The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina
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Getting Started: Parish Safety Plan

A simple working template for turning parish decisions into a practical local plan

CORE IDEA: Start with the decisions your parish actually needs to make. Keep the plan simple, local, and usable.

How to Use This Template

This is a starting point, not a comprehensive safety plan. Clergy and parish leadership can use it to record basic decisions about emergency roles, shelter, evacuation, medical response, disruption, and communications. Review the plan with the people who may need to use it, update it when conditions change, and practice the most important actions.

1. Parish Information & Leadership

Parish / Church	
Street address for 911	
Clergy lead / final decision authority	
Staff / operations contact	
Parish safety lead, if designated	
Diocesan contact	

2. Emergency Contacts & Responder Access

911	Emergency
Police non-emergency	
Fire / EMS non-emergency	
Best responder entrance / access point	
Who meets and directs responders?	

3. Shelter in Place

Primary severe-weather shelter area	
Alternate shelter area	
Protected area for an external threat	
Accessible shelter area(s)	
Who gives shelter instructions?	
Who assists people needing help?	

4. Evacuation & Accountability

Primary assembly location	
Alternate assembly / relocation location	
Primary and alternate exit routes	
How are children accounted for?	

How are other groups / visitors accounted for?	
Who coordinates accountability?	

5. Medical Emergency

AED location(s)	
First-aid supply location(s)	
Known trained medical / first-aid personnel	
Who calls 911?	
Who clears access / meets responders?	
Who documents and follows up?	

6. Disruption, Boundaries & Escalation

Who may direct a person to leave?	
Parish policy for requests for money / transportation / services	
Who contacts clergy or law enforcement?	
When should 911 be called?	
Who communicates with the congregation during a disruption?	
Who documents and preserves records / video?	

7. Children, Vulnerable Persons & Accessibility

- Identify who is responsible for children during shelter or evacuation.
- Identify procedures for reunification with parents or guardians.
- Identify accessible routes, shelter areas, and assistance needs.
- Follow all diocesan and parish requirements for child and vulnerable-person safety.

Local notes / additional decisions:

8. Communication & Documentation

- Know how clergy, staff, ushers/greeters, and volunteers will receive instructions.
- Keep the church's exact address and emergency contact information readily available.
- Preserve threatening messages, photographs, video, or other potential evidence. Do not delete or destroy it.
- Document significant incidents and notify diocesan offices in accordance with diocesan guidance.

9. Our Three Current Safety Priorities

Priority	Lead Person	Target Review Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

10. Review the Plan

- Review the plan with clergy, staff, ushers/greeters, and others who have assigned roles.
- Walk through shelter locations, exits, assembly areas, AED/first-aid locations, and responder access.
- Use short scenarios to practice decisions before an emergency occurs.
- Review at least annually and after a significant incident, major facility change, or change in parish leadership.

Plan last reviewed: _____ Next review: _____

Remember: A short plan that people understand and practice is more useful than a detailed plan that no one knows how to use.