

## Contingency Plans

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Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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## Contingency Plans

Reference Number: MTAS-517

### **Disaster Contingency Plans**

Contingency plans should be detailed and instructive, and address the specific needs of every office of city government. They should anticipate the various types of disasters your city might face. Response to a flood will be different from response to a fire, earthquake or tornado. In addition to officials and staff having copies of the plan, duplicates should be stored off site in case of disasters of truly catastrophic proportions. The best recovery plan is no good if the only copy is locked inside a file cabinet in an office that is on fire.

A good disaster contingency plan will:

- Designate who is in charge of recovery operations and who will be working on recovery teams. It should include all necessary information for contacting these people at any hour of the day or night;
- Anticipate the types of disaster the city may face and provide basic instructions for the first responders to an emergency to ensure that everything possible is done to minimize damage and preserve the safety of individuals responding to the disaster (e.g., evacuation plans, directions for shutting off electrical current in case of a flood, locations of shut-off valves in case of a broken water line);
- Include an inventory of supplies and equipment that are available for use in salvage efforts. The inventory should identify locations of important supplies and equipment — everything from heavy machinery to fire extinguishers to mops and buckets;
- Identify alternative office space and other facilities that might be used if the city needs temporary space for relocation or salvage operations;
- Include current contact information for experts in emergency management such as those at the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other governmental entities, plus commercial entities that can provide expertise in recovery and salvage if the disaster is too large for the city to handle by itself; and
- Plan for acquiring replacement office equipment and supplies quickly and efficiently. This will be essential if computer equipment is damaged.

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*DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.*

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