

Beyond WordsSM

the Dollar General school library relief fund



Are you prepared?

Sometimes, disaster will strike with little or no warning. “Beyond Words” is a fresh campaign to jump-start schools and librarians to plan for the unthinkable—library disaster relief following catastrophic weather or other destructive events. The American Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, and the National Education Association have identified a sampling of disaster planning resources to help public schools take early action and go ‘beyond words’ to protect every school’s intellectual core—the library.

Americans live in the most severe-weather-prone country on Earth. The National Weather Service estimates that the United States experiences

Assess your library's disaster preparedness. Through periodic inspections and information gathering, you can reduce your library's vulnerability to disaster.

an average of 10,000 thunderstorms, 2,500 floods, 1,000 tornadoes, and about six deadly hurricanes a year. Global climate extremes are causing catastrophic shifts in weather

patterns which, in turn, are causing severe heat, floods, and hurricanes like Katrina that devastated the Gulf Coast.

From wildfires in California to flooding and tornadoes in the Midwest and the South, schools are not immune to the havoc wrought by Mother Nature and human activities. Hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, power outages, chemical spills, tornadoes, or even bombs and terrorist attacks can devastate school libraries in minutes. To protect these valuable resources, librarians and volunteers must prepare to respond to natural and other disasters quickly and effectively.

Luckily, there are already government, service, and local emergency organizations that are paying attention and can help. For instance, the National Weather Service tracks dozens of hazardous weather conditions, and the American Red Cross provides community disaster education and emergency support to help us through these crises.

When authorities and individual citizens fail to prepare for these possibilities, the price is paid in lost and disrupted lives and damaged property.

The 5 Readiness Steps

- Assess Preparedness
- Identify District Resources
- Make a Plan
- Create Emergency Procedures
- Prepare an Emergency Kit

A collaboration among



Identify District Resources

Find out what plans are in place in your school district to help you deal with disasters.

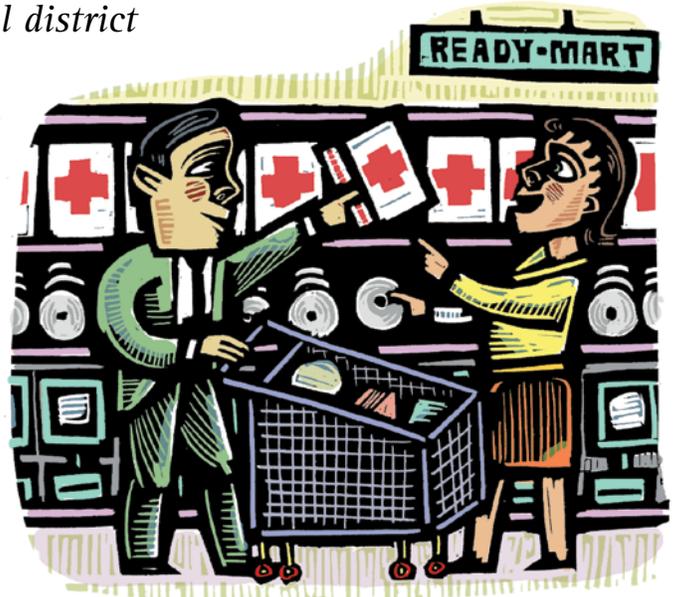
What policies and structures have been developed to address disasters? Is there a district or school disaster plan in place? Can nearby school districts coordinate and share resources?

Find out if there is a department of risk management, crisis response team, department of library services, facilities management division, or other department that responds to crisis events in your district.

- Who are the key contacts for a crisis in your school and would you know how to reach them before and after a disaster?
- Would they provide information and assistance in recovery efforts and deal with the press?

What funding sources are available to assist your library in recovering from a disaster?

- Does the district provide emergency or contingency funding that you can access to replace materials?
- Does insurance cover the library and its contents?
- Is your school eligible for public assistance? If your local and state government cannot provide recovery relief after a major disaster, they may appeal for federal assistance through FEMA.
- Will school vendors donate to the library?
- In addition to Dollar General's disaster relief fund, are there other private funding sources or grants you can request?



Who is responsible for recovery and salvage operations?

- Is there library staff expected to lead recovery and repair?
- Is there a district approved vendors list for recovery and repair efforts?

Resources

Find valuable information on disaster preparedness and emergency planning for libraries. The Web sites below offer a selection of materials to adapt to your needs:

The American Library Association

(bibliography of resources and tools, under "Professional Tools: Admin and Management")
www.ala.org

The American Red Cross

(disaster preparedness)
www.redcross.org

Baltimore Academic Library Consortium

(disaster planning assistance on recovery)
<http://matrix.msu.edu/~disaster/balcplan.php>

Beyond Words Library Relief

(library disaster grant application)
www.ala.org/aasl/disasterrelief

FEMA

(public assistance, disaster aid grants, state emergency agencies, and disaster specific guidelines)
www.fema.gov

California State Library

(customizable disaster response plan templates, emergency planning, recovery documents, and checklists under "Information Resources: Emergency Preparedness and Response")
<http://calpreservation.org> and
http://calpreservation.org/disasters/generic/plan_toc.html

Heritage Preservation

(user-friendly "Field Guide to Emergency Response," DVD and Salvage Wheel)
www.heritageemergency.org

International Association of Emergency Managers

(emergency management information)
www.iaem.com/resources/links/intro.htm

NEA Foundation

(online *Beyond Words* toolkit and poster)
www.neafoundation.org

Ready America

(local and state government emergency agencies and supply kit checklist)
www.ready.gov/america/local/index.html

soliNET

(disaster, recovery, and salvage plans, and checklists, see "Resources: Preservation Publications") www.solinet.net and
www.solinet.net/emplibfile/emerstratg.pdf

Syracuse University Library

(books and electronic salvage after flooding, see "Preservation: Disaster Plans")
<http://library.syr.edu/information/index.html> and
<http://library.syr.edu/information/preservation/emersup.htm>

Make a Plan

Develop a library disaster plan to prepare for and respond to events.

- Organize a diverse team of school staff, district experts, and community emergency services providers to develop your plan.
- Study school and community evacuation plans before an emergency occurs.
- Align your disaster plan with any existing district and/or school policies.
- Download disaster response plans and checklist templates from online Web sites. Refer to the resource section for useful links.
- Determine ahead of time if there are any electrical items that should be unplugged before an evacuation.
- Keep copies of the disaster plan on file in the main office, library, evacuation kit, and at multiple off-site locations, such as your home or the district office, as well as on the electronic backup of critical files.
- Obtain the radio frequency to access emergency notices on a radio scanner (Ham radio) from the



local emergency director. Many emergency personnel use the amateur radio network to track weather on the open airwaves.

- Review and update the plan yearly. Revise the plan after a disaster, reflecting what was learned, what worked, and what didn't work.

Include key contacts, a communication plan, advance emergency procedures, assignment of responsibilities, immediate first steps list, instructions for response and recovery, collection priorities, recovery team members list, record keeping forms, floor plans, resource lists, insurance information, and library access instructions.

- Plan your route—have at least two ways to get in and out of the building from your library.
- Work with emergency services personnel to make sure your procedures are appropriate for each emergency.
- Know what the evacuation alarm sounds like for your school.
- Make sure school staff and students practice fire drills and evacuation procedures at least three times a year. Remember to plan to reunite students with their classroom teacher, if appropriate.

Emergency Procedures

**Act first to protect lives, then protect physical property.
Books and other resources can be replaced — people can't!**

Some disasters and emergencies may require specialized responses. If your school or district disaster plans don't delineate procedures for dealing with each of these, include them in your library plan.

- Leave quickly—but not before you ensure that there are no students or volunteers still in the library. Check the stacks, closets, and other areas for stragglers, particularly disoriented children.
- Take only the essentials—car keys, purse, and emergency toolkit, if conditions allow. Don't try to take heavy or large objects if you need to evacuate immediately.
- In a fire or other imminent danger, there is not time to search for a purse or other items.
- Remain calm and proceed quickly, but in an orderly manner to exit the building.

- Shut all doors behind you as you leave, to slow the spread of fire, smoke and water.
- Once outside, move away from the building and assemble upwind from smoke.

Remember: In an emergency, assess your students' and your own safety and act accordingly.





Prepare an Emergency Kit

Every library should have a “toolkit” of supplies and materials to use in salvage and recovery efforts after a disaster strikes.

Ideally, every librarian should prepare both a mobile emergency kit for quick evacuation and an on-site protected storage cabinet to keep supplies for salvage and recovery after the disaster. Some supplies should be kept in both locations.

- **Storage**—set aside a storage container or cabinet for on-site recovery supplies. Remember that in the aftermath of a disaster, supplies may be hard to find.
- **Boxes**—a few sturdy boxes or stackable plastic containers to hold supplies, irreplaceable materials, and critical files.
- **Mobile kit**—a large rolling suitcase is more manageable than big boxes to make a quick exit.
- **Electronic backups**—back up disks that contain a record of your automated card catalog, critical computer files, and any specialized programs; these need to be updated regularly.
- **Duplicates of critical files**—copy your disaster plan, key contact information, an inventory of furnishings and equipment, insurance policies, information on the initial salvage process (i.e., how to handle wet books, dry out videotapes, etc.), and any other information that you may need to prepare for reopening and normal operations.
- **A digital camera**—take “before” pictures to support insurance claims before a disaster strikes; use the camera afterward to document damage.
- **Plastic sheeting, trash bags**—cover equipment, bookcases, and card catalogs to minimize water damage.
- **Packing tape**—seal boxes, secure plastic sheeting, etc.
- **Notepads, pens**—record critical information when you return.
- **Flashlights and batteries**—replace batteries regularly for power outages.
- **Protective goggles, masks, and gloves**—use protective gear when working in debris and mold.
- **A radio scanner**—tune into the open airwaves to track weather, emergency information, and 911 when traditional communications fail.

Update the inventory each year or after a disaster occurs.

Beyond Words: The Dollar General school library disaster relief fund provides grants to public school libraries to replace or supplement books, media, and/or library equipment that support learning in a school library environment. Public school libraries that incur substantial damage or hardship due to natural disaster or an act of terrorism are eligible for assistance. For grant details, go to www.ala.org/aasl/disasterrelief.