to evacuate in time. Arrange help for those who cannot evacuate on their own. Plan where the church can regroup in safety to account for each member and notify others that they are OK. Board up windows to minimize damage.

If the church is not in a target community, but close enough to where evacuees go, it may offer shelter for them. Have enough supplies to provide food, water, hygienic needs, sanitation, and sleeping places for several days. Be ready to treat injuries and respond to medical events.

Make it an ongoing practice to safeguard church records. Considering the possible damage from a direct hit, this includes duplicate records off-site, preferably in a place safer from hurricanes, such as a bank vault, or electronically in another state. It would require a lot of work to load file boxes into a van for evacuation.

## *Nor'easters*

These are called nor'easters because leading winds come from the northeast. They are extratropical cyclonic storms which form within 100 miles of the Atlantic coast where the warm Gulf Stream and cold water meet. Like tropical systems, they can be more than 200 miles wide and can do a lot of damage on coastal communities.[18]

When nor'easters form in Winter (they can come in March), their effects can include blizzards. A nor'easter may merge with a Winter storm crossing the continent or an Icelandic-Greenland Cyclone, forming a super storm. Preparing for a nor'easter is a combination of preparing for a winter storm and a hurricane at the same time.

## *Icelandic-Greenland Cyclone*

This is like a nor'easter, except it comes from the northeast in the North Atlantic. The Icelandic Low[19] between Iceland and Greenland where cold and warm water meet is the beginning point for these cyclones, which then move southwest toward the Maritime Provinces and New England. Prepare for this as you would for a nor'easter. Weather forecasts usually call these nor'easters.


## Conclusion


A Church Safety Ministry needs to know what kinds of windstorms may come in their location and how likely they are, then prepare to protect the flock before, during, and after the storm.

## There Is More

The other three articles in this series on *Dealing with Severe Weather and Disasters* are "Heat & Cold, Flood & Drought" (Extreme Conditions), "On Shaky Ground" (Tectonic Disasters and Other Geologic Events), and "By Human Hands" (Man-Made Disasters). The *Lessons Learned* article is "The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting."

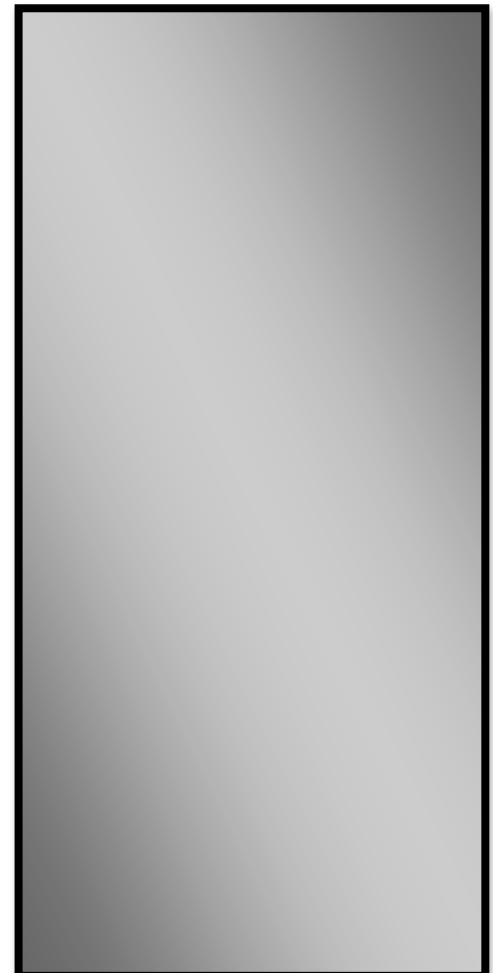
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# HEAT & COLD, FLOOD & DROUGHT

## Extreme Conditions

### Introduction

Like Goldilocks, we may not like extremes - too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry - but there are times we have to deal with one extreme or another. Sometimes, if it's not too extreme, it's just uncomfortable and/or inconvenient. However, these extremes can pose threats to health and life: heat stroke, hypothermia, frostbite, injuries, drowning, dehydration. They can also damage property, and the damage can be expensive and also contribute to other health threats.

As church safety ministries, we cannot prevent extreme weather, but we can protect lives and property.

### IN THE NEWS

About 425 BC the ancient historian Herodotus wrote in his Histories (Book 8, Section 98),

"It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the men and horses that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day's journey; and these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed.[2]

This was used as the basis for the unofficial motto of the United States Postal Service, which is engraved on the main Post Office of New York City in 1914.[3]

### *Extreme Cold*

Virginia Beach, Virginia, January 2018 - Many church services were cancelled with record cold along the East Coast. Even those that were open had lower attendance. Pastors tried to minister to those who did not venture out but stayed at home. They shared their messages through podcasts and Facebook Live.[4]

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

(Genesis 8:22).

There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain

(Isaiah 4:6).

"There I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes"

(Genesis 31:40).

## IN THE NEWS CONTINUED...

Wichita, Kansas, February 13, 2021 - A polar vortex took freezing temperatures and ice storms all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. In Wichita, two churches teamed up to raise money to help homeless people cope with extreme cold. Money they raised bought socks, gloves, blankets, tents, and available rooms in hotels and motels.[5]

Indianapolis, Indiana, January 2018 - A downtown church, a rescue mission, and a city agency teamed up to provide overflow shelters for the homeless during extremely cold weather. This included a temporary zoning variance for the church to provide space to house people. The mission and volunteers staffed the shelter.[6]

Muskegon, Michigan, January 28, 2001 - The pastor of a church was seriously injured when a half-ton ice dam fell on him while he was removing icicles from the church building's eaves. One leg had to be amputated, and a resulting blood clot became a fatal pulmonary embolism.[7]

### *Extreme Heat*

City of Tyler and Smith County, Texas, 2018 - Churches are mentioned three times in the 2018 Heat Reponse Plan for Smith County and the City of Tyler: capacity to house the public, checking on individuals at risk for heat stroke, and providing volunteers.[8]

### *Flood*

Midland, Michigan, May 20, 2020 - Some churches in Midland were flooded when two dams broke. In one church, the water was waist-high in the sanctuary, damaging pews, destroying carpets and hymnals, and overturning the baptismal font. Water had to be pumped out of the basement, where the furnace was immersed. The flood waters also posed a disease risk, since they carried sewage.[9]

### *Drought*

Intermountain Southwest, February 2021 - As of mid-February 2021, large portions of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico were experiencing Exceptional Drought. Even more territory, including other states, had Extreme Drought.[10] And this is during Winter. What will it be in Summer?

## Special Resource and Featured Product

The special *Sheepdog Church Security* downloadable resource for March is *Emergency Supply List Recommendations (Essential supplies to have on hand in a disaster or emergency event)*.<sup>[11]</sup> Click [\\*HERE\\*](#) to get it. You will be subscribed to the weekly email updates and *The Church Guardian* (our monthly newsletter).

In addition to the equipment and supplies list for the church, this document has lists for families - one for evacuation and the other for shelter-in-place. The page for families can be copied to give to church members.

*The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold (Acts 28:2).*

Forewarned is forearmed. This month's featured product does just that by warning you of dangerous conditions. It is the [Midland WR300](#), Deluxe NOAA Emergency Weather Alert Radio, which has S.A.M.E. Localized Programming, 60+ Emergency Alerts, & Alarm Clock w/ AM/FM Radio. It picks up alerts for your location, not only for weather, but also for other public hazards. If the AM/FM radio is on, an incoming alert will override the broadcast.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Preparing for and Responding to Extreme Conditions

What will our response be to extreme weather conditions? Have we planned the response? Are we prepared for the response? Whether we are praying for relief from excessive heat or cold, for rain to end a drought, or for rain to stop, we need to know what else to do and have what we need to do it. May we be able to paraphrase the words of Herodotus<sup>[2]</sup> like this: "The Church Safety Ministry is stayed by neither snow nor rain nor heat nor cold from protecting the Lord's flock."



### *Extreme Cold*

As this is being written, more than half the country, including all of Texas, is in the grip of freezing temperatures with snow and ice. In a significant portion of this, the cold is extreme with temperatures in single digits or lower and the chill factor below zero. What can and should a *Church Safety Committee* do in times like these?



## *Protecting the Building*

The *Church Safety Director* is not directly responsible for building maintenance, but he/she can advise the church's governing board and recommend measures which will make the building safer and protect it from damage.

1. *Keep water lines from freezing* - When water freezes, it expands. Water lines that are closed and/or have bends keep freezing water from expanding lengthwise, so the ice expands where it is, bursting the pipe. Most of the time we don't know the pipe is burst until it thaws and we have a major leak. Even if someone is there and sees the leak when it happens, the leak may be large by the time she or he can turn off the water supply.

- ♦ Insulate water lines in outside walls.
- ♦ Provide heating to keep them from freezing.
- ♦ Keep the building heated, even at a low temperature, to keep inside water lines above freezing.
- ♦ If there will probably be a power outage which will disable the heating system or cut off the heating tape, and the church does not have a generator, then turn off the water supply and drain the pipes. Of course, this depends on knowing the current weather forecast.

2. *Don't let ice under the roof* - Prevent ice dams. This is ice that builds up along the edges of the roof (such as in gutters) or on shingles. Water melting from snow then backs up into any space available and freezes, opening the space wider. Sometimes these fingers of ice can stretch for several feet inside. When they melt, they become leaks. Unnoticed leaks may cause structural damage or foster growth of toxic mold, a well-known health hazard. Keep gutters free from debris so water can drain before it freezes. Icicles are a sign of ice dams.[13]

3. *Fix all leaks before Winter* - The roof, siding, windows, vents - all of these should be inspected and leaks fixed. This makes it easier and less expensive to heat the building during extreme cold. It also prevents damaging leaks.

4. *Don't let excess snow accumulate on the roof* - Roof collapse is a hazard of heavy snowfall. That is why alpine-design buildings have steep roofs. Flat and shallow-pitch roofs are more prone to excess snow accumulation. Remove excess snow, but do it safely.



## *Protecting the People*

Part of the above section protects those in the church from the health hazards of mold, etc., but there are other ways to protect people.

1. *Protect from hypothermia and frostbite* - Have the building warm enough during services, classes, and events to prevent hypothermia. This is especially important when they are sitting down, inactive. If it is too cold for many members to be safely outside when coming to church, cancel services. Use a mass notification service, such as [Alert.Church](#).<sup>[14]</sup>

2. *Protect from physical hazards* - There are physical hazards which often come with extreme cold.

- ◆ Most of these come from snow and ice making walkways slick.
- ◆ Ridges of shoveled or plowed snow can be tripping hazards.
- ◆ Snow and ice can fall from eaves, trees, and utility wires.
- ◆ A slick parking lot can lead to vehicle accidents.
- ◆ Water under a concrete walkway can freeze and expand, lifting one slab higher than the next, creating a tripping hazard. Rope this off to make people go around it.

3. *Be ready for medical emergencies* - Extreme cold can be hard on health. Know how to recognize and treat hypothermia and frostbite.

- ◆ Exertion in cold air can trigger heart attacks and breathing problems.
- ◆ Some persons may be more awkward in heavy clothing and fall.
- ◆ Keep thermal blanket/wraps on hand to warm up persons with hypothermia and/or frostbite.
- ◆ Have the means on hand to heat drinking water or other beverages for a hypothermia patient.

4. *Have supplies on hand for sheltering people* - If your church decides to open as a warming place or a shelter from the cold for the homeless or those who've lost their heat at home, have what you need for housing them. The same supplies can be used if members are stranded in the church, unable to go home (for example, if the roads are closed by a major accident while services or classes are in session).

## *Extreme Heat and Drought*

Extreme heat and drought usually go together.

Services may have to be cancelled during extreme heat if the air conditioning fails. Keep in touch with church members and people in the local community. Check on their welfare. If the church is able to do so, it may be a cooling place. Not everyone has air conditioning, and AC units may fail when most needed. Keep bottled water on hand.

*The word of the Lord  
that came to Jeremiah  
concerning the  
drought  
(Jeremiah 14:1).*

During a drought, use water wisely. Let the flowers die and the grass dry up. Grass will revive when rain returns. People are more important.

## *Flooding*

There is little we can do to prevent flooding. Be alert for watches and warnings of flash flooding during heavy rain. Services may have to be cancelled.

*Then the flood would  
have swept us away,  
the torrent would have  
gone over us  
(Psalm 24:4).*

Is your church building flood ready? If it is where flooding is likely, determine how high the waters may rise inside the church (except in an exceptional flood, such as that in Midland, Michigan[9]). Raise all wall outlets above that. Have the main breakers that high also and put all circuit below the flood level (such as in the basement) on a single cut-off. If likely flooding is forecast, turn off those circuits.

If your church is above any likely flood levels, it may be a shelter for those displaced by a flood. If you are considering this, be supplied for the number of persons you could house.

Not least of all, educate church members on flood safety. Also, train all church van or bus drivers in safe driving during a flood.

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## Conclusion

We can't choose the weather, but we can choose what to do when facing extreme weather conditions.

## There Is More

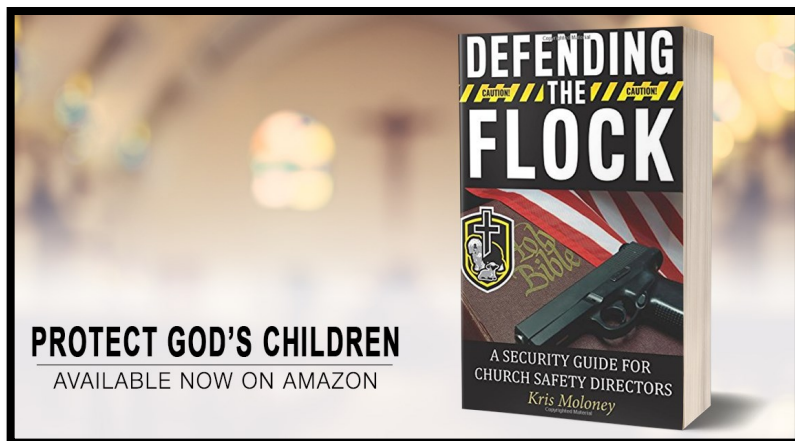
There are three other articles in the Dealing with Weather and Disasters series. They are "The Will of the Wind" (All Kinds of Windstorms), "On Shaky Ground" (Tectonic Disasters and Other Geologic Events), and "By Human Hands" (Man-Made Disasters). The Closer Look article is "The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting."

[Click Here for References](#)

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Churches must be prepared to combat violence from all corners.

If you are not prepared, that can spell disaster, as it has for too many churches across the nation. To ensure that you are prepared for any eventuality and able to curb violent acts, we offer this book.



# ON SHAKY GROUND

## Tectonic Disasters and Other Geologic Events

### Introduction

Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sinkholes, landslides, and tsunamis – these are geologic events. The first two are tectonic, produced by movements of gigantic plates many miles deep that form the Earth's crust and by faults (cracks) in those plates. The next two are more local, movements of rock layers closer to the surface and of the soil itself.

Tsunamis are produced by underwater earthquakes or landslides, and by terrestrial landslides, avalanches, or glacial calving hitting the water.[2]

Jesus said, "For [the Father] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). As with other natural events, churches are not immune to damaging geologic forces.

### IN THE NEWS

*From the Cascade Mountains to Montana and beyond, May 18, 1980* - It happened on a Sunday morning. After two months of rumbling and a growing bulge on Mount St. Helen's northern flank, an earthquake caused the bulge to slide, opening up a lava chamber and triggering a massive eruption. As the mountain literally blew its top, losing over 1,300 feet in height, billions of tons of rocks and ash were spewed miles-high, and carried eastward by prevailing winds. Falling ash covered everything for hundreds of miles and dusted the landscape for thousands more. The ash came for nine hours as the eruption continued.

The eruption began a little after 8 am. Ash began falling on Yakima, Washington before most Protestant church services began, but during early Protestant services, Sunday School, and First or Second Mass in Catholic churches. It came during most services in Idaho (Mountain Time), and arrived as many services were ending in Kalispell, Montana. Farther east, many evening services were cancelled. [3][4][5][6][7][8][9]

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke ... and the whole mountain trembled greatly (Exodus 19:18).

The mountains quaked before the Lord, even Sinai before the Lord, the God of Israel (Judges 5:5).

And ... the ground under them split apart. And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up (Numbers 16:31-32).

## IN THE NEWS CONTINUED...

Charlotte and Sparta, North Carolina, August 9, 2020 - A 5.1 earthquake struck on a Sunday morning. A church in Sparta, near the epicenter, suffered minor damage. Because of pandemic restrictions, the building was unoccupied at the time. In a church in Charlotte, the shock of the quake was felt just as 1 Kings 19:11 ("after the wind an earthquake") had been read.[10][11]

North Naples, Florida, 2012 - Developing sinkholes forced the closure of a church. For a time the pastor was holding services in a church office. By a year later, damage had made the property totally unsafe.[12] The area around Tampa Bay has had several sinkholes over the years. Some experts think this is because of water being pumped out of the aquifer.

Sugarcreek, Ohio, May 2009, and Wadsworth, Ohio, July 2017 - Sinkholes can be caused by the collapse of abandoned mines. This was the case in Sugarcreek, Ohio, in 2009 and Wadsworth, Ohio, in 2017.[13] [14] There were no church buildings involved in these two cases, but churches were not far away.

Hickman, Kentucky, beginning February 2019 - A "landslide" (gradually widening sinkhole) has been growing closer to a church and its parsonage in Hickman. The underground cause is thought to be either abandoned mine shafts or the collapse of a limestone cavern.[15]

Sulawesi, Indonesia, September 28, 2018 - An earthquake and tsunami killed thousands of people on a Friday. Among the dead were 34 students attending classes in a church when a landslide buried it.[16]\*\*

## Special Resource

March's special downloadable resource is *Emergency Supply List Recommendations (Essential supplies to have on hand in a disaster or emergency event)*. [17] It has lists for both the church and families. You can get it by clicking [\\*HERE\\*](#). This will sign you up for the monthly newsletter, The Church Guardian, and weekly email updates (that is if you're not already subscribed).

*And after the wind  
an earthquake, but  
the Lord was not in  
the earthquake  
(1 Kings 19:11).*

## Featured Product

The [\*Midland WR300\*](#), Deluxe NOAA Emergency Weather Alert Radio is the featured product from the Sheepdog Church Security store (Recommended Equipment for Safety Ministries) on Amazon.[18] It has S.A.M.E. for local weather forecasts and alerts. It also has over 60 emergency alerts, including for other hazards (such as road closures, spills, explosions, etc.). Emergency alerts will override AM/FM radio broadcasts.

## Preparing for the Unplanned

Rarely do we have as much warning of tectonic disasters and other geologic events as we do for weather. However, we should know which ones are more likely in our areas and locations.

### *Earthquakes*

**\*\***Strong earthquakes are expected in places such as the West Coast, Pacific Islands, and the Continental Basin (including Yellowstone, Jackson Hole, and the Great Salt Lake), but some occur in the Mississippi Basin and on the East Coast, though not as frequently. Some knowledge of fault lines will indicate where the rare quakes are more likely, such as close to or in the Appalachians (for instance in Sparta, NC[10]).

Normal preparations in quake-prone areas are:

- ◆ Survivable building construction,
- ◆ Anchoring of "free-standing" tall items (such as bookcases),
- ◆ Quake-proof mounting of hanging items (such as chandeliers),
- ◆ No protruding masonry cornices, etc.

Survivable building construction includes soil and sub-soil evaluation. Some soil/subsoil compositions magnify the shaking. Some older buildings may be made more earthquake-survivable. Also, identify quake-safe places in the church for those who cannot get outside quickly. Teach quake-survival practices, such as getting under a table or pew.



## *Volcanic Activity*

Very few churches are where volcanic lava, pyroclastic flows, or ejected hot rocks are a threat. However, a major eruption, like Mount St. Helens in May 1980, can send mudflows down rivers, flooding fields and towns in thick goo. Cities downriver from Mt Rainier in Washington (Seattle to Tacoma) and Mt. Shasta in California (all the way to Sacramento) face that kind of threat if those volcanoes erupt, melting their glaciers. They can also deliver mountains of ash to downwind communities.

Here is where a weather radio with public alerts[18] is valuable. If clouds of volcanic ash are headed your way and you receive an alert, the *Church Safety Director* and church leaders can decide whether to shelter in place, send people home, or cancel services/events. This depends on when the ash is expected to arrive. If services, classes, or events must be cancelled, a mass notification system, such as [Alert.Church](#)[19], can get the message out.

## *Landslides*

Most of the time, landslides are weather-related, caused by heavy rain. Sometimes a section of a hill, mountain, cliff, or riverbank has gradually become unstable and eventually gives way in a landslide. Buildings, including churches, may be below or above the slide. Triggers are not always rain or snow, but could be extra pressure or shaking, such as from a small quake, a train, or road traffic. Closely related are rock slides.

Be aware of any slide possibilities for your church's location. What has been the history of landslides in that area, even small ones? When the probability of a landslide is higher, monitoring the danger is more important.

## *Sinkholes*

There are places in the United States where sinkholes are a real hazard. In these places are underground cavities which can collapse, and sometimes do. Much of the Florida Peninsula is actually supported by subterranean water. When millions of tons of water have been pumped out for industrial, agricultural, commercial, and residential use, it leaves empty cavities. This is especially true in the areas around Tampa Bay and Miami.

Areas with extensive underground mining, present or past, are also prone to sinkholes, especially many decades after the mine shafts have been abandoned. This is especially true when the shafts are closer to the surface. Support timbers can age and become weaker. Deep shafts are surrounded by more supporting material.

On the other hand, water can constantly erode limestone bedrock, especially if the water has any acidity. As dissolved limestone is carried away, a cavern opens. If it is close enough to the surface, it can collapse, letting the ground above sink.

It would be too easy to tell a church to check the records for abandoned mine shafts or shallow caverns before building a structure. It can be hard to find them. Many older abandoned mines were never mapped or were not mapped accurately, so all you can be sure of from the records is that there had been mining in the area. We should also realize that we do not know where all the natural caverns are. We can check for the history of sinkholes in the area. If you can afford it, have soundings (sonic mapping) done to look for underground cavities which may collapse before deciding where to build. Depending on your location, this mapping may have already been done and recorded.

## *Tsunamis*

Tsunamis are large waves of water caused by underwater landslides, underwater earthquakes, or landslides, avalanches, or glacial calving impacting the water from above. When this wave reaches shallow water, it piles up high and can scour the coast. Some tsunamis, such as that triggered by the Sulawesi earthquake[16], devastate coastal communities, with no immunity for churches.

## *Cover Your Liabilities*

Several churches have experienced quakes, volcanic emissions, landslides, and sinkholes, and then discovered that their insurance policies did not cover the damage. After evaluating your church's risk for these ground-based hazards, see whether your insurance policy covers the higher risk dangers. In some cases it's like flood insurance, which has to be added to the standard policies. Look, consider, decide. Some websites such as the *Insurance Information Institute* [20], have advice about insurance for these kinds of hazards.

## Conclusion

There are some natural hazards we cannot actually forecast - earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sinkholes, landslides and tsunamis - at least not to the same degree as the weather. However, we can know which ones are likely in our areas, prepare for them, and insure against the most potentially costly ones.

## There Is More

There are three other articles in this series on *Dealing with Severe Weather and Disasters*: "The Will of the Wind" (All Kinds of Windstorms), "Heat & Cold, Flood & Drought" (Extreme Conditions), and "By Human Hands" (Man-Made Disasters). The *Lessons Learned* article is "The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting."

[Click Here for References](#)

# BY HUMAN HANDS

## Technological Disasters

### Introduction

What can go wrong? Just about anything in this world can go wrong.

- ♦ What if a rust-bucket car sideswipes the church van.
- ♦ The next week, the power goes out in the middle of your child's Sunday School program at church.
- ♦ Later that month, the hard drive on the church's computer crashes.
- ♦ Right after the new drive is installed and data files are restored, a ransomware attack ties everything up.
- ♦ Two months after that, a freight train derailment spills chemicals and causes an explosion, and during VBS to boot!
- ♦ When it is all-clear and the kids are coming in, the porch rail breaks.



And you were wondering what could go wrong!

### IN THE NEWS

*Bolivar, Missouri, August 10, 2018* - A 15-passenger van belonging to a church near Kansas City was carrying youth to a canoe outing in southern Missouri. Traveling down a state highway, a rear tire blew out. The van skidded, left the road, hit a tree, and overturned.[2] Three of the youth were killed and eleven more injured. Later, pastors of the church were expressing their concerns about the safety of 15-passenger vans.[3]

*Northville, Michigan, August 2, 2015* - A strong storm swept across southern Michigan on a Sunday morning. The power went out as a Northville church was beginning its first service. Those leading the service changed the music selections and continued the service without electricity. The power came back on during the second service. The pastor said they realized that worship did not depend on things that use electric power.[4]

## IN THE NEWS CONTINUED...

*South Point, Ohio, October 13, 2019* - A propane gas explosion destroyed the self-standing fellowship hall of a rural church. The church building itself sustained only minor damage. There was no fire.[5]

*Sioux City, Iowa, Week of February 14-20, 2016* - The computer files of a Sioux City church were frozen by ransomware hackers. The hackers demanded payments to release the church's data. Instead of paying ransom, the church had their computer system rebuilt. Police and other authorities were investigating the attack.[6]

*San Juan Capistrano, California, October 15, 2010* - When 16 persons at a school next to a church became ill at the same time, hazardous material was suspected. The fire department was called and a hazmat team responded. The school and the surrounding area were searched. No hazardous material was found. Those who were ill recovered within a few hours.[7]

*Henrico, Virginia, June 26, 2019* - The central part of the sanctuary ceiling in a Henrico church collapsed. Several pews were damaged and dust damaged the pipe organ. Fortunately, no one was in the sanctuary at that time. Their insurance agent advised them to not begin cleanup until after the investigation of the cause.[8]

Speaking about insurance, structural failure may or may not be covered by a policy. Part of this depends not only on the actual cause as determined by investigators, but on terms used in the policy. For example, in a First Circuit Court of Appeals case, the definition of "decay" in an exemption to an exclusion determined whether or not an insurance company had to pay for the collapsed ceiling in a Massachusetts church.[9]

## Special Resource

In March the free downloadable resource is *Emergency Supply List Recommendations (Essential supplies to have on hand in a disaster or emergency event)*. [10] This document has lists for the church and a list for families. By clicking [\\*HERE\\*](#) you can get it and (if you're not already subscribed) sign up for *The Church Guardian* (monthly newsletter), and weekly email updates.

The Security Guide article "Preparing Your Church for Natural Disasters"[11] and the *Sheepdog Church Security* training course *Severe Weather and Natural Disasters* [1] have additional information.

## Featured Product

The featured product from the *Sheepdog Church Security* store (*Recommended Equipment for Safety Ministries*) on Amazon.[12] is the [Midland WR300, Deluxe NOAA Emergency Weather Alert Radio](#), which has S.A.M.E. local weather forecasts and alerts, over 60 emergency alerts, including for other hazards (such as road closures, spills, explosions, etc.), and an AM/FM radio. Emergency alerts will override radio broadcasts.[13]

## Technological Disasters

Not all disasters are natural. Some are technological. Mostly unpredictable, a technological disaster is expected to be accidental, but it can be intentional. Several types are:

- ♦ Traffic Accidents
- ♦ Power Failures
- ♦ Explosions
- ♦ Computer Failures as a Result of Viruses
- ♦ Hazardous Materials such as Oil Spills
- ♦ Structural Failures

### *Traffic Accidents*

Although train, ship, and aircraft wrecks may be classified as traffic accidents, the ones impacting a church are overwhelmingly those on streets, roads, and highways. Some exceptions are a plane crashing into church property, a train wreck releasing hazardous materials, and church individuals or groups as passengers on a flight, train, ship, etc. on church business.

Most traffic accidents are caused by human error, either directly or indirectly. Direct causes could be driver error or passenger interference. Mechanical failure is an indirect human cause: lack of maintenance, mistakes in mechanical work, poor design, manufacturing errors, etc.

## **Avoiding Traffic Accidents and Insuring against Them**

If the church has vehicles, they should be properly maintained, meet safety standards, and be covered by insurance. Only qualified drivers should operate them. Some vehicles may require a state CDL Passenger Endorsement. The church may be liable if it uses private vehicles driven by members to transport unrelated persons to a church function or other event (such as a conference, concert, or camp).

Does the church's liability insurance cover this? If you cross state lines, are you still covered? Consult your attorney as well as your insurance provider. Also cover medical claims for drivers and passengers injured in a traffic accident caused by an uninsured driver of another vehicle.

## **Power Failures**

An old riddle is, "Where was Moses when the lights went out?" The natural answer is, "In the dark." What if he is in your church when the lights go out. The church should have battery-operated emergency lights which come on when the power goes out. That way, attenders can find their way out or to shelter, depending on the cause. Flashlights are also useful during a power outage. One with a traffic wand<sup>[14]</sup> can be used for directing people to safe places.

Some churches have emergency power generators which will come on if the power does not return within a specified time. Not just anybody can properly hook up an emergency power generator. If it is not set up correctly, electrical equipment can be damaged when the power returns.

## **Explosions**

Most explosions in churches or nearby buildings come from gas leaks. Also, boilers and water heaters can explode if relief valves do not function as designed. Fires or other sources of excess heat can cause containers of volatile flammable liquids to explode. For instance, fumes from a gasoline container can be ignited by a pilot light.

Vigilance and maintenance are keys to preventing explosions.

- ♦ Be alert to indications of gas leaks or fumes from flammable liquids.
- ♦ Have gas lines and appliances (including furnaces, ranges, and water heaters) inspected regularly.
- ♦ Inspect and clean furnaces and water heaters annually.
- ♦ Store flammable liquids safely, either in a vault-type room or (preferably) in a separate building.
- ♦ Know where underground gas lines are and prevent digging there.



## Computer Failures as a Result of Viruses or Hacks

Individuals and organizations from local groups to the federal government are trying to prevent computer attacks. The attackers use malicious code, such as viruses, worms, and malware, to infect computers. Criminals and foreign agents (intruders) use phishing messages on websites or in emails and other messages to get the victim to disclose information needed to access the computer. Once inside the church's computer, they may be able to get into confidential data and bank accounts.

There are two ways of preventing cyberattacks on your church's computers: keeping out malicious code and keeping out intruders -

- ♦ Install effective anti-virus and anti-malware programs on the church's computers. Update them frequently. Many anti-virus programs can be set to automatically update. Scan the computers when starting them and before shutting them down. Be aware of any malicious code (threats) the program has found in scans.
- ♦ Practice cyber safety hygiene. Guard against phishing attempts. Do not open messages, links, and web pages with malicious code. Just because an email message claims to be from a trusted source does not mean it is. If it has a link or asks for identifying information, check the sender's email address against your contact list. Learn to look for signs of a phishing message. If in doubt, contact the person, company, or organization directly (NOT by replying to the message) and ask if they sent such-and-such a message. If they did not, delete it.
- ♦ Back up all church data to removable media, such as CDs, DVDs, and external drives. If there is a crashed hard drive, malicious code that necessitates wiping the computer, or a ransomware attack, files can be restored, as was done in the Sioux City church.[6]

## Hazardous Material Incidents

Hazardous material incidents can range from leaking cleaning chemicals in the janitor closet to a truck wreck, an industrial spill, or a fire involving certain materials.

Do what you can to avoid a hazardous material incident within the church building or on its property. If you are warned of an external hazmat threat (such as a tanker wreck or an industrial leak) while services or events are in session, be prepared to shelter in place if there is no time to send people home.

- ♦ Have materials to seal doors and windows.
- ♦ Turn off all HVAC equipment.
- ♦ Bring everyone into an area that can be sealed off.
- ♦ Monitor public safety channels for an all-clear or further alerts.

## Structural Failures

If your church building is old, it should be inspected for potential structural failure. For instance, nails holding up the ceiling in a very old Massachusetts church eventually pulled out. [9] All the roof trusses in an old Ohio church building had to be replaced during renovation done during the initial COVID closure.[15] Weaknesses may also show in newer buildings because of design, materials, or damage.

Pay attention to:

- ♦ Porch, stairway, and balcony railings
- ♦ Canopies over outside doors and passenger drop-off areas
- ♦ Fixtures hanging from ceilings, etc.
- ♦ Any signs of sagging ceilings
- ♦ Distortion of roof lines
- ♦ Cracks in walls
- ♦ Doors and windows which no longer close easily
- ♦ Lifted board ends or loose boards on wood porches, platforms, stairs, etc.

## Conclusion

Some technological disasters may be prevented. Others cannot. Prevent the ones you can, be ready to respond to those more likely. Be sure your insurance covers the more costly ones your church is at risk for.

## There Is More

This series on *Dealing with Weather and Disasters* has four articles The other three are: "The Will of the Wind" (All Kinds of Windstorms), "Heat & Cold, Flood & Drought" (Extreme Conditions), and "On Shaky Ground" (Tectonic Disasters and Other Geologic Events). At the end of the month is "The 2002 Our Lady of Peace Church Shooting," an article on *Lessons Learned from Church Shooting Incidents*.

[Click Here for References](#)

# CHURCH SECURITY ROLL CALL

WEEKLY TIPS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CHURCH SECURITY TEAMS BASED ON THE RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE OF KRIS MOLONEY AND THE SHEEPDOG CHURCH SECURITY TEAM. HOSTED BY KRIS MOLONEY.



## Episode 249: The Will of the Wind

*Windstorms and severe weather alerts.*

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LISTEN ON SOUNDCLOUD

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## Episode 250: Extreme Conditions

*Extreme heat and cold, flooding and drought.*

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## Episode 251: On Shaky Ground

*Tectonic disasters and other geologic events.*

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## Episode 252: By Human Hands

*Technological disasters.*

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## FREE MONTHLY DOWNLOAD



### SEVERE WEATHER SUPPLY LIST

Your Church can play an essential role in equipping your congregation to ride through natural and man-caused disasters. This article provides ideas on how to help your congregants and your church itself prepare.

Click the Picture and enter your Email Address. You will receive an email with a download Button. Click the Button in the email to Download the Safety Ministry Resource.

## MAIL CALL

Messages from Sheepdogs across the country

### Joe Brooks

“Hi Kris, just heard from my Pastor Southbrook Church, Franklin, Wisconsin, and he said he has purchased the program. I appreciate you guys and am anxious to continue with the training program. I have been using the Roll Call emails you send out and forwarding them to the Safety Team members and Staff, great source information, thanks again for your Ministry in the Church Safety/Security world. Semper Fi from a retired USMCRI!”

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# SHEEPDOG'S MONTHLY GUEST ARTICLE

## How to talk to 911

BY: TERRY B.

When the Feces hits the Flabellum... Who Ya Gonna Call?? Ghost Busters?? I don't think so...

That's a great idea but in reality, there are a great group of well-trained professionals waiting to take your calls. These well-trained folks are amazing at taking you thru whatever issue you are dealing with.


Who are we talking about...Emergency 911 Dispatchers!!

The first link in the chain of any emergency response.

Upon answering the phone with a confirmation that you dialed the right number, the first thing they will ask you is: what's the emergency? Stay calm and describe the situation as simply as possible as well as how many people are involved. Give a callback number to them in case you get disconnected. Make sure the callback number will be available. The 911 dispatchers have training, so no matter what the issue is, they can keep you calm and work with you till the appropriate emergency services arrive at your door.

After they hear what the emergency is, they will ask follow up questions. First and foremost, will be your name and the address. Most cellphones have an automatic location sent when you call, but there are times that this either is not functioning or perhaps you're calling about an incident at another location. According to the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), more than 80 percent of 911 calls are made from cell phones nowadays.





The simple question of “what’s the address you’re calling from?” may be simple but during times of stress, even the simple questions are made difficult. The other reason this becomes an issue is that most people just don’t pay attention to where they are. Situational Awareness dictates that you always know not just what’s going on, but where you are. The best way to do this is to note when you enter a building, the building number. Often even if your phone gives a location, there could be a few too several hundred feet discrepancy. I recall when we lived in our former house, when we pulled into our driveway, the GPS would show us in a cemetery up the street. This was always a little unnerving.

Just remember, no matter what the issue is, they can’t help you if they can’t find you.

911 knows who you are, and what you need; now what?? At this point, they have already dispatched the appropriate responders. But your job is not done. You become the eyes and the ears of the responders until they arrive. You can inform them of what is developing and who is doing what. Describe what is wrong with any victims and if anyone is providing care to them. Always let them know if it is an active crime scene. You need to be able to tell the dispatcher information such as if it is an active intruder and what you have seen so they get the right people dispatched to the situation. Inform them of how many victims there are so they know how many responders to send. Follow the instructions of the dispatcher. They may ask you to perform first aid and will talk you through any needed tasks. You can also let the responders know of any dangers. Not just that there may be a person that may be hostile to them, but also if there are pets that may be the same.

The dispatcher will gather as much information as possible. Answer any and all questions they ask to the best of your knowledge. The 911 dispatcher may want to keep you on the line if needed. Other times they may ask you to hang up. Either way, you can rest assured that they are doing everything they can to get the right people to the right place to give you the right help.





Terry Berringer is the owner/operator of Church Emergency Consulting. He was the founder, developer, trainer and director of the security, parking and medical teams of one of the largest congregations in south-west Pennsylvania for over 20 years.

To learn more, click on the image below:



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Emergency  
Consulting**

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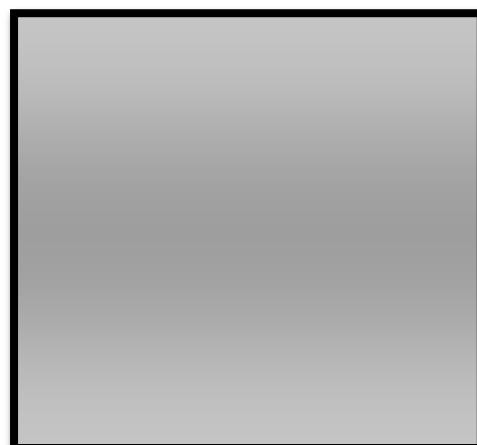
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# ONSITE INSTRUCTORS

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# **SHEEPDOG SEMINAR**

## **SAY NO! TO UNLAWFUL VIOLENCE**

**AT THE SHEEPDOG SEMINAR,** you will learn the steps that must be taken to decrease one's chances of being victimized by violence on faith-based property (and what we teach is applicable everywhere).

**YOU WILL BE** walked through the details of the tragedy that struck New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 2007. On a Sunday in December, an angry gunman arrived at the church. He had already murdered two people 80 miles north of Colorado Springs.

Driven by hatred for people of faith, he shot several worshipers, and murdered two sisters. You will hear the lessons learned by the safety team at the church; what they did right, and what they did wrong.

### **LOCATION OF EVENT**

Carlisle Christian Fellowship  
1825 Suncrest Dr.  
Carlisle, PA - 17013

### **DATE**

June 5, 2021

### **TIME**

Saturday 8:30 A.M. - 1:30 p.m.

### **LEARN MORE**

[Sheepdog Safety Training Seminar Schedule](#)

### **PREREGISTER**

[Eventbrite Sheepdog Seminar](#)

# SHEEPDOG CORNER

*Hi Sheepdog,*

Is that the end of the tunnel? Is COVID going away, just in time for summer? I sure hope so. This has been a tough year for a lot of people. Both friends and family have been impacted by Corona Virus in one way or another.

Personally, I have found it difficult to get anything done in the realm of church safety. Some team members choose to pause their attendance or at least their training. I, somewhat, understand. There was a lot of COVID rhetoric out there.

The good news is this too shall pass! And when it does, we need to be ready to get back to work and training. Hopefully, you are thinking about these coming months and the training opportunities you have available for your team.

I'm thinking about some walk-through drills, just to knock the cobwebs out of our heads. A simple walk-through drill with the team is fairly easy to accomplish. All you need is an empty church and your team. (Although there may be some wisdom for you to mentally rehearse the day.)

The drills may include: Fire, Medical, Lost Child, Abducted Child, Storm, Disruptive Person, Suspicious Person, Active Shooter, etc.

***Your Loyal Companion in Christ,***

***Kris P. Moloney***



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**A Police Officer with over 18 years of experience and a retired Army Captain and Company Commander. He has certifications in Crime Prevention, Security Assessments, and the Crime Free Program. He also has a Bachelor's degree in Ministry and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership.**

**Kris P. Moloney**