

# People's Church Preparedness Policy

## 1. Purpose

People's Church strives to meet all challenges that adversely affect the security, safety, health and well-being of our members, their families, staff, and visitors to our community. To do so we have developed the following policy to guide our protection of those on our church campus from harm and prevent physical damage to the church and associated property.

The preparedness policy outlined below is meant to heighten awareness of unexpected threats, and identify and plan for hazards that may be associated with those threats. This policy document is designed to prepare our church members, staff, and visitors for emergencies and accidents. The policy's goal is to achieve a state of readiness to act and effectively mitigate threats, problems, and incidents before or while they occur.

This preparedness policy addresses areas not already covered under our Safe Church Policy. Specific procedures, including an Emergency Preparedness Plan, and training information are available on the Peoples's Church website.

## 2. Communication

Being prepared is a shared responsibility among the church community. Procedures outlined in this policy document will be clearly communicated on an annual basis to the board, staff, preparedness teams, relevant committees, those in religious education and made available to all members of the People's Church. Where helpful and feasible, signage will be posted within the church that contains safety-related information and specific procedures for evacuation, shelter in place, and other yet undefined emergency conditions.

## 3. Safety and Medical Preparedness Teams

The church will develop and maintain trained Safety and Medical Preparedness Teams that can effectively respond to the emergency situations outlined in this policy document. Safety and Medical Preparedness team members will be identified with distinctive name badges.

### 3.1 Safety Team

In addition to newly recruited and trained volunteers, the Safety Team will include trained church members and may include volunteers who currently serve as ushers, greeters, AV personnel, Religious Education leaders, and Sunday Service committee members.

### 3.2 Medical Preparedness Team

A Medical Preparedness Team will be created and include medical professionals and other volunteers from our church community. The purpose of this team will be to provide emergency assistance as needed at Sunday services and other church events on our campus.

Such assistance will include general first aid such as treating lacerations, falls, and seizures, as well as performing more involved procedures such as CPR and defibrillation. Other actions may include rendering assistance for chronic diseases and other personal

health emergency conditions. Church members who are trained medical personnel will be asked to participate on the Safety Team to respond to medical situations as permitted by law.

#### **4. Training**

Initial preparedness training will be required for all Safety and Medical Preparedness Team members. Annual refresher training for these members will be encouraged. Training will be tailored to address the topics listed in this policy. Training for other members of the church community such as ushers, greeters, staff, religious education personnel, and Sunday Service Committee members will be developed and delivered initially on an as-needed basis. The goal will be to train as many of these members and volunteers as possible.

#### **5. Contact List of Safety and Medical Preparedness Team members**

The church administrator will maintain a contact list of trained Safety and Medical Preparedness Team members and a volunteer sign-up system for church sponsored events. The goal is to have at least one trained person from the Safety and Medical Preparedness Teams present each Sunday and for church events with over fifty persons attending. Contact information for individuals agreeing to serve on the Safety and Medical Preparedness Teams will be maintained by the Office Administrator and made available to staff, police, fire, and medical personnel as needed.

#### **6. Emergency Evacuations and Shelter in Place**

People's Church will have written plans covering evacuations, relocations, and shelter in place scenarios. Evacuation plans will cover fire, power failure, gas leaks, bomb threats, suspicious packages and unattended items, phone, and electronic threats. Plans for sheltering in place will include procedures for dealing with weather-related hazards such as tornados and thunderstorms as well as active shooters and other lockdown situations.

##### **6.1 Bi-Annual Drills**

At least two emergency drills will be conducted annually and will take place during a Sunday service. One drill will be in the spring and the other in the fall. All individuals participating in any activity within the church during these times, including religious education, will be required to participate in the drill. Preparatory information for the drill will include what to do and where to go, and will be included in the Order of Service on the day of the drill. A verbal reminder and quick overview of how to leave the building will be provided at the start of all activities taking place that day.

#### **7. Ambulatory and Special Assistance for Physically and Mentally Challenged Individuals**

Safety Team members will be trained in assisting individuals who have physical or mental challenges so they can fully participate in church events. Wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and other ambulatory assistance devices will be available for temporary use while on church grounds. Training will include how to provide special assistance for physically and mentally challenged individuals during drills and emergency situations.

#### **8. Signage, Building Orientation, Wayfinding and Assistance During Emergency Situations**

The Church will provide and install clear and unambiguous signage related to wayfinding. Greeters and staff will be trained to assist church members and visitors in finding and locating specific rooms and areas within the building. Signage, as well as the assistance of those mentioned above, will include the locations of fire alarms, emergency shut-off systems (including those in the kitchen and throughout the facility.) Training will include the ability and readiness to assist members and visitors during drills and all emergency situations covered under this policy document.

#### **9. Dealing with Inappropriate or Threatening Behavior**

Safety Team members will be trained to properly respond and control individuals exhibiting disruptive or threatening behavior. Training in this area will focus on non-violent techniques that safely and effectively deescalate situations and reduce heightened emotions.

#### **10. Demonstrations or Protests by Outside Groups or Individuals**

Ushers, greeters, staff, and the Sunday Service Committee members will be trained in procedures and tactics to deal effectively with situations that pose immediate or elevated risks to members or visitors to our church from outside, non-church-initiated activities. This would include politically motivated demonstrations and protests on or near church grounds.

#### **11. Notification of Emergency Personnel**

Ushers, greeters, staff, and Sunday Service Committee members will be trained in how to notify and or request emergency assistance from fire, police, and medical personnel. Training will include an overview of local emergency procedures, as well as reporting requirements for fire, police, and medical personnel during and after the event.

#### **12. People's Church Chain of Command, Staff Response, and Crisis Management**

The People's Church Chain of Command is as follows:

- Administrator: Melissa Emrich (phone numbers and email)
- On Duty Safety Team Member
- Lead Staff: Rev. Rachel Lonberg, Minister

All individuals in the Chain of Command will be trained in all areas specified in this document.

#### **13. People's Church Incident Debriefing**

A debriefing of those involved in emergency incidents will be conducted by the People's Church Chain of Command. This will occur as soon as practical after a safety related event or emergency. Safety and Medical Preparedness Team members and all individuals involved in the incident will be asked to participate in this debriefing to evaluate their responses and identify necessary improvements to this policy document and identify physical and procedural changes within the church complex.

#### **14. Post Incident Communication to Public and Press**

The minister is the chief communication officer and contact for all public and press communication following a major emergency incident. The Church Minister may delegate this duty to the Board President or similar individual as appropriate.

**15. Access to the Building**

People's Church will utilize, maintain, and support an access control system for our facility. Access will be provided to a limited number of individuals.

**16. Emergency and Assistance Related Equipment**

People's Church will provide and maintain emergency and assistance related equipment and supplies to meet preparedness needs and situations that are covered in this document. Equipment will include first aid kits, wheelchairs, and defibrillators. People's Church will provide appropriate training for this equipment and assistant-related activities that are covered in this document. All emergency and assistance equipment will be inspected and updated annually, or as required by the law and the manufacturer. The location of this equipment will be posted prominently and clearly marked.

**17. Building Safety Evaluations**

In addition to the annual building walk-through by fire department personnel, the Safety Team members in collaboration with members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee will conduct seasonal walk-arounds of the building and surrounding property to identify, remove and where possible, mitigate unavoidable hazards.

**18. Insurance Review:**

The church administrator, with guidance from the safety team and finance/treasurer will conduct a review of our insurance policy with Church Mutual, every three years. This review should verify that our Preparedness Policy, and the Emergency Preparedness Plan is consistent with our insurance liability coverage and other clauses within said insurance policy.