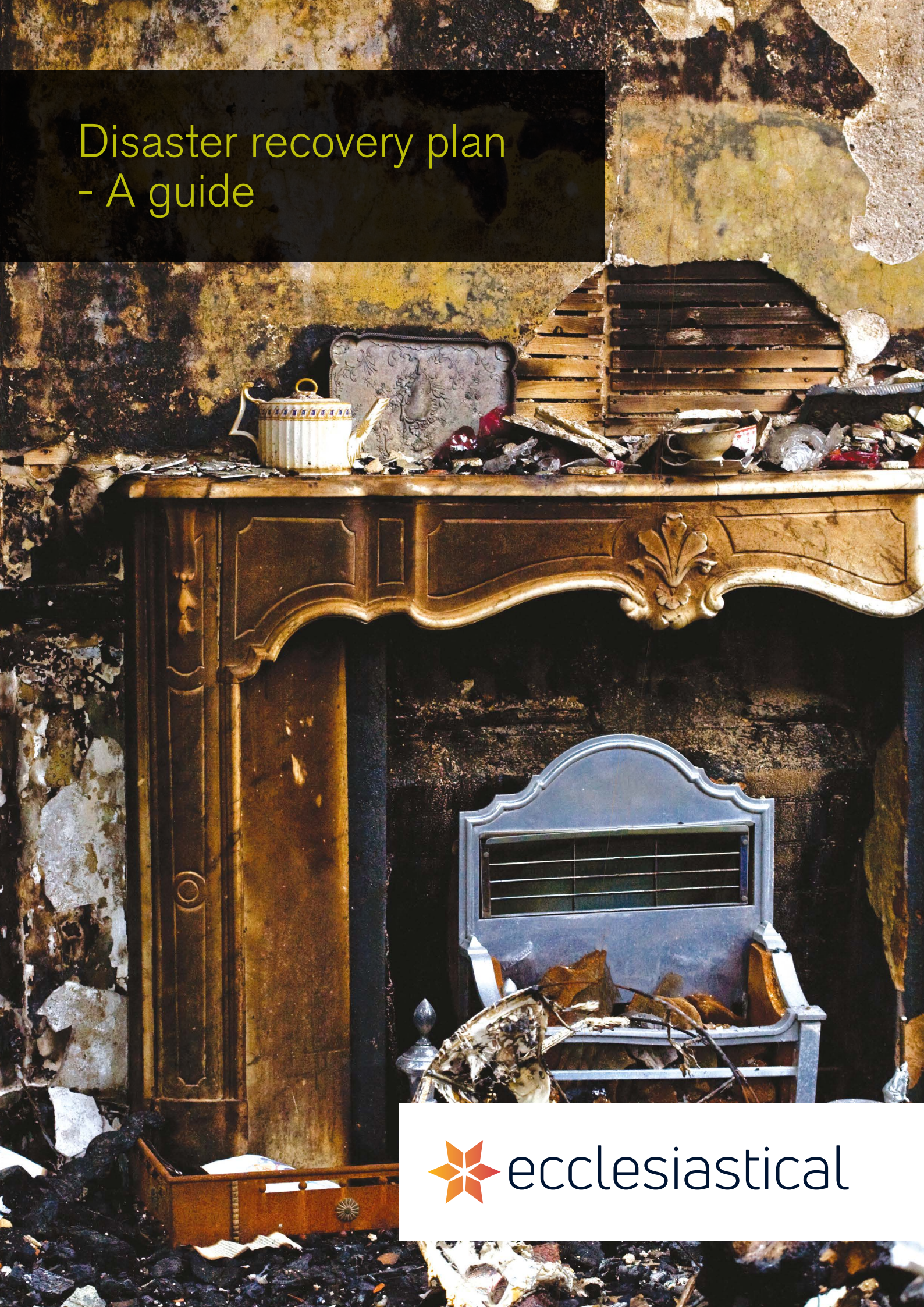
Disaster recovery plan - A guide



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Introduction

Insuring historic property and valuable contents, from fine art to antique furniture, delicate fabrics and furnishings to rare and precious collections, is a highly specialised area of insurance that requires expert assessment and professional guidance. The possibility of disaster, whether natural or man-made, clearly has a disproportionate impact on buildings and items that are by their nature irreplaceable. Many of these disasters remain out of our control; however we do have control over how we react to a disaster, and how we react can help to minimise the impact.

This guide and its associated notes are designed to assist you in creating a disaster recovery plan which can be put into action should an incident occur. Disaster recovery plans do not come 'off the shelf'. If you are a homeowner with a valuable collection your needs will be very different from those who are running a museum or cultural heritage site. In either instance your plan will be solely applicable to your own circumstances. This guide is designed to give you a quick yet comprehensive overview of the sorts of issues that you will need to consider when putting your plan together.

We have created a series of notes (templates, forms, checklists) to assist you in preparing your own disaster recovery plan.



What is a disaster?

A disaster is any unlikely or unforeseen event that can put valued items at risk of serious damage or destruction. This could include:

- Fire
- Flood
- Storm
- Bomb threat / explosion
- Serious injury to staff, volunteers, or visitors.

What constitutes your own highest potential risk will probably depend on the nature of your collection.

Prevention is better than cure, so it's worth remembering that without adequate protective or preventative steps, an everyday mishap could easily result in significant and disproportionate damage. Something you may not ordinarily class as a 'disaster' could still cause considerable loss to property, contents and your reputation, if not managed effectively. You may also find that you are unable to trade for some time if operating a business from the property. Your assessments and preventative measures should act to minimise the likelihood of something happening in the first place or at least minimise the impact. Your disaster recovery plan should sit alongside your preventative measures.

You can find a variety of advice and guidance articles about prevention on the Risk Management section of the Ecclesiastical website.



How likely are they?

No one ever thinks it will happen to them, and in the everyday scheme of things it is unlikely that you will suffer a major disaster, particularly if you have effective prevention in place. But it could happen and if it does, the point of having a disaster recovery plan is to minimise ensuing damage and loss, and maximise a successful recovery through a series of pre-planned actions.

Formulating your own plan means that everyone concerned knows exactly what their responsibilities are in any given contingency. This saves valuable time and maximises the potential for damage limitation.

What is a disaster recovery plan?

A disaster recovery plan helps an organisation to identify the steps required in the event of a disaster to minimise harm to people, buildings, contents, any business activity and reputation. It is an 'information pack' containing the key things you will need to know. Creating the plan includes mapping out your needs and priorities, roles and responsibilities and communications to deal with the incident as it strikes; in the short, mid and long term; and how to recover.

Your plan should include:

- Responsibilities and tasks
- Emergency plan
- Communications plan
- Recovery plan
- Reference to key documentation such as your insurance policy.

Why do I need one?

A disaster recovery plan provides the pre-planned procedures that everyone will follow in the event of a disaster. It minimises confusion, assists the emergency services, and helps with prioritising the salvage of important items. It assists insurers, local authorities and restorers to reinstate property, and it provides assurances to stakeholders and investors.

Along with key prevention documentation such as assessments, it can be used for insurance purposes; for valuation assessment and to support a claim. Your plan can also be instrumental in identifying specific insurance covers you should consider adding to your policy. For example, if you run a business from your premises, which may be significantly disrupted as a result of a disaster, you should consider Business Interruption cover.

Your plan should be stored securely where those who might need access to it urgently, can safely retrieve it. A copy should be stored off site, and/or electronically where it will not become a victim of the incident.

Your plan should also be tested, reviewed and revised on a regular basis, particularly following an incident or any change.

This document will guide you through the following process:





Prevention is better than cure

You could have the best disaster recovery plan in place but it is preferable not to suffer an incident in the first place. The first step to prevention is to assess all risks (indoors and out) to identify the likelihood and impact a range of possible events could have on your property. The knowledge that you and your staff and volunteers have of the building and its contents, time critical areas and priorities, will be very helpful in this process. Looking at historical data will also be useful.

Assessments should systematically look at each area of the premises, specific activities and individual circumstances and note all significant hazards and risks and any existing safety measures. Action should be taken to reduce those that can easily be tackled (such as unnecessary storage of combustible materials like old paperwork, or adequate provision of equipment for salvage and recovery). Response to other risks should be prioritised by those that could impact most on critical areas and more precious items.

Depending on the scale and design of your building, precautionary action such as compartmentalisation can be taken to minimise spread of a fire. You may also favour early detection systems over something like a suppression system to reduce water damage that can be created by an accidental activation.

Another essential step towards effective prevention is to have a robust system for inspection and a programme of regular maintenance. Deterioration of buildings can present a number of risks, particularly prevalent in historic properties, such as fire, slips and trips, leakage, and security breach. These issues can worsen the impact of a major incident or escalate an otherwise minor incident. Regular maintenance and monitoring will minimise risk exposure and nip in the bud any issues of deterioration – which in the long term, could well save you a great deal of worry and expense!

The following provides some useful guidance specific to prevention and damage limitation in historic properties and for protecting art and collections.

Flooding and water damage

Ensure your roof is in good order and have any missing or slipped slates/tiles replaced. Roof valleys, gutters, hoppers and downpipes should be cleared of debris on a regular basis to prevent overflow. Frequently check storm drains and soakaways for blockages. Any trees near the property should also be regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person. All water installations including pipes and tanks should be adequately lagged to protect them from freezing. You may wish to consider installing a water leak detection system.

Fire

Ensure your electrical wiring is properly inspected and maintained in accordance with the National Standards Authority of Ireland Electro Technical Committee's Standards for Electrical Installations. Any alterations or extensions to the fixed electrical system should always be carried out by an electrical contractor registered with Safe Electric. All electrical switchgear panels and cupboards should be kept free of storage and combustible materials and should be easily accessible.

Regularly test your fire detection system and on-site firefighting equipment to ensure they are in good working order.

Gas appliances should be inspected annually by a contractor registered with the Register of Gas Installers of Ireland (RGII). Boiler houses should be of fire resisting construction and should never be used to store flammable material.

Portable heating appliances should be avoided where possible. If they are used, they should be sited well clear of combustible materials. All portable electrical appliances must be regularly tested by a qualified electrician with details logged and dated for reference. Repair any damage to wiring, plugs and sockets immediately it's discovered.

Accumulated rubbish and combustible materials that might constitute a fire hazard should be regularly tidied and removed; if storage is necessary then combustible waste materials should be stored externally in lockable lidded metal bins or skips. All exit routes should be kept free of obstructions and all fire exit doors should be easily opened from the inside and never locked when the building is occupied.

If you have open fires, ensure that all fireplaces have adequate fireguards or mesh fire curtains in good repair. Chimneys should be regularly swept and flue linings checked for decay.

Guidelines for caring for fine art

Here are some guidelines for preventing everyday damage occurring to various forms of fine art when on display, in storage or in transit.

Paintings

Paintings are susceptible to many forms of damage. Changes in the environment in which a painting is hung or stored can lead to the painting contracting and expanding, which will weaken the structure and ultimately result in a deterioration of its condition. The risk of damage can be greatly reduced by maintaining a consistent display or storage environment. Many museums control room temperature at around 20˚C with a relative humidity of 55%. It is therefore important to consider the following:

- Avoid hanging or storing pictures above fireplaces, radiators, heating pipes and any other heating equipment, or vents.
- Avoid hanging or storing directly onto walls which are susceptible to damp.
- Avoid hanging or storing in direct sunlight.

Paintings can also be accidentally damaged, resulting in dents, punctures and tears to the canvas. To minimise the risk of such damages, the following should be considered:

- Avoid hanging paintings where they might be accidentally knocked, such as next to doors, shelving, and furniture or in busy corridors.
- Paintings in storage should be kept off the ground to avoid the possibility of damage from dampness or standing water. Ideally, they should be stored in racks at least 15 centimeters off the ground.
- Paintings should not be stored against each other, as dents and scratches then become inevitable. Thin boards should be placed between them.
- When paintings are being moved, they should be carried facing away from the carrier, with one hand underneath the frame and one at the side. Carriers should wear cotton gloves.
- Transit of paintings should be carried out by professional packers and shippers.

Furniture

As with paintings, furniture is also prone to damage from changes in environment. Wood can contract in low humidity and expand in high humidity, with these movements potentially resulting in cracks and splits or the lifting of veneers. Furniture should be kept in a constant environment, away from radiators or exposure to direct sunlight.

Furniture can also become damaged through handling. Check that furniture is structurally sound before attempting to move it and that cabinet doors and drawers are locked. Marble tops should be removed separately and should be carried vertically, never horizontally.

In order to protect both the furniture and the carriers, the weight should be assessed before deciding how many people are needed to move it safely. Furniture should be lifted straight up and not dragged, pulled or pushed as the stresses involved can quickly result in damage. Furniture transit should be carried out by professional packers and shippers.

Furniture should be checked regularly for signs such as small holes in the wood which signal pest infestation. If infestation is discovered, a conservator should be contacted immediately for further advice and the infested item should be moved away from other items.

Ceramics and glass

Ceramics and glass do not tend to be affected by changes in the environment to the same extent as paintings and furniture. They are of course, very susceptible to breakage.

In order to try to prevent damage to ceramics and glass, they should ideally be displayed in suitable cabinets which stand firmly on the floor and are not exposed to vibration when people walk past. The shelves should be checked regularly and should not be overcrowded. Items should not be propped against one another as this can cause scratches or cracks.

When handling ceramics or glass, hands should be clean and dry, as some items may be porous and easily marked with grease, dirt or perspiration. Lids should be carefully removed. Objects should not be lifted by handles, arms or rims as these are all potential areas of weakness. If items are to be moved to a different room, they should be wrapped in acid-free tissue paper and placed in a strong box padded with foam and bubble wrap.

If items are to be transported, professional packers and shippers should be used. In the event of a breakage all fragments, however small, must be collected and wrapped in acid-free tissue paper. No attempt must be made to fit the pieces together as this can lead to further damage.



Books and manuscripts

Books tend to be constructed from organic materials and are therefore susceptible to damage from changes in environment. If the surrounding air is too damp, books can become infested with mould and insects. If it is too dry, books can become brittle.

In addition, handling can also cause damage to books and manuscripts, particularly old books as the paper may be weak or previously damaged.

In order to store books safely, the following points should be considered:

- Avoid direct light and direct heat (such as radiators).
- Avoid moisture and maintain good air circulation. To reduce the risk of condensation, do not push books to the back of the shelf.
- Avoid storing in attics or basements as these areas are prone to the ingress of water.
- Store books upright on shelves to avoid their shape becoming distorted.
- Avoid storing books too tightly on shelves as this can result in damage when pulling them off or forcing them back onto the shelf.

Prints, drawings and watercolours

Works of art on paper are susceptible to paper deterioration and fading pigments. As with other forms of fine art, controlling the environment is essential to their protection. If works are hung on cold walls then condensation can form and encourage mould growth, whereas conditions which are too dry can cause the paper to become brittle.

Works on paper are particularly prone to deterioration through exposure to light and consideration should be given as to whether they should be hung behind UV filtered glass. A conservator should be contacted to discuss the best solution as any framing needs to be sensitive to the materials used on the surface of the work.

Any handling should be kept to a minimum and the surface should not be touched as works on paper are easily smudged and stained.

Bronze

Like paintings bronze can be susceptible to extreme cold or heat and humidity, any changes could change the patina (the surface of the bronze) or with extreme temperature changes even cause cracking as the metal expands and contracts.

Again thinking carefully about where a bronze is sited is very important and how it is cleaned to avoid damage or scratching. Dust gently with a soft cloth when required to avoid abrading the patina and avoid the use of cleaners in case they ruin the bronze's surface.

A specialist should be contacted and engaged for any repairs.

The Ecclesiastical website offers a series of risk prevention guidance and advice - www.ecclesiastical.ie/risk-management

This includes:

- Health and safety articles and documents
- Fire safety articles and documents
- Security articles and documents
- Weather articles and documents
- Advice for assessing risks.

Preparing the plan

The purpose of planning ahead is to minimise injury to people and damage to buildings and contents, save time and help to get things back to normal as soon as possible. A disaster recovery plan will outline what needs to be done, how and by whom, to achieve these objectives efficiently and safely. It may be used by people who work/volunteer for your organisation, or by the emergency services.

Your plan will comprise of a number of pieces of information or documents under the following headings:

- Tasks and responsibilities prior to and during an incident
- Emergency plan: information, actions and equipment needed in the first 48 hours
- Communications plan: wider messaging, the media and who to update
- Recovery plan: including salvage, restoration and preparing for the future.

The plan will be specific to your premises and collections and should:

- Be prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders and where necessary, relevant authorities and emergency services
- Include all possible emergency situations – anything from storm damage to a bomb scare
- Be numbered and dated so it is clear everyone is working to the same version
- Be stored securely in an accessible location and copies in secure off site locations, electronically and/or with key members of staff.

Note #1: 'Disaster recovery plan details' and **Note #2:** 'Property information' provide guidance to the sort of information you should present and keep up to date at the front of your disaster recovery plan i.e. version and location of the plan, and property information.



Tasks: roles and responsibilities

If you are responsible for smaller or private premises, there may only be one of you or few people to carry out tasks. In this instance, you should focus efforts on the most critical tasks and work with emergency services and local authorities to achieve others. In larger premises it makes sense to form a disaster recovery team to spread the actions between several people and ensure that in the event of a disaster there is a clear chain of command and everyone has a defined role.

The following tasks, which is not an exhaustive list, should be assigned to individuals. Depending on the size of your team, it may be that one person performs more than one task, but there should be one single point of co-ordination to whom everyone reports.

Prior to an incident

- Prepare the disaster recovery plan; compiling all relevant and useful information in one document and storing it safely on and off site, accessible to those who may need it.
- Liaise with the emergency services, especially the Fire Service to obtain their advice and discuss their fire-fighting strategy
- Conduct training so that anyone likely to be involved in disaster recovery understands the role/s they may be required to perform.
- Desktop exercises are a useful way to test your plan
- Subscribe to a reputable disaster recovery company to assist with salvage and restoration.

When an incident strikes

- Co-ordinate activity – assign tasks and have an overview of all activity when an incident occurs.
- Notify and liaise with the necessary emergency services about the incident and inform them of any hazardous materials or substances.
- Implement health and safety procedures such as:
  - Shut down utilities
  - Distribute any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to those who require it
  - Organise logistical support where needed such as transport or a cordon
  - Inform immediate neighbours if they could become affected
- Evacuate everyone on site, ensuring that everyone has exited the building to a designated safe area and identify anyone not accounted for and where they may be located.
- Administer first aid where you're able to do so, gather as much information as possible to assist medical services.
- Ensure the building is safe and secure and if you're not able to do so, assist the emergency services to do so.
- Co-ordinate the removal of objects, adhering to pre-established order of priority, using salvage cards if necessary. Set up an emergency salvage area for the initial treatment of damaged items. Assist anyone handling the items to know how to do so safely.
- Arrange temporary security if regular measures are compromised.
- Notify your broker and the insurance company and discuss / request any necessary assistance in the protection of buildings and contents.
- Manage and control the flow of information in a timely manner to ensure accuracy and consistency. This may include communication with stakeholders, staff/volunteers, visitors, investors, your local authority, utility companies, the media and social media.

Lastly your ability to respond, should always be planned with the worst possible scenario in mind. It is relatively easy to scale down a large-scale response for a smaller incident, but virtually impossible to do the opposite!

Note #3: 'Record of responsibilities' provides a checklist for detailing and recording these actions and can be found on our website.

Training and testing

Each individual involved in disaster recovery, whatever the size of your team, should be fully aware of what their role entails and training in that role is advisable including the use of any equipment necessary to fulfil the role. It is also vitally important that their understanding of the plan overall is not simply theoretical. Testing the plan is necessary, more frequently in the initial stages and ideally half-yearly going forward. Desktop and practical exercises should be undertaken to enable team members to anticipate problems, work to avoid potential disasters and to adapt to any changing circumstances. The plan should also be included in induction training for new starters with any element of disaster recovery included in their role. More things will be learned from things going wrong during a practical drill than a perfectly executed desktop exercise.

Practical aspects of training should include knowledge of the property and its valuable contents, identifying objects on the salvage or 'snatch' list, understanding the handling and care of different salvageable objects and regular rehearsals of the emergency evacuation procedure. Training should also be given in respect of basic ladder safety, manual handling and working safely in adverse conditions (avoiding trips and slips, falling objects, smoke inhalation, etc.). Ideally one member of the team should be a qualified first aider. Personal protective equipment including identification, hard hats, fluorescent jackets, steel toed boots/shoes, torches and so on, should also be provided.



Emergency plan

What to do in the event of a disaster

When any unexpected event occurs, one thing you don't have is the luxury of time. The first few hours can be vital and so it is important to put your rehearsed plan into action immediately. This is where training comes in, so that recovery can begin with minimal delay and maximum efficiency. The overriding priority in an emergency situation is to ensure the safety of everyone on the premises, then the challenge of containing the damage to both building and contents. In the hours and days following the incident being declared over/safe, the next task is to account for all objects and fully document the damage sustained. All of this could happen very quickly, the most critical period of time will depend on the scale and type of incident.

Immediate response

In the light of your assessments, you should have effective plans for dealing with the first critical stages of any emergency. **Note #4:** 'Immediate response and evacuation procedures' in the disaster recovery notes will help you to prepare location specific procedures for your property.

This will include

- How the alarm is raised
- Evacuation procedures including assembly points
- Contacting and liaising with the emergency services
- What to do in a given circumstance e.g. if, when and how to tackle a fire
- Other emergency contacts
- How to handle medical situations including carrying, administering first aid and where to treat people
- A list of hazardous substances and their location.



One of the most critical aspects of timely response is fast, effective communication, particularly if you have a larger organisation or group of people who will need to be informed such as owner, trustees/board members, staff and volunteers.

Information should come from a central point to avoid speculation and to ensure accuracy and consistency. You may need to establish what level of messaging is communicated to which group of people (e.g. you may give more detail to trustees than you would to staff. This can be achieved by having a pre-designed communications system that sets out what method/platform will be used to communicate what level of messaging to which group.

Your system may involve a number of methods of communication, such as phone, social media and SMS messaging, each chosen for its intended audience as well as what you need to communicate. Your plan must be regularly kept up to date to take account of changing personnel and contact numbers/details.

Depending on the situation you may also need to communicate with external parties such as the media. If this is the case you may want to consider obtaining professional help from a communications professional or PR agency.

Note #5: 'Communications' provides a template to capture your information and communications channels and can be downloaded from our website.

Response equipment kit

A response equipment kit is a pre-prepared set of supplies containing items that are necessary for smaller disasters and in the initial stages of a larger disaster. The kit should contain items such as paper towels, mops, rubbish bags, hi-viz tabards, gazebos and tools to open cabinets and remove paintings from frames.

Note #6: 'Response equipment kit' gives an extensive but not exhaustive list of items and can be downloaded from our website.

Situation report

To keep track of the incident and to assist any emergency services, a situation report should be completed and periodically updated throughout the incident. This records things such as

- lead contacts onsite, representing your organisation (and the emergency services if onsite)
- have the emergency services been contacted and if so, at what time
- an evaluation of the situation as can be ascertained at the time
- what actions have been taken so far.

Note #7: 'Situation report' is a template report and can be found on our website.

In a severe situation the responsibility for the site will rest with Emergency Services personnel and they will advise when it is safe to re-enter the building. You should record the time the Emergency Services took control, the name of the lead officer, and the time the 'all clear' was given.

When it is safe to enter, any damage to the buildings and collection needs to be assessed to ascertain what action needs to be taken. It is also important to try to stabilise the situation and prevent further damage.

When the emergency is under control and the site has been made safe, security against opportunistic theft is a primary consideration – especially if any objects of value are still on the premises. In this event, you should seek advice from your insurance company and/or security company if you have one.

Your situation report may also assist during an insurance claim.

A snatch list

An itemised snatch list is a record of priority items that can be grabbed on your way out - if it is safe to do so. If the Fire Service is involved, they will have control of the site. They should be made aware of any precious items that need to be retrieved if possible, and after all life safety has been considered.

A snatch list is an internal document that notes all priority items, detailing any known issues of fragility and vulnerability and each item's location. Factors that should be considered in the creation of the snatch list include:

- the value of the item (both monetary and personal)
- ease of replacement
- the speed at which the item will deteriorate when wet
- the ease with which the item can be removed and transported, including details of any equipment needed (e.g. keys, knives etc.)
- a photograph of the item to help with identification.
- do not record the value of any items on your snatch list

To facilitate any potential insurance settlement, be sure to have everything professionally valued prior to any incident occuring. A copy of your valuation should be kept off-site in a secure location.

A separate snatch list may also exist for any items or collections on loan to you from somewhere else. Salvage cards will also need to include these items.

Salvage cards

In the event of an emergency, speed is crucial, so the removal procedure needs to be both simply set out and entirely unambiguous. Salvage cards can be given to the emergency services to start retrieving items, even if the incident is still ongoing, provided there are no life safety considerations. You should therefore compile from your snatch list a set of room-by-room floor plan salvage cards. These could be printed and laminated or be on-line and accessed via a portable device on-site. Cards should include:

- photographs of the item/s within the room
- locations (of the item – which room and position within the room)
- a simple description of every item (not just names of items because a name will not mean anything to someone who is unfamiliar with the collection)
- exit routes
- power points
- the location of fire extinguishers, water, gas and electrical mains (including stopcocks and fuse boxes) and any other relevant mains utilities and services information
- precise information on any tools necessary to enable individual items' removal. For example 'screwdriver' as a description is insufficient; details of screw head size and type may well save a wasted journey.

Once salvaged, items should be labeled and catalogued. A gazebo and ground-sheets may be needed to protect the items if it is bad weather. (See the recovery section of this guide).

Note #8: 'Snatch list' and **Note #9:** 'Salvage cards' provide guidance and can be downloaded from the notes section of our disaster recovery guide webpage.

Establishing access to expertise and resources

Successfully planning the retrieval of your endangered items is only half the requirement. Next comes the issue of having available a readily accessible and secure salvage location. If you cannot supply this yourself, having good community relationships is helpful as schools and churches with halls may be able to provide short term storage. Alternatively there are a number of reputable disaster recovery companies who have both the storage facilities and the salvage experience to take full care of your collection in an emergency. However, to be sure of their services, you will need to subscribe with them prior to an incident taking place.



The same is true of conservation. It makes good sense to form a relationship with a reputable conservator beforehand, so that in the event of a disaster, you can quickly contact someone who is familiar with the items and who can immediately advise you on the best course of action.

Communications plan

Alongside handling the immediate incident, there will be a network of people to inform and provide with regular updates, including:

- Trustees and board members
- Stakeholders
- Investors
- Collection owners (if you have items or a collection on loan to you)
- Staff and volunteers not directly involved in handling the incident
- Suppliers: utilities and any expected deliveries or contractors
- The media
- Insurers
- Your local authority
- Pre-booked visitors/users
- Potential visitors/the public
- An Post



Your communications plan should include names and contact details, alternative methods of communication and a plan for speaking with the media.

It is important to communicate key information in a timely manner. Information should come from a central point to avoid speculation and to ensure that it is accurate and consistent. Depending on the situation you may also need to communicate with external parties such as the media. If this is the case you may want to consider obtaining professional help from a communications professional or PR agency.

Note #10: 'Contacts list' provides a form to capture contact details and **Note #5:** 'Communications' will also b helpful

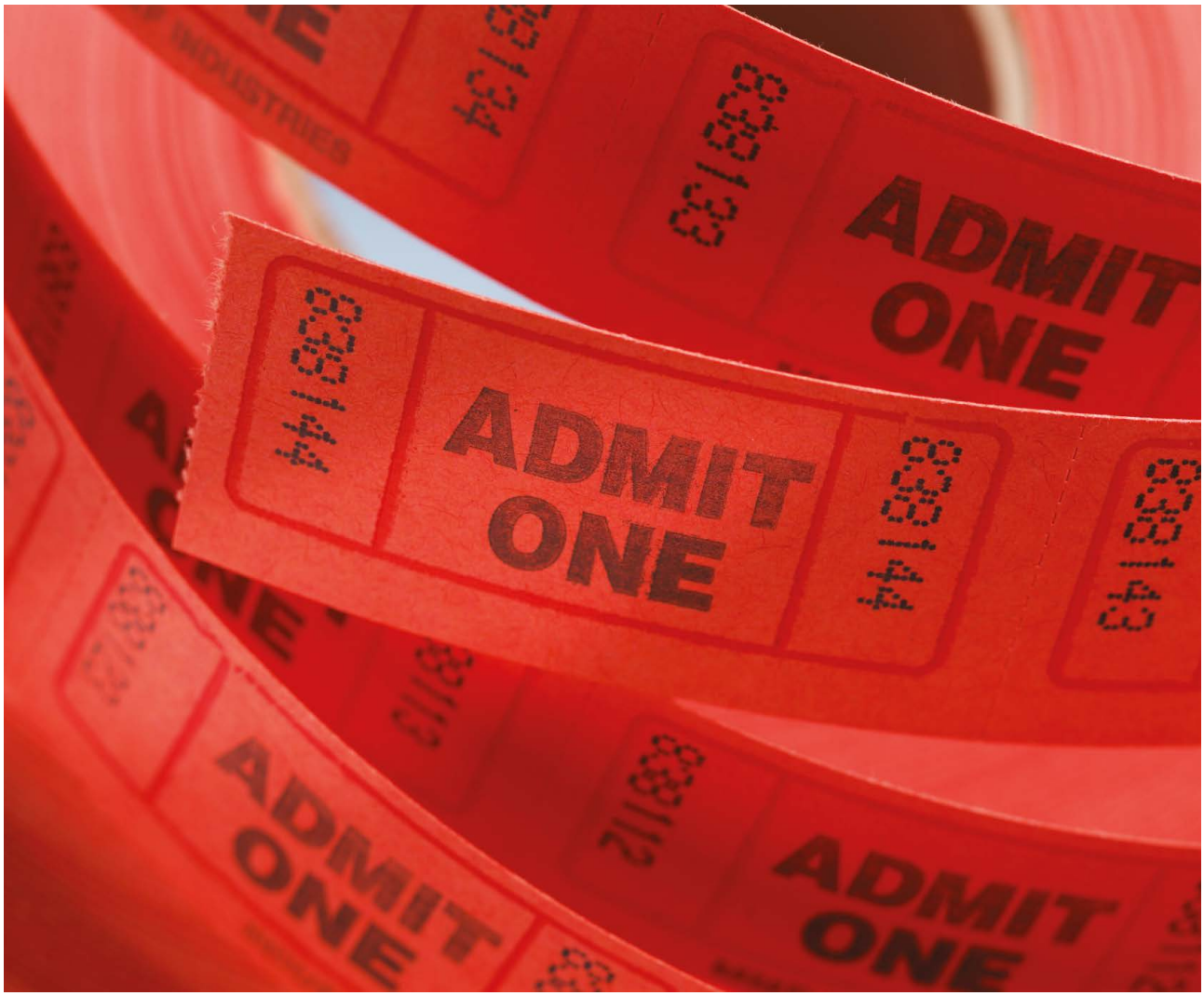
Business continuity

If you run a business or charity from your property, you will want to keep as much business as usual operational as is possible during the incident and the recovery process. If it is a small incident, this may be possible within a few days with just a part of the business out of action. But depending on the scale and nature of the incident, this could mean anything from a scaling back of operations to a complete loss of premises for an unknown period of time. In the meantime, arrangements may need to be made for:

- Alternative safe means of access and exit to the parts of the property that remain operational
- Temporary administrative headquarters
- A temporary venue
- IT and communication support
- Alternative arrangements for pre-booked activities
- Secure storage for items not directly impacted by the incident but which need relocating whilst the incident is dealt with and recovery completed.

Note #11: 'Business continuity' provides a form to record the contact details of local organisations who could help with getting your business back up and running quickly.

Business Interruption insurance cover can assist with the costs associated with these unforeseen changes including staff wages and loss of revenue.



Recovery plan

The recovery plan takes over from the initial response once the building has been made safe and secure. The main goals of the recovery plan are to minimise long term damage to the building and collection, recover as much of the collection as possible, record any damage that has occurred, conduct any restoration and conservation work required, and return the building to normal use (if possible) or decide what should be done.

Provision for salvage and storage

The salvage operation should begin as soon as possible. If any part of the premises is safely accessible, valuable objects can be removed from the vicinity immediately.

As soon as the affected areas have been made safe and secure, then removal, sorting, protection and treatment can begin. The work of removing precious objects to secure, pre-designated salvage areas should be carried out by trusted and trained personnel at the earliest opportunity. The sooner any essential restoration work can begin, the greater the chances of limiting the damage and any potential losses.

The first objective will be the immediate rescue of as many items as possible. When this has been achieved, a wider and systematic salvage operation can commence. Every item should be photographed and referenced against the existing inventory of collection items, in order to catalogue how much has been retrieved.

At the same time, all unaffected areas should be protected with polythene sheeting to prevent further damage. If there is any likelihood of the disaster spreading, then valuable items should be removed from harm's way.



Assessing the damage

Set aside a large secured and covered area for sorting and assessing objects into the following categories:

- Undamaged objects (these should be catalogued, removed and stored as soon as possible)
- Wet objects (to be frozen for their protection and restoration)
- Wet objects (not to be frozen for their protection and restoration)
- Minor water damage
- Fire and smoke damage
- Mould damage.

Arranging treatment

In larger locations that require a team response, one member of the team should be placed in overall charge of the operation. They should have the knowledge necessary to make an initial appraisal of the condition of each object and whether or not further advice should be sought. They should also hold the details of who to contact in the event of any item needing specialist care.

While much salvage work can be carried out by suitably briefed non-professionals, it cannot be stressed too highly that the treatment of damaged objects is a matter for trained professionals only. If you are in any doubt about the condition of a damaged work, then secure the item and seek the advice of a conservator as quickly as possible.

Inasmuch as it is practical, all members of the disaster response team should receive some instruction in the correct procedures for handling fine art and antiques, as part of their overall training.

Salvage procedure overview

The following guidelines are provided to give you an indication of the handling procedures you should take in respect of specific types of item. The risk levels 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority) relate to the order of priority with which items should be assessed and treated. These are provided as guidelines only, not necessarily as recommended courses of action. Handle all items with care and if in any doubt consult a conservator.

Works of art on paper

Large-scale prints and drawings – level 1: Be extremely careful if rolled or folded. Prints and drawings can be air or freeze-dried if damp. If wet, they should be freeze-dried and left to dry image side up on a sheet of absorbent paper.

Work in soluble media – level 1: Do not blot. Works can be air or freeze-dried. Dry image side up on a sheet of absorbent paper.

Prints and drawings in stable media – level 2: Be careful not to tear the paper. If framed then remove frame carefully and dry image-side up on a sheet of absorbent paper. If the paper is stuck to the glass then leave in frame and dry with glass side down. Can be air, vacuum or freeze-dried.

Paintings

Framed paintings – level 1: Drain excess water and carry horizontally. If possible remove from frame (do not remove from stretcher). Collect any detached fragments of paint. Keep paint-side up and do not allow anything to touch the paint surface. If framed with glass remove from frame unless the glass is stuck to the frame. Air-dry immediately, do not freeze. Dry face up, avoiding direct sunlight and ensuring that nothing touches the paint surface. If glass can be removed, do so carefully. If the painting is stuck to the glass do not remove. Instead, air-dry glass-side down.

Paper, books and manuscripts

Velum and parchment manuscripts – level 1: Extremely fragile when wet, support with board at all times. Consult with conservator before proceeding. Interleave with absorbent paper. Air or freeze-dry. Gilded or illuminated manuscripts should not be freeze-dried.

Books and pamphlets – level 1-2: Be careful not to tear paper. Air, vacuum or freeze-dry within 48 hours. If dirty, rinse with clean water. If damp, stand on top or bottom edge, open to 90° angle, and allow to air-dry. If wet interleave less than 20% of the book with absorbent paper which should be replaced when damp.

Paper – level 2: Be careful not to tear paper. Air-dry flat as single sheets or small piles (up to 0.5cm) interleave with absorbent paper. If there are too many items to dry within 48 hours, interleave with freezer or wax paper and pack in sturdy containers to freeze.

Photographs

Photographs – level 1: Remove from enclosures or frames. Do not touch or blot surface. If framed with glass remove from frame unless the glass is stuck to the frame. Rinse the photographs in clean cool water and air-dry by hanging from a line with plastic pegs or clips. Can also be dried flat, image-side up on absorbent paper. Can be kept in clean water for up to 48 hours before air-drying. If glass can be removed do so carefully. If the photograph is stuck to the glass do not remove. Instead, air-dry glass-side down. Some types of photographs can be frozen.

Glass plate negatives – level 1: Do not freeze. Air-dry on absorbent paper with the emulsion side facing up. Mounted colour slides and sheet films – level 1: Handle by edges or mounts. Air-dry in mounts if possible. Can be frozen then thawed, or freeze-dried.

Other

Below are a few other examples of materials that also require immediate attention after an emergency.

Textiles – level 1: Support carefully whilst moving. Do not unfold if wet and do not stack on top of other wet textiles. Rinse off any dirt then drain and blot to remove surplus water. If possible, shape and pad out the textile to its original form. Gently blot textiles to remove excess water, then air-dry indoors using fans or air conditioning. Textiles can be separated with waxed paper and frozen.



Leather – level 1: Support carefully as fragile when wet. Rinse surfaces or sponge to remove any dirt. Remove surplus water by draining then blotting. Reshape, and, if necessary pad to retain shape. Air-dry.

Bone, ivory and shells – level 1: Handle with care as breakage possible. Rinse to remove any dirt, then drain and blot very gently. Slowly air-dry on absorbent paper.

Animal skins and taxidermy – level 1: Handle carefully using gloves and mask as may contain hazardous substances. Blot surfaces to remove any excess water then air-dry on a towel or plastic sheet. These items can be frozen.

Dried botanic specimens – level 1: Handle carefully as very fragile. Lay out on absorbent paper and air-dry quickly to prevent mould growth or germination.

Woven material (baskets etc.) – level 1: Handle very carefully. Rinse to remove any dirt or mud. Remove any surplus water by draining and blotting. If necessary, reshape and pad for support during the drying process. Air-dry slowly, changing the padding material if necessary.

Furniture – level 2: Inspect painted surfaces. If paint is flaking then air-dry slowly without removing dirt or moisture. If paint is intact or there is no paint then surfaces should be rinsed or sponged gently to clean. They should then be blotted and allowed to air-dry slowly.

Furniture may need to be covered in order to slow the drying rate and prevent warping or splitting. Veneer should be held in place whilst drying with padded weights or clamps. A white haze may develop on the finish which does not require immediate attention.

Audio and video tape – level 2: Handle carefully using gloves to avoid scratches. Rinse wet tapes in clean water then air-dry.

CDs and CD Roms – level 2: Do not rub or scratch surfaces. Rinse off dirt with clean water. Air-dry on absorbent paper.

Vinyl discs – level 2: Hold by the edges and do not scratch surfaces. Air-dry on absorbent paper.

Geological specimens – level 3: Wet specimens may be fragile. Rinse and air-dry on absorbent paper.

Wooden items – level 3: Rinse surfaces to remove any dirt and gently blot. Air-dry slowly, possibly using sheeting to cover the object and lengthen the drying process to prevent splitting or warping.

Ceramics – level 4: Handle with care as breakage possible. Unfired ceramics may become soft or dissolve if wet. Sponge the surface of the object gently to remove dirt etc. If it is broken, wrap in paper and seal in a zip-lock bag. Different ceramic types require different procedures: for example, terracotta is quite vulnerable and needs to be air-dried using fans. High-fired ceramics are the most stable and simply need to be blotted then air-dried using fans.

Stone – level 4: If the stone object has a smooth surface then blot it gently before air-drying. If rough-surfaced do not blot but air-dry on a towel or plastic sheet.

Glass – level 4: Handle with care as breakage possible. Gently blot dry without rubbing then air-dry using fans.

Metal – level 4: Handle carefully using gloves. Rinse to remove any dirt etc. then blot gently. Do not clean if any applied finish is in danger of flaking. Air-dry.

Damage record

All damaged items should be documented and photographed for insurance purposes. Try to assess the extent and nature of the damage to each object. Note down the circumstances and any other relevant information, such as material composition, priority status, present fragility (e.g. might moving the piece result in further damage) and treatment required. Be sure to document the location of each piece – it is very easy to lose track when items are being relocated to different destinations.

Even when apparently fully dry, some air-dried objects – such as books and fabrics – can still be susceptible to mould. These therefore should be stored individually (not shelved, rolled or stacked) in a dry and well-aired environment.

Note #12: 'Record of damage' provides a template form to record damage and can be downloaded from the notes section on our disaster recovery guide.

Returning the building to normal

When the salvage operation is over, the next step is to get things back to normal as soon as possible. Even where there has been no structural damage, this may take a little time – for example, fans or dehumidifiers may need to be used to reduce and stabilise temperature and humidity.

When a building has suffered structural damage, your insurers and surveyors will advise on the extent of the damage, options, next steps and potential timescales. Discussions with key stakeholders will need to take place to determine the extent to which you want and can restore the building. This process may need to consult other organisations including:

- Local planning authority
- Relevant prescribed bodies such as An Taisce, and The Heritage Council
- Organisations such as Irish Georgian Society
- Conservation experts
- Your local community and neighbours

Gaining agreement between stakeholders in advance of an incident, about development and what your preferred recovery approach for your building would be, is good practice and something that can form a part of the disaster recovery plan. It will help progressing recovery plans much quicker and can help to minimise any emotional trauma of trying to discuss matters in the aftermath of a disaster.

The restoration of a building can take months, if not years to complete depending on the scale and nature of the recovery. A number of factors can impact timescale including how quickly decisions are made, planning approvals, local community approval and funding.

Medium to long-term solutions may be required to store and display collections, and an alternative venue needed from which to run a business should your building be unusable during restoration. You should revisit your communications plan to keep everyone updated, including the media.

Review, reassess and refresh

Before everything returns to normal, it's important to address all the contributory causes of the disaster to minimise the possibility of anything similar happening again.

Also, everyone in the disaster response team should meet to give their views on how the plan worked (or didn't) and discuss any improvements that might possibly be made.

As part of this process, any preventative measures and assessments should be revisited.

Your plan should be reviewed and refreshed and all records and important information updated.

Record keeping

It is vital to keep a record of your plans and associated information, including actions taken to mitigate consequences, the situation report, associated costs, receipts, times and dates. These records will help to support any insurance claim you need to make and will help you to improve processes in the future, further mitigating the chance of an incident occurring and the extent of damage.



Further advice

For further information please visit the Ecclesiastical website.

For specific risk advice about topics including health and safety, fire and security, Ecclesiastical customers can contact Risk Management Team on 01 619 0300

Lines are open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).



Useful contacts

National Library of Ireland
7-8 Kildare Street
Dublin 2
DO2 P638
Tel 01 603 0200
Email: info@nli.ie
www.nli.ie

Irish Georgian Society
City Assembly House
58 South William Street
Dublin 2
DO2 X751
Tel 01 679 8675
Email: info@igs.ie
www.igs.ie

The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
8 Merrion Square North
Dublin 2
DO2 YE68
Tel 01 676 1703
Email: info @ riai.ie
WWW. riai.ie

Health & Safety Authority (HSA)
The Metropolitan Building
James Joyce Street
Dublin 1
DO1 KOY8
Tel: 01 614 7000
Email: wcu@hsa.ie
www.hsa.ie

The Institute of Conservation
Radisson Court, Unit 2
219 Long Lane
London SE1 4PR
Tel: 0044 20 3142 6799
admin@icon.org.uk
www.icon.org.uk

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Department of Arts, Heritage & The Gaeltacht
Custom House
Dublin 1
Tel: 01888 2000
Email: niah@chg.gov.ie
ww.buildingsofireland.ie

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY
Tel: 0044 20 7377 1644
email:info@spab.org.uk
www.spab.org.uk

The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 0044 20 7250 3857
www.c20society.org.uk

An Taisce- The National Trust for Ireland
Tailors Hall
Back Lane
Dublin 8
DO8 X2 A3
Email info@antaisce.org
www. antaisce.org

The Arts Council
70 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
DO2 NY52
Tel: 01 6180200
Email: info@artscouncil.ie
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The Heritage Council
Aras na hOidhreachta
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