Libraries and Natural Disasters

By Danielle Meininger and Christina Leonette

The importance of libraries in the aftermath of natural disasters

Why is this important?

- Extreme weather events have increased in frequency and intensity
- It is becoming obvious to disaster preparedness officials that libraries need to be a part of disaster planning

How does this impact communities?

- Residents in hard-hit communities rely on libraries for information needs after disasters

What skills do librarians need?

- excellent research skills
- ability to work with all levels of management
- strong interpersonal communication skills
- listening skills
- note-taking skills
- ability to handle sensitive and confidential matters

IDENTIFIED ROLES DURING DISASTERS

Examples of eight broad categories describing the librarians' roles during a disaster

**Community Supporters**
Act as community gathering places for resources, technology support, information and shelter

**Information Disseminators**
Public, academic, special, and hospital libraries disseminate current, reliable information to patrons, institutions, or the general public

**Internal Planners**
Developing planning documents

**Information Community Builders**
Ensure continued services for communities

**Institutional Supporters**
Act as a command center for activities

**Government Partners**
Work with state health departments, local police and fire departments, and federal institutes, departments, and agencies

**Collection Managers**
Protect, restore, and provide access to collections

**Educators & Trainers**
Train emergency responders and community members

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

- [Incident Command System (ICS)](https://training.fema.gov/EMISWeb/IncidentResourceLibraries/)
- [Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training](https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team)
- [Ready Citizen Corps](https://www.ready.gov/citizencorps)
- [Disaster Preparedness & Community Resiliency Toolkit](https://www.njstatelibrary.org/services_for_libraries/resources/tools/Disaster%20planning/)

---

1. [Image of bar chart indicating increased frequency of extreme weather events]
2. [Checklist of important roles for libraries in disaster planning]
3. [Identification of roles such as Community Supporters, Information Disseminators, Internal Planners, and others]
4. [Examples of roles and responsibilities during a disaster]
5. [Links to training resources and disaster preparedness tools]


