

ERC-East 50 Lessons Learned

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This list of lessons learned was compiled from a number of different disasters / emergencies over the past several years including the four hurricanes that hit Florida in one year. The lessons Learned from the “Twin Sisters”, Katrina & Rita are contained in a separate document. These and all lessons learned should be used to help those involved with the ERC-East learn from past experiences.

In no particular order:

1. During earthquake events there will be after shocks; they will hamper emergency operations, create new fears among the citizenry and may cause more destruction than the original shock, fires will occur, caused by electrical shorts, natural gas, fireplaces, stoves, etc and fires in collapsed buildings will be very difficult to control.
2. There will be a general lack of necessary information; priesthood leaders should be prepared to wait for damage/casualty assessment information to establish priorities.
3. Information from non-members in the event area can be very helpful in determining the initial damage assessment of their immediate area.
4. No matter what the disaster/emergency, emergency equipment and privately owned vehicles will not be able to reach some locations because of traffic jams. Tow trucks will be at a premium. Parked or abandoned vehicles will block streets, and emergency responders will be some of the worst offenders.
5. Even though there will not be enough people to initially deal with disasters/emergencies, many available personnel will never be identified and used. After the initial event, there will be too many volunteers.
6. General information will be offered in response to specific questions because wards / branches / stakes cannot verify the requested information.
7. The potential exists for message flow to, from, and within the ERC-East to break down and become inefficient and unmanageable.
8. There will be an over critical desire to verify all incoming information. If it is received from a ward / branch / stake priesthood leadership it should be considered as verified.
9. Many EmComm'ers will become overloaded; some will not be able to cope with the volume of activity and information they have to deal with, and some will not be able to cope with

the noise and distractions.

10. The extent of any major disaster will be difficult to assess, though this will be necessary to assure proper commitment of local and out-of-area resources.
11. Initially there will be an air of urgency and more requests for aid than available aid to send.
12. Communications will be inadequate; holes will appear in the EmComm system and the potential is there for incredibly heavy communications traffic.
13. Trained personnel will become supervisors because they will become too valuable to perform hands-on tasks.
14. Responding mutual aid units will become lost; they will require maps and guides.
15. Electric power will be interrupted or will fail completely.
16. Fuel will not be available because there will be no electricity to run the pumps.
17. It will be difficult to shut off the gas; valves that are seldom, if ever, used will be difficult to find, and may not work when they are found.
18. Phone service will be erratic or non-existent. Pay phones might still be available.
19. Water will be contaminated and unsafe for drinking. Tankers will be needed for fire fighting and for carrying drinking water.
20. Church members will volunteer to help but their commitment will usually be short-term, measured by hours, not days.
21. There may be a multitude of hazardous materials incidents.
22. Local Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) have the potential to be overrun with non-essential personnel who mean well, but who must be kept out of the area.
23. There will be initial chaos; supplies, materials and equipment needed will not be readily available. Staging will be essential; the flow of personnel, equipment and supplies has the potential to be overwhelming.
24. The media will have the best communications available.
25. There will be an epidemic of flat tires caused by debris on the roads; in addition to police, fire, and emergency medical vehicles members who are out and about will sustain a multitude of flat tires that will require repair in the field.

26. Streets will be impassable in some areas; it will be necessary to clear streets of rubble in order to conduct emergency operations.
27. The primary police department concern will be law enforcement; there will not be sufficient time or manpower to provide miscellaneous services.
28. It will be dark; there will not be enough generators or lights available.
29. Portable toilets will be in demand; there will be no place to “go,” and if a place is found there will be six photographers and a TV crew there to cover the event.
30. Documentation will be very important; there will be a multitude of requests for information later. Someone will get the bill; record-keeping and accounting procedures will be important.
31. Many injured people will have to find their own way to medical treatment facilities.
32. Volunteer and reserve personnel may be slow to respond; they will put their own families' safety first.
33. On-duty public safety personnel will be concerned about their own families, and some may leave their posts to check on them.
34. Emergency responders (public safety and medical alike) will not be adequately trained to respond efficiently.
35. There will be citizens who will not utilize evacuation/mass care centers; they will prefer to stay with friends and relatives, or to camp out in their own yards.
36. The identification of workers and volunteers will be a problem; it will be difficult to determine who is working where and on what.
37. There will be rumors; people will be listening to their radios, portable battery operated TV's, scanners and must be given accurate information.
38. There will not be enough handie-talkies; batteries will soon go dead.
39. Generators will run out of fuel; additional fuel must be on-hand to maintain generator powered lighting and communications.
40. Emergency responders will require rest and must be relieved. Selected church members may be of value as guides for mutual aid responders, or as supervisors for volunteer crews.

41. Both government and personal equipment will be lost, damaged or stolen, and may never be accounted for.
42. People will die and there is nothing that can be done about it. Non-public safety personnel will not understand why everyone cannot be saved. Priorities must be set to save the most lives possible.
43. Dead bodies should not be an initial concern. Rescuing the living should be the first priority.
44. If phones are working, the number of requests for service will be overwhelming. People will have to fend for themselves; it will be difficult for dispatchers to ignore these pleas for help.
45. We will not be able to reach some of the units and will not know how they are or what they are doing.
46. Security will be posted at hospitals, clinics, and first-aid stations to control hysterical citizens demanding immediate attention.
47. There are no critically injured in a disaster; only those who are dead or alive.
48. Handicapped and disabled persons will probably die unless personal family and friends can care for them and maintain their life-support systems. Church leaders must know where the sick and shut-ins live.
49. If the disaster/emergency holds true to form, things will get better some time after they have become considerably worse.
50. And finally, Murphy will be alive and well.

Oft times it takes hours for emergency services to get an accurate picture of just how widespread the damage has been. EmComm'ers / Amateur Radio Operator's (ARO), both members and non-members will be on the air in just seconds. We need to capitalize on this and take advantage of their ability to assess how widespread the damage or affected area is. Even getting accurate reports from just a few is better than nothing, and can be used as the basis for future actions.

In the event of an emergency it is recommended that:

- **the net activation at all levels follow the published SOPs**
- **as members and non-members check into nets or come up on the air we ask them for an initial damage assessment of their immediate area.**
- **we keep an updated map that accurately reflects the damaged and undamaged areas.**
- **we keep an accurate record of the EmComm'ers / ARO's and units that are operational.**

- **we maintain contact with other Amateur Radio individuals and clubs to learn about conditions in other areas.**
- **accurate and timely information is sent to ERC-East.**