



DISASTER AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish formal guidelines in the event of a major natural or manmade disaster or emergency. Health related emergencies are not covered by this policy, but are covered under the “Epidemic and Public Health Emergency Policy.” The Board of Trustees of the North Lake County Public Library District believe that the safety of the public and staff are priority in the event of a major disaster or emergency situation.

GUIDELINES: In the event of a major disaster or emergency the library director assumes the role of person in charge. In the director’s absence, the chain of command follows with the assistant director then the most senior staff member present. The library director assumes the role of incident command. If the director is unable or unavailable to perform this duty, the chain of command follows with the assistant director, then the board chair. If necessary, an assist from the Montana State Library consultant may be required, or IC may be turned over to the Lake County Emergency Management department.

Immediate Response: The person in charge will assess the situation, recognize, and define the emergency. The person in charge will notify, or assign someone to notify, appropriate first responders and the library director if not present, and to the extent possible, will ensure that all staff and visitors are safe and accounted for. The IC will activate the Disaster Plan when safe to do so. The IC will notify the library board of trustees that the Disaster Plan has been activated. The IC will act, or assign someone to act, as the spokesperson, and only the IC or the spokesperson are authorized to speak with the public and media. In the event of a catastrophic disaster or emergency directly affecting those in the library (i.e. earthquake, flood, fire, active shooter, armed robbery, etc.), the lives of the people in the library take precedence over library property. If the individuals are not in immediate danger and it is safe to do so, library property will be secured as laid out in the Disaster Plan.

Aftermath: The IC will follow the steps and utilize resources and contact information contained within the Disaster Plan based upon the type of disaster or emergency that has occurred, with the goal to salvage as much library property as possible. The Disaster Plan is reviewed annually by the library director and updated as necessary. The library director will report to the library board as needed throughout the disaster recovery process.

Staff: In the event of a major disaster or emergency, it is to be expected that library staff may experience trauma, injury or even death. The library board of trustees will work with library management to evaluate the needs of counseling services for staff in the absence of an Employee Assistance Program. Staff pay during emergency closures and Worker’s Compensation Insurance is addressed in the Employee Handbook.

This policy was approved by the North Lake County Public Library District Board of Trustees on **May 23, 2023**.

Signed 5-23-2023
Allen Bone, Acting Chair
Abbi Dooley, Library Director