



Emergency Risk Communications Plan

Approved: *Arthur Shepherd*
Arthur Shepherd, Director

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Review & Revision Date: _____

St. Mary's County Dept. of Recreation and Parks
23150 Leonard Hall Drive
Leonardtown, MD 20650
(301) 475-4200 ext. 1800

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Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to train staff to effectively communicate with the public and experts during a catastrophic event that attracts significant media attention, such as a health emergency or weather emergency. It identifies staff roles and procedures to be followed during the crisis. This document is reviewed annually and updated as needed. Any revised editions are to be approved by the Director of Recreation & Parks.

Emergency Response Protocols

Staff Roles

Emergency Situation

A danger is present outside of the Department facility or in a park and poses a potential threat of harm or endangerment to staff and participants. Staff's priority is to ensure the safety of participants and notify help immediately.

The 3 R's

- **RECOGNIZE** the threat.
- **REMOVE** participants from the area and to a safe, indoor area.
- **REMAIN** in designated space and call 911 or the non-emergency line at 301-475-8008.

Once emergency personnel have been contacted, assign a staff to contact the supervisor. If the supervisor is not available, contact the Division Manager. If staff is unable to contact either, contact the Department Director. During business hours, staff can always contact the main office at 301-475-4200 ext. *1800.

Urgent Situations

In the event of a situation involving a citizen, staff or child that requires additional assistance from a supervisor but does not pose a potential threat of harm or endangerment, contact the appropriate supervisor. If unavailable, the Division Manager should be contacted.

External Communication (Media Coverage)

The only employee authorized to discuss information with the news media is **the Director of Recreation & Parks and the County Public Information Officer (PIO)**. Any employee approached by the news media should notify a supervisor and direct the reporter to the Department Director. The Director may further delegate communication responsibilities at his/her discretion based on subject expertise.

It is understood that Department staff may have to handle initial contact with the media. If so, do the following:

- **DO NOT** make any statements regarding the incident.
- **DO NOT** respond with "No Comment".

- Make a generalized statement to the media, reinforcing the Department person of contact.

“The Director of Recreation & Parks is the designated spokesperson and has all of the current information related to the incident. He/she may be reached at the main office in Leonardtown for further questions.”

Emergency Contact Information

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911

St. Mary's County Emergency Communications – Non-Emergency #: (301) 475-8016

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office – Non-Emergency #: (301) 475-8018

Main Office Phone 301-475-4200, then press * then the extension number

Recreation and Parks Staff Contact List

ADMINISTRATION	301-475-4200
Department Director	x1812
Project Manager	x1811
Fiscal Specialist	x1810
RECREATION DIVISION	
Recreation Manager	x1804
Registrar	x1801
Front Desk	x1800
Fiscal Specialist	x1805
Admin Coordinator	x1820
Therapeutic Specialist	x1802
SPORTS	
Sports Coordinator	x1830
Leonard Hall (Evening)	x1831
Leonard Hall Fax Line	301-475-4982
Community Standards	x1803
YOUTH & CAMPS PROGRAMS	
SAC & Camps Coordinator	301-373-4689
Recreation Specialist	301-373-5410
Hollywood Recreation Center Fax Line	301-373-8400
GYMNASTIC CENTER	
Program Director	301-862-1462
Front Desk (Receptionist)	301-862-1462
Gymnastics Center Fax Line	301-863-5383
GREAT MILLS SWIMMING MILLS POOL	
Program Coordinator	301-866-6562

Front Desk (Receptionist) 301-866-6560
Great Mills Swimming Pool Fax Line 301-866-6561

BUILDING SERVICES

Extension *1150

MUSEUMS DIVISION

Museum Manager 301-769-3235
St. Clement's Island Museum (SCIM) 301-769-2222
SCIM Site Supervisor 301-769-4723
Piney Point Lighthouse Museum (PPLM) 301-994-1471
PPLM Site Supervisor 301-994-1471
Old Jail Museum (OJM) 240-925-3427
Marketing Manager 240-925-3427
St. Clement's Island Museum Fax Line 301-769-2225

WICOMICO SHORES GOLF COURSE

Golf Course Manager 301-884-4601
Pro Shop 301-934-8191
Maintenance 301-884-2943
Riverview Restaurant 301-884-0399
Wicomico Shores Fax Line 301-884-3125

PARKS DIVISION

Parks Manager 301-475-4200
Parks Manager Cell Phone x3571
Parks Manager Cell Phone 240-538-4946
Senior Office Specialist x3570
Maintenance Shop Fax Line 301-862-3613

CHANCELLORS RUN PARK

Facilities Coordinator 240-237-8023
Facilities Coordinator Cell Phone x1673
Facilities Coordinator Cell Phone 240-434-6669
Assistant x 1670
Voice Mail Only x1681
Chancellors Run Fax Line 240-237-8138

Website: www.stmarysmd.com/recreate Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmarysmdrecreation

Emergency Procedures

Guidelines for Assisting Persons with Disabilities in an Evacuation or Emergency Action Plan

During an Emergency Evacuation Procedure or Severe Weather/Natural Disaster event:

1. Communicate the nature of the emergency to the person.
2. Ask the person how they would like to be assisted.
3. When evacuating the person, make sure to bring along any mobility aids if possible, i.e., walker, or cane.

Persons with Visual Disabilities

Tell the person the nature of the emergency and offer to guide them to the nearest exit. Have them take your elbow and help them avoid obstacles. Even if they have a guide dog, it is wise to offer to physically guide them. Upon reaching safety, tell the person where they are and help them to get oriented to the location.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

Communicate the emergency to them in whatever manner is comfortable, utilizing hand gestures or a quick written note.

Persons Using Canes, Walkers or Crutches

Ask the person what assistance they need. If they are unable to use the stairs, follow directions for persons using wheelchairs (below).

Persons Using Wheelchairs

Ask the person what assistance they need. In general, in the event of fire, persons using wheelchairs should be moved to a fire safe exit (stairwell landing). If possible, have someone stay with them until additional assistance has arrived. **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.** If a person with a disability is located above or below the first floor, they should be moved to an exit/stairwell corridor out of the flow of foot traffic (rescue personnel are trained to check these areas for persons who may be trapped). When leaving the building, immediately inform rescue personnel of the location of the person using the wheelchair. Only in imminent danger situations should staff attempt a wheelchair evacuation.

Severe Weather

Lightning

Response:

- Regularly monitor weather conditions and local weather forecasts prior to scheduled activities.
- If thunder can be heard, then the presence of lightning is apparent, even if not immediately observed.
- Be aware of surroundings and the nearest safe area.
- Suspend activities, allowing sufficient time for group participants and/or spectators to get to shelter.
- Understanding of safe shelters is essential. Whenever possible, locate the nearest safe shelter and proceed indoors.
- If outside, avoid tall objects, stay off high grounds and avoid open spaces. Stay away from all metal objects as well, including electric wires and fences. Lightning typically strikes the tallest object, including humans in an open field or clearing.
- When outside during lightning activity and unable to reach safe shelter indoors, place your feet together, crouch down low and always duck your head with hands providing protection.
- Wait a minimum of 30 minutes from the last observed lightning strike or boom of thunder,

before resuming activities. Be extra cautious before giving the all clear.

For Your Benefit:

Safe shelter areas include fully enclosed buildings and fully enclosed metal vehicles. Unsafe shelter areas include tall solitary trees, anywhere near water, open fields.

Tornadoes

Response:

Tornado Watch

- Tornado Watch communicates that there is a potential for tornadoes, be aware of possible incoming tornadoes.
- Stay tuned to a weather radio or smart phone if possible.
- Normal activities can continue but be aware that severe weather may develop rapidly.
- Be prepared to move to a place of safety with minimal warning.

Tornado Warning

- Tornado Warning communicates that a tornado has been sighted.
- Have group participants and/or spectators seek inside shelter immediately.
- Find a small interior room without windows, a hallway on the lowest floor away from doors and windows, or pre-determined shelter areas.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows at all cost.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.
- Remain sheltered until the tornado has clearly passed.

Identifying Shelter Locations:

- Establish a designated area for employees to seek shelter in an underground area such as a basement or storm cellar, if available.
- If an underground shelter is unavailable, establish a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible (consider rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows or a heavy concrete floor).

Accountability Procedures:

- Develop a system for knowing who is in the building in the event of an emergency.
- Establish an alarm system or notification to warn employees.
- Conduct annual training exercises to practice what to do and where to seek shelter.

Response Actions:

If local authorities issue a tornado warning or a funnel cloud is sighted, **take shelter immediately**. All employees shall immediately retreat to the designated shelter area until the threat of severe weather has passed. During a tornado warning, follow the procedures listed below.

- Stay away from all windows and doors.
- Move to an interior corridor away from windows.
- Stay away from lobbies, walkways, atriums and other large glassed-in areas, and large open areas with a long roof span such as auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums.
- If available, take cell phone, NOAA public alert radio and flashlight.
- Crouch down along the wall and protect head with hands from possible flying debris.
- Do not use elevators because the power may fail, leaving persons trapped.
- Protect head and crouch down.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.
- Remain in shelter area until given the all clear by authorities.

Once an All-Clear has been Given, Follow the Procedure Below:

- If the building was not affected by incident, return to previous location.
- If building was affected by the incident, attempt to safely exit the building. If unable to do so, call 911. If no telephone is available, try to get the attention of outside personnel by making noise, such as yelling.

Working Outside:

- Try to get inside a building as quickly as possible and find a small, protected space away from windows.
- Avoid buildings with long-span roof areas such as a school gymnasium, arena or shopping mall, as these structures are not supported by outside walls. When hit by a tornado, these type buildings can collapse.
- If staff cannot find a place to go inside, crouch for protection next to a strong structure or lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area. Cover your head and neck with your arms or a jacket.

Working in a Large Office Building:

- Keep away from windows and glass doorways.
- Go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest floor. Do not use elevators because the power may go out and leave personnel trapped.
- Do not leave a building to attempt to “escape” a tornado.

Working in a Large Gymnasium or Auditorium:

- If inside one of these buildings and cannot leave, find an interior area such as a restroom or office, with concrete walls if possible and/or take cover under a sturdy structure.

When Inside a Vehicle:

- If staff can safely drive away from the tornado, do so.
- If there is a sturdy structure, go inside.
- If no sturdy building is available, pull over and away from trees or power lines, stop the car (but leave it running so the air bags work) and crouch down below the windows. The airbags and frame of the car will offer some protection, but not

absolute safety.

- If outside of the car and in a ditch, get far enough away from the car so that it doesn't tumble onto you. Do not climb under the embankment of a bridge or overpass.

Earthquake

During an Earthquake:

- DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON. Minimize movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place. If indoors, stay there until the shaking has stopped and sure exiting is safe.

Evacuation and Emergency Action Plan Coordinator(s) will follow these steps to ensure the safety of personnel in an Earthquake:

- Conduct annual training exercises to practice what to do in an earthquake.
- Establish a designated meeting area for personnel to report to once the shaking stops.
- Establish accountability procedures for personnel.

If Working Indoors When the Shaking Starts:

- DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If not near a strong table or desk, drop to the floor against an interior wall and cover head and neck with arms.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as hanging objects, lighting fixtures, tall cabinets and large appliances.
- Avoid doorways unless it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway.
- Do not exit a building during the shaking. Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside.
- Do not use elevators.
- Persons in a wheelchair should lock the wheels and cover head.

If Working Outdoors When the Shaking Starts:

- Stay outside.
- Move to a clear area if safe.
- Move away from buildings, trees, streetlights and power lines.

If in a Moving Vehicle:

- Stop as soon as safely possible and to the side of the road.
- Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, bridges, overpasses and power lines.

Once the Earthquake Shaking Stops:

- If trapped in debris:
 - Move as little as possible to not kick up dust.
 - Cover mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
 - Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear present location.

- Use a whistle if available. Shout only as a last resort to prevent inhalation of dust.
- When the shaking stops, look around to make sure it is safe to move, then exit the building and report to the designated meeting area. Stay in this area until advised it is safe return to the building or otherwise instructed.
- Stay away from damaged areas.
- Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call 911 for help.
- Expect aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures and can occur in the first hours, days, weeks or even months after the quake.
- If driving, anticipate traffic light outages.
- Once returned to the building, open cabinets cautiously. Beware of object than can fall off shelves.
- Clean up any spills or debris.
- Report any structure or contents damages to Building Services immediately.

Extreme Cold

The St. Mary's County Department of Recreation & Parks reserves the right to cancel programs, special events and/or close facilities in the event of extreme cold conditions. When St. Mary's County schools are closed for the day, it also means that all activities scheduled in school buildings for that day are canceled, including all Recreation & Parks programs, after school programs and athletics.

Response:

- All cancellations should be displayed on the Department's website.
- If the program is currently running, make sure that all individuals are kept indoors. Long exposure to such freezing temperatures may cause frostbite or hypothermia.

Extreme Heat

All programs, special events, athletic games, facilities, etc. can be canceled under the following conditions:

- When heat and humidity are such that participants in vigorous activities for prolonged periods could become over heated and continued activity becomes dangerous.
- When the heat index possesses a possible threat to the safety of participants and spectators.
- When weather conditions present a threat to the safety of participants and spectators.

Response:

- Move group participants indoors when available. Otherwise, a shady area may suffice.
- Provide sufficient breaks for water during programs and special events.
- If any participants complain of headache or dizziness, call 911.
- Cancel the program at the discretion of the overseeing supervisor.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are essentially large complexes of thunderstorms. Therefore, they include all the dangers that can come with thunderstorms: lightning, flash floods, downbursts, tornadoes and more. For coastal areas, the added threat is flooding from high tides and the storm surge. The storm surge is a dome of water (perhaps only 2 feet high or maybe 15 to 20 feet high and often 50 miles across) that comes sweeping across the coastline just to the right (north) of the area where the eye of the hurricane makes landfall.

Warnings Defined:

- Tropical Storm Watch: Tropical storm conditions with sustained winds from 39 to 73 mph are possible in your area within the next 36 hours.
- Tropical Storm Warning: Tropical storm conditions are expected in your area within the next 24 hours.
- Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions (sustained winds greater than 74 mph) are possible in your area within 36 hours.
- Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions are expected in your area in 24 hours or less.
- If you live near the water, you should also be aware of the following alerts:
 - Coastal Flood Watch: The possibility exists for the inundation of land areas along the coast within the next 12 to 36 hours.
 - Coastal Flood Warning: Land areas along the coast are expected to become, or have become, inundated by sea water above the typical.

How to Respond to a Hurricane:

When notified by manager or other designee that a hurricane or hurricane conditions are imminent, the following should be accomplished:

- Check outside area and secure all portable equipment, signs, trash cans, etc.
- Utilize masking tape in "X" pattern on windows/glass to minimize flying glass.
- Ensure all electrical equipment is unplugged.

All sites have a cellular phone which can be used to dial 911 in the event of an emergency. The site director will designate a staff member to call 911.

If the cell phone is not working and a land line is not available, a personal cell phone may be used. If no phone service is available, a text message may be sent to the Division Manager.

If evacuation of a site is required, the supervisors will contact the contracted bus service for youth camps or advise other visitors and participants to evacuate utilizing personal transportation.

Fire Emergency

St. Mary's County Government and the Department of Recreation & Parks has a Fire & Emergency Evacuation plan for fires located in the main office building at 23150 Leonard Hall Drive, Leonardtown, MD 20650 (Appendix A). This plan is intended as a guide in the event of a fire, bomb or hostage related emergency. It provides general instruction and direction for those

who play a role in assuring that everyone in the building leaves in an orderly manner and in the quickest time possible.

General Response for Recreation & Parks facilities:

- When a fire is detected, pull the nearest first alarm when available.
- Call 911.
- If the fire is small and an individual trained in extinguisher use feels that it can be extinguished using no more than one portable fire extinguisher, this attempt can be made. If this effort fails, the person using the extinguisher should immediately evacuate.
- Upon notification of the fire emergency, individuals (both employees and/or program participants) should leave the building or park area.
- Individuals are not to reenter a structure until notified by a Fire Department Official.

Appendix A: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation & Parks Main Office Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan

EMERGENCY EVACUATION MASTER PLAN

