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Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



U.S. COAST GUARD CHAPLAIN'S GUIDE TO HURRICANE OPERATIONS

U.S. Coast Guard

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK SHOULD BE
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References

Source Materials

This handbook contains original material developed by U.S. Coast Guard Chaplains in hurricane operations and excerpts from the following publications:

COMDTINST 1754.3A Critical Incident Stress Management

Credits

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CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

During the past several decades, major disasters throughout North America, including the catastrophic 2017 Atlantic hurricane season, have highlighted the need for Coast Guard Chaplains to be prepared to care for our Coast Guardsmen and their dependents beyond the physical and social sphere and into the psychological, emotional, and spiritual domain. Disasters certainly impact lives on the physical side (a destroyed home, bodily injury) and certainly on the social side (disrupted relationships and routines), but the invisible effects of the psychological, emotional, and spiritual realms are often overlooked.

Chaplains must be where it matters, when it matters, with what matters, which means chaplains must be present and engaged during hurricane operations. Chaplains have a tremendous opportunity to be a vital part of the process of sustaining, healing, and restoring the necessary psychological, emotional, and spiritual health of our people to keep them doing what they do best as Coast Guardsmen. We do this by ministry of presence, advisement, employing spiritual care, and by bringing hope to the hopeless.

Do not assume that because you are not assigned to a geographic area affected by hurricanes that the material in the handbook does not apply to you. In a large-scale response, many Coast Guard Chaplains will be asked to respond. Whether or not you deploy personally, you will feel the effects of hurricane response. Members from your units will deploy or prepare to deploy. Families across the Coast Guard will have to cope with the unexpected deployment of their servicemember. Some of your units will be minimally manned or face reduced funding as the Coast Guard as a whole focuses its efforts on response operations. You may have personnel at your command who know people who were impacted by the hurricane or who have property in the hurricane ravaged area.

This handbook is designed to familiarize Coast Guard Chaplains on their specific role during hurricane operations, before, during, and after the storm. We chaplains will be ready, relevant, and responsive in the delivery of holistic religious ministry during Coast Guard operations we are called to support. **While the topic of this handbook is hurricane operations, the guidance is applicable to any natural or man-made disaster response or crisis situation.**

The table of contents shows the logical progression of a chaplain's role during hurricane operations. The rest of the handbook elaborates on each of these points followed by various checklists, templates, and resources useful to you in your ministry during this very crucial time.

CHAPTER 2. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

A. CHAPLAIN OF THE COAST GUARD (CG-00A)

1. Serves as primary advisor to the Commandant (CCG) on matters of religion and promotes the well-being of all, while ensuring that Coast Guard personnel and families are provided the full spectrum of pastoral care.
2. CG-00A is the final authority for deploying mobilized chaplains outside an Area Chaplain's Area of Responsibility (AOR) to disaster areas.
3. During an incident, attends daily briefings at the National Command Center and reports to Coast Guard leadership on chaplain involvement in the disaster.
4. Supervises and communicates with the Area Chaplains.
5. The Deputy Chaplain of the Coast Guard will serve in CG-00A's absence.

B. AREA CHAPLAIN

1. In conjunction with the District Chaplains plans and supervises, the deployment and operational execution of chaplain support throughout the hurricane response in their Area AOR.
2. Directly responsible for securing chaplains from their own Area's AOR to standby for mobilizations to the affected areas. For chaplains outside of the Area Chaplain's AOR identified for mobilization, a BIO Information Request Template is sent (see Appendix D as USN Chaplains do not have USCG employee ID numbers for processing ICS-213-RR-CG Resource Request Message). Once complete, the mobilized chaplain's BIO information is sent to the Area Chaplains administrative office and added to the Resource Request Message requesting chaplain support to the specific District.
3. Confirms with CG-00A the list of chaplains (active duty and reserve) available for mobilization for hurricane support, who are from outside the Area Chaplains AOR.
4. Attends Area Command Center briefings.
5. Responsible for communicating daily SITREP information to CG-00A, including the geographic location of chaplains and dependents in the affected area.

C. DISTRICT CHAPLAIN

1. Plans and executes supervision of Air Station, Base, and Sector Chaplains and directly reports to the Area Chaplain.
2. Serves as part of the Incident Management System under the Incident Commander and accesses the support level of chaplains in the affected area.
3. Attends daily brief and updates the Incident Commander on chaplain movements and delivery of ministry.
4. Stays in touch with Response and Prevention department heads for situational awareness of USCG Cutters, fixed and rotary aircraft. This enables the District Chaplain to give guidance to chaplains on the ground about possible transportation opportunities.

5. Regularly meets with the district Health Safety Work-Life (HSWL) director, Work-Life Division chief, and Critical Incident Stress Management Technical Specialist to gather information about any Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) missions. Chaplains may be embedded with these deployed CISM teams if requested by CISM team leaders.
 - a. COMDTINST 1754.3A (series) states, “Coast Guard members and others may experience stress, frustration, and grief for those involved in a traumatic incident. An insensitive response to the impact of incidents can contribute to burnout, increased stress, substance abuse, and/or other personal problems, including poor job performance.”
 - b. CISM teams help:
 - 1) Affected personnel were in fear for their lives
 - 2) Serious line of duty injury
 - 3) A disaster or multi-casualty event
 - 4) Death of an active duty member or civilian employee
 - 5) Incidents involving the recovery of human remain
6. Evaluates the best locations to stage Sector/Air Station and mobilized chaplains while awaiting clarification and transportation into the hurricane affected areas.
7. Sends Resource Request Message (ICS-213-RR-CG) for mobilization of chaplains to the affected areas. The Logistics Chief Section or Plans Chief notifies the Area Chaplain of any inbound Resource Request Messages to be sent to the Area Chaplains command for processing.
8. Tracks all critical issues in affected areas that would benefit from religious ministry support.
9. Tracks chaplain locations and movements within AOR. Submits daily reports to Area Chaplain with updates of chaplain movements and level of support information.
10. Maintains mobilized chaplain orders in order to facilitate and execute the demobilization process.

D. SECTOR/AIR STATION CHAPLAIN

1. Sector/Air Station Chaplains are boots on the ground.
2. Primary goals are to provide:
 - a. Ministry of presence.
 - b. On-scene crisis support.
 - c. Pastoral counseling.
 - d. Spiritual/religious support and advise the local Incident Commander.
3. Submits daily ministry reports to the District Chaplain.

E. PROSPECTIVE/MOBILIZED CHAPLAIN – GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Complete Mobilized Chaplain Bio Information Template form (see Appendix D) and submit to the Area Chaplain as quickly as possible.

2. Chaplains tagged for potential mobilization will receive calls from the Area and/or District Chaplains for mobilization guidance into the Area AOR.
3. With guidance from District Chaplain to prepare for mobilization, pack for at least 15 days in a location where there may be no electricity or communication systems available (e.g., need for a solar phone charger).
4. Chaplain receives orders and executes travel. The chaplain will be sent to a setting where there's an official command structure and/or USCG personnel for further support.
5. Chaplains may be assigned as follows to execute following missions:
 - a. Assigned to a staging area (AIRSTA, Base, Sector, Station) to minister to air crews, Cutters, and other personnel who are assembling or evacuating, etc.
 - b. Embedded with a CISM team. His/her mission is then governed by the mission of the HSWL-CISM coordinator back at the district. Chaplain still communicates and sends in daily reports to the District Chaplain.
 - c. Assigned to affected area to help and cooperate with local Sector Chaplain.
 - d. Assigned to affected area where there is no other Coast Guard Chaplain. There may be chaplains from other services in that location.
 - e. Assigned to the Personnel Support Team (PST) which mobilized to support evacuated families.
 - f. Assigned to a PST at a national call center. Chaplain will minister to the team, and also may help via phone counseling.
 - g. Assigned to minister to a command element that has COOPED to another location. COOP stands for: Continuity of Operations Plan.
6. Chaplains are to work as colleagues under the mission given by the ICS Commander and under the supervision of the District Chaplain, or in the case of the Sector Chaplain, by his/her commander.
7. Chaplains will communicate with the District Chaplain prior to traveling outside of the primary mission area to fulfill a critical mission. The District Chaplain will communicate with the Area Chaplain on the critical mission request outside the primary mission area.
8. Prepare daily reports and submit to the District Chaplain.
9. Once authorized to demobilize, coordinate with District Chaplain for travel information. District Chaplains initiate the demobilization procedure with the Logistics Section Chief and in conjunction with the Area Chaplain.

CHAPTER 3. PRE-HURRICANE AND DURING THE HURRICANE

A. PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY IN ADVANCE

Hurricane season occurs annually June to November. Knowing this, you must prepare yourself and your own family in advance, whether or not you live in an area likely to be affected by a hurricane. If a hurricane hits in your AOR, you will be called upon to respond while being supported by other Coast Guard assets from around the nation. If a hurricane hits in another location your command, you will likely be called upon to support the affected units. Every Coast Guard Chaplain should be ready to mobilize during hurricane season.

Prepare now to ensure your affairs are in order and your chaplain “Go Bag” is fully stocked (see Appendix A). Also, review thoroughly the Incident Command System (ICS) Chaplain Job Aid. This aid is a helpful resource to assist you in understanding where you fit within the command structure during relief efforts.

For your family, ensure your house is prepared and safe. Once a hurricane is on its way, it is too late to prepare and purchase the needed supplies. Your family should know well in advance that evacuating may be the best option. Your house should also be ready to withstand the storm. This also includes letting your extended family know your plans. When in doubt, evacuate your dependents early so you can focus on helping others in need.

Both <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes> and <https://www.ready.gov/prepare> offer a wealth of information.

B. CONNECT WITH YOUR SUPERVISORY CHAPLAIN AND OTHER LOCAL COAST GUARD CHAPLAINS

Prior to hurricane season and the imminent possibility of a hurricane approaching your area, connect with your supervisory chaplain. Discuss with your District Chaplain the following:

1. Are you going to evacuate or remain in place?
2. What chaplain is going to cover down and where?
3. Will immediate help be sent in?
4. Will your family be with you or will they evacuate and where?

At the same time, connect with other Coast Guard Chaplains in your area including Auxiliary Clergy Support (ACS) Chaplains. Coordinate with each other and make appropriate plans. Discuss possible course of actions if communication channels fail.

C. NETWORK WITH LOCAL CHAPLAINS

Once a hurricane hits, disaster relief quickly becomes an “all hands-on deck” event. It is important to network with chaplains of other branches before the crisis as it increases the

span and capacity of care and builds working relationships between your command and their command.

D. PARTICIPATE IN YOUR COMMAND'S HURRICANE READINESS BRIEFS

These briefs are meant to prepare homes and plans for when a hurricane strikes. Ensure you are part of the brief in order to communicate your availability and contact information. These briefs are also a good time to offer suggestions on how to maintain emotional and spiritual resiliency in a crisis.

E. OFFER STRESS MANAGEMENT CLASSES

Prior to hurricane season, ask your various units if they would like you to offer stress management or spiritual resiliency training. You should also offer these trainings to dependents.

F. ADVERTISE YOUR AVAILABILITY AND YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to stress management classes, advertise your availability and contact information via an all-hands email to your command and/or through your command Facebook page.

G. TAKE PART IN A HURRICANE EXERCISE

Most commands in potentially affected areas conduct an annual Hurricane Exercise (HUREX). Participate in these exercises, listen in, and communicate with key leaders to learn their plans in various scenarios. This will help you understand where religious ministry support best fits and affords you the opportunity to communicate to your command how they best can utilize you should a hurricane come.

H. IF A HURRICANE IS IMMINENT, STAY CLOSE TO YOUR COMMAND CADRE

If a hurricane is imminent in your area, stay close to your command cadre. Attend all briefs and pertinent meetings. This will help you be aware of the command's plan and will also allow you to begin planning for the care of those affected.

I. KNOW YOUR PLACE IN THE COOP (CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN)

Where your command makes its COOP site will become command central. It will become a very busy place especially during the imminent possibility of a hurricane. Do not interfere if you see them working but certainly be present. You will often be more effective in individual conversations than in public announcements. This will be a high stress environment and therefore a good place to check in on your people.

J. KNOW YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

Hurricanes frequently damage mobile communications and internet service. Know your command's and chaplain team's alternate communication plan.

K. BE USEFUL TO YOUR COMMAND

As a chaplain, your primary role is providing spiritual and religious support. At the same time, and as time allows, look for ways to contribute behind the scenes. Any task that puts you in contact with people can create opportunities to minister. For example,

1. Be a part of a working party.
2. Help load vehicles.
3. Help serve food.
4. Drive people to the evacuation site and then pray with and for them.

L. BE WHERE DEPENDENTS ARE WHEN THEY PRE-EVACUATE

If your unit decides to pre-evacuate dependents, go to the location where the dependents are evacuating. They will appreciate your comfort and your reassurance. They will likely have questions, so work with your Logistics Department to learn as much pertinent information as you can. Do not make any promises you cannot keep.

M. IF THE WHOLE COMMAND EVACUATES, DETERMINE WHERE YOU WILL BE MOST USEFUL

If your command evacuates, your location of best utilization can be a difficult decision. Should you be a part of the pre-evacuation party? Should you be one of the last to leave with the command? Should you be with the service members? Should you be with the dependents who are leaving their homes and property? Discuss with your command and supervisory chaplain about when and where you should go. It is ultimately up to your command and supervisory chaplain to determine where you need to be.

If your command evacuates, there will likely be a designated location and hotel to which both your service members and dependents will go. Once there, ensure you connect with the Personnel Support team (PST), making them aware of your presence in the event they need to contact you. Also, look for ways to publicize your contact information for everyone to see. Post your contact information in a central, visible location at the PST. A helpful idea is to post your contact information on a Post-It Super Sticky Easel Pad sheet and encourage arriving members and families to take a picture of it with their mobile phone. If the PST gives personnel and families an informational handout, ensure that your contact information is on it as well.

At the same time, another Coast Guard Chaplain may be mobilized to provide support to you and your unit at the designated place. Work closely with him or her as to how best to provide ministry. Consider offering prayer services, divine services, or any other type of

ministry and be sensitive to the needs of those of varying faiths. Research local resources who may be able to help or offer support.

Connect with your Incident Command Post (ICP) and its location, as this is where a majority of your unit will be working as the storm passes. The ICP will have the most up to date information, and you'll be able to develop the best means of providing needed and timely ministry.

Once the storm passes, your command will begin planning to return in order to provide relief efforts. Work with your command and your supervisory chaplain as to the best place to serve. You can either return and provide relief efforts with the damage assessment team or stay with the ICP personnel and dependents. Every situation will be different.

N. CONNECT WITH CHAPLAIN(S) ASSIGNED TO THE DESIGNATED PLACE PREPARING TO RECEIVE DEPENDENTS

If your dependents are evacuated and you stay with your command and personnel in the affected area, be sure to connect with the chaplain at the evacuation site. This is an important relationship, especially as you care for the members and they care for dependents.

O. INFORMATION TO REMEMBER IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED AS THE CHAPLAIN AT THE DESIGNATED LOCATION TO RECEIVE DEPENDENTS

1. Care for the Personnel Support Team. They will work long hours to help evacuated members and families.
2. Be prepared to receive the spouses and children at any time, day or night.
3. Contact the evacuated personnel and families' chaplains and maintain consistent communication.
4. Connect with the District Chaplain to see if the Coast Guard Foundation or Coast Guard Auxiliary can help with family support.
5. Connect with CISM coordinator.
6. Offer religious worship services or coordinate transportation to local places of worship.
7. Provide opportunities for prayer and/or sacred text studies.
8. Provide scheduled hours for counseling.
9. Coordinate with local communities of faith to potentially provide children's ministry programming (e.g., mini-Vacation Bible School) at a local hotel if there are a significant number of evacuees in the area.
10. Communicate daily with the District Chaplain as to personnel/family needs and ministry delivered.
11. USCG Chaplains cannot directly ask profit or non-profit organizations for donations. However, if these organizations discover that there are evacuees in need of help, refer them to your command's POC that processes these offers of support.

P. IF YOU'RE TOLD GO HOME AND HUNKER DOWN – “DO IT!”

The storm will eventually come, even if it seems to take forever. The sky will look clear, the weather might be beautiful, but radar imagery will indicate it fast approaching. If your command tells you to go home and hunker down, “do it!” Moreover, if your family has not evacuated, they will need you there.

Q. DURING THE HURRICANE

Every hurricane is unique. A Category 2 hurricane might wreak more damage than a Category 5. Every storm is serious. Have a place for you and your family to shelter. Your number one priority during the storm is to keep you and your family safe. Don't take unnecessary risks. Your command will need you safe and healthy after the storm. While you are hunkered down, keep your phone available. Communication systems will likely be damaged, but if possible, be available for any communication. Lastly, don't go outside until it is absolutely safe and local government officials and/or the command has communicated that it is permissible to return.

CHAPTER 4. POST-HURRICANE

A. CHECK IN WITH YOUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS – WORK OUT FROM THERE

After ensuring your family's safety, begin checking in with your immediate neighbors to ensure their safety, especially if you live on a military installation. From there, begin checking in with other neighbors to see if anyone is injured and in need of help.

B. CONTACT YOUR CHAIN OF COMMAND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

If you are evacuated at the time of the hurricane, contact your command and/or supervisory chaplain with a recommendation as to where you can serve. Should you join first responders? Should you stay with your command? Should you stay with dependents? Every storm and situation will be different. Remember, when everyone is evacuated, no one knows how their homes fared during the storm.

If you are not evacuated, communicate with your command as soon as possible in order to learn the command's focus of effort. Stay up to date with what the command is doing. Their focus of effort should be your focus of effort.

C. IF ANYONE IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, OR SPIRITUALLY DISTRAUGHT, GET TO THEM FIRST

Everyone handles stress differently. Some will not be affected by the storm but others may be very distraught. If people are scared, fearful, or anxious, be empathetic with them. Some might have experienced the loss of a loved one or significant damage to their personal property. Pray appropriately with those whom would allow you to pray.

D. BEGIN NETWORKING WITH OTHER CHAPLAINS IN PREPARATIONS FOR GREATER CARE

Let your supervisory chaplain know you and your family's status and plans. Provide as much information as possible in case communication services fail. Contact other Coast Guard Chaplains in your local area to coordinate efforts of ministry. Also try to contact the chaplain attached to the evacuated dependents or at the PST. That chaplain may know of specific members who could use a visit. And lastly, begin contacting chaplains of various other services in order to maintain lines of communications and learn of their needs.

E. STAY ALIGNED TO COMMAND LEADERSHIP AND MAKE THEIR PRIORITIES YOUR PRIORITIES

Recovery efforts may take only a week and some may last months. During the duration of the relief efforts, make it a priority to stay aligned with your command leadership. Not only will you be able to offer regular and helpful advisement and learn of personnel

needs, but you may be their only confidant during a very stressful time. Leaders are tested significantly during these times, which means they may confidentially lean on you.

F. BE WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE HURTING AND WHERE STRESS IS HIGH

In addition to staying close to leadership during what may be a long recovery process, also be where the people are hurting or where the stress is high. Your people will most likely be involved in search and rescue efforts, opening ports, environmental clean-up, and reconstituting the base. Be aware of and present at the places where tensions are running high and people are tired.

G. AS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO), FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION (FEMA), AND DISASTER RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS BEGIN COMING IN, NETWORK THEM WITH COMMAND POINTS OF CONTACT

Working with NGOs, FEMA, and Disaster Relief organizations can be challenging. As chaplains, we often desire to help everyone and do as much good we can. Remember to work within many legal parameters (some of these parameters are taught in ISC 100, 200, 700, and 800 courses). In your interactions with these organizations, stay in your lane. Do not speak for your command or make any promises, but try to be helpful where you can. Keep your command and supervisory chaplain apprised if any of these organizations reach out to you. Follow your leadership's guidance as to how you can best interface and potentially partner with these organizations.

H. NETWORK WITH MEDICAL STAFF – THEY WILL KNOW HOW PEOPLE ARE DOING

If there is a Coast Guard clinic in your area, prioritize networking with primary care physicians, nursing staff, and Health Services Technicians (HS). They will likely be aware of needs and help direct you to opportunities for care and ministry support. In addition, care for the medical staff as they will likely be very tired as well. They often have to bear the burdens of many hurting people.

I. IF YOU ARE EMBEDDED WITH A CISM TEAM (CISM CHAPLAIN)

If assigned to a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, you will be integrated into a team of typically four CISM peers. The CISM team will be under the direct supervision and tasking of the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (EAPC) or the CISM Technical Specialist is assigned to the Incident Command Post (ICP). You should still maintain regular and direct communication with the appropriate supervisory chaplain. The supervisory chaplain will direct the initial assignment to the chaplain embedded with the CISM team. The duration of the CISM assignment belongs to the CISM Coordinator at the District; the duration of the deployment belongs to CG-00A.

The chaplain embedded with the CISM team may conduct various stress management group and individual interventions after the hurricane or natural disaster. *No chaplain should be assigned to a CISM team if they have not completed the CISM Basic Course.* Your role is that of a chaplain not a CISM peer. During Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD), the chaplain may work alongside a mental health professional contracted by the EAPC specifically for that particular intervention. The CISM chaplain should also coordinate and collaborate with all Coast Guard Chaplains in the Area of Operations (AO) to maximize efforts and impact.

J. IF CISM TEAMS ARE DEPLOYED IN YOUR AREA, BUILD A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM

CISM teams consist of three to four members and will typically stay about three weeks in the affected area before rotating. The CISM teams will offer CISM “debriefs” to units that request them. Those debriefs help them identify service members who are in greater need of stress management care than the CISM team can offer. It’s important to regularly connect with the CISM team as they will provide a helpful perspective on how personnel are doing. They will also have a good pulse and perspective on the stress level and the morale of the command.

K. LOG YOUR DAILY ACTIVITY

Your superiors will need to know everything you were involved in over the course of the disaster relief. Also, the District Chaplain requires daily reports. It tells our story and helps leadership know what we are doing. It is much easier to record items daily than to attempt to recall them after the fact. This will also help you alter enter accurate and timely data into the Command Religious Program Analytics Tool (CRP-AT).

L. CONDUCT REGULAR SELF CARE

Hurricane operations can be exhausting. Therefore, you must care for yourself physically and spiritually. Eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, exercise, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid junk food, excessive caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine products. Avoid excessive screen time when you could and should be sleeping.

Likewise, take care of yourself spiritually: pray, read Scriptures, stay connected with your faith tradition and worship practices, spiritual family, and be diligent in your spiritual disciplines. There will always be people in need, but you can't do it all. You can easily become a causality of compassion fatigue and exhaustion in the midst of seeking to help those around you.

M. PROVIDE AND FACILITATE

Expect many Coast Guardsmen members to deploy to the affected area in support of relief efforts. They will work long hours. They will have no faith community home as they are separated from their network of relationships. Organize short morning prayer times or morning devotionals. Offer a weekly or mid-week sacred text study. Provide divine services when appropriate. Research and provide information on places of worship in the area for other faith groups. Also, be aware of the cutters and/or flight crews which may be deployed to provide support. They may want you to come aboard to conduct a divine service for them while in port.

N. CARE

Your presence will be an incalculable psychological, emotional, and spiritual source of stability and hope. Check in regularly with crews, lend a hand, give briefs about what you know, and gauge the stress level and morale of the members. Your ministry of presence will result in opportunities to help people who need help at that moment.

O. ADVISE

Your command will be required to make many difficult decisions in regards to relief efforts and care of personnel. Provide a sounding board for their decision-making process. Regularly attend command and staff meetings where decisions are being made. When appropriate, provide input. Ultimately, you need to wholeheartedly support command decisions, even if you do not fully agree with them.

P. SEEK POSSIBLE COMMUNITY RELATION PROJECTS – IT HELPS MORALE

In the event of a hurricane, the surrounding community will likely experience significant damage. You, along with your people, will want to serve the local community. Remember that your main responsibility must be to your Coast Guardsmen and their well-being. However, if you have command approval, seek out opportunities to partner in serving affected areas. Serving the local community can also assist some of your Coast Guard personnel who may feel they are not contributing to the relief efforts. Helping those in need also strengthens the command's relationship to the community.

Q. HELP BRING BACK NORMALCY

The ultimate goal of the relief efforts is to return to normalcy. Don't wait until all the relief efforts are completed before you begin to do normal things. Doing ordinary things that show glimpses of normalcy will help your command see progress, and it will help them see a light at the end of the tunnel. Do some of the things you'd do before the storm: a morning of Ultimate Frisbee, an evening BBQ, a weekly Eagles and Anchors lunch, or any number of things. Take the initiative and help re-establish these events to improve command morale.

R. PROVIDE ONGOING STRESS MANAGEMENT COURSES

Traumatic events take time to process. As days and weeks pass, people will begin thinking about what they faced and what they continue to face. They begin to realize how difficult it actually was. This is an important time to reach out to affect units and schedule stress management training. Speaking to the whole unit will be a good opportunity to gauge stress levels and to offer opportunities for individual counseling and other available resources.

S. WRITE AN AFTER-ACTION REPORT

When all the events and relief efforts have ended, peruse your personal notes, collate daily reports sent to the District Chaplain, and develop an after-action report and a lessons-learned. See Appendix C for a thorough After-Action Report (AAR) template.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

USCG ministry is crisis-centered. The USCG mission is based on effective response to a critical emergency. The great privilege of working with the Coast Guard is to watch and learn from their tremendous experience and expertise as an organization dealing with these crises and disasters. In recent years, as a result of the intense hurricane seasons, they have sharpened their skills as to how to best respond in the face of and result of damaging storms. We want to keep pace with our line counterparts in learning how to deliver increasingly effective crisis ministry. We want to continually learn from one another, and we hope this handbook to be regularly revised to provide the best possible ministry.

Preparation for such crises is imperative. Read through this handbook and the USCG Chaplain Incident Command Systems Job Aid each year before hurricane season. Always be ready to deploy. It's not an "if a hurricane will hit" each year but a "when and where a hurricane will hit" each year. If we want to be ready, relevant, and responsive, we must be trained and prepared. Prepared personally, prepared professionally, and prepared spiritually to go at a moment's notice. That's what it means to be *Semper Paratus!*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. CHAPLAIN HURRICANE CHECK-LIST

- USCG ICS Chaplain Job Aid
- Medical readiness records
- Immunization records
- Deployment or evacuation orders (at least pending)
- Foul weather gear
- Green and/or orange reflective vests
- Orange hard-shell case (e.g., Pelican Case)
- Chaplain pennant
- Duct tape
- Safety glasses
- 3M respirator/dust mask
- Rubber gloves
- Work gloves
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Waterproof notebooks (e.g., Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks)
- Large Red USCG Chaplain Gear Bag
- Waterproof bags (or thick trash bags)
- CISM handbook and worksheets
- White helmet with Chaplain insignia
- Uniforms and undergarments for 15 days (check with District Chaplain to see if Service Dress Blues or Tropical Blue Long uniforms will be required)
- Communion elements
- Daily devotionals (e.g., Our Daily Bread)
- 5-6 Post-It Super Sticky Easel Pad sheets rolled up (to make large signs)
- 3 Sharpie Markers

APPENDIX B. FAMILY HURRICANE CHECK-LIST

- Personal emergency kits
- Water: at least 1 gallon per person per day for 5 days
- Food: enough for 5 days
- Non-perishable packaged or canned food, juices, etc.
- Foods for infants or the elderly
- Snack foods
- Non-electric can opener
- Cooking tools
- Paper plates and cups/plastic utensils
- Cooking device: grill, camp stove with extra source of fuel
- Blankets/pillows, etc.
- Clothing: seasonal/raingear/sturdy shoes
- First aid kit/medicines/ prescription drugs
- Special items for babies and the elderly
- Toiletries, hygiene items, moisture wipes, insect repellent, sunscreen
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Battery-operated radio
- Telephones: fully charged cell phone with extra battery and solar phone charger
- At least \$300 (with some small bills) and credit cards – banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods
- Keys
- Toys, books, and games for family and children
- Tools: keep a set with you during the storm
- Important documents (wills, trusts, birth certificates, passports, medical records, and documents you don't want anyone seeing) in a waterproof container or watertight re-sealable plastic bag
- Insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, social security card, etc.
- Pet care items
- Proper identification and immunization records
- A pet carrier or cage
- Pet leash
- Full fuel in all vehicles
- Reliable vehicle as evacuation routes will be packed and often moving very slowly. A 7-hour drive can take 12 or more hours.
- Renters/homeowners insurance.
- Personal belongings
- Pictures
- Secure all belongings in safest way possible in house. Move any items that can become projectiles inside.
- Empty fridges/deep freezers. When electricity comes back on, it will recirculate food smells and ruin these items if not empty.
- Charges for communication devices
- Emergency contact information

APPENDIX C. AFTER ACTION REPORT TEMPLATE

SECTOR SAN JUAN, CHAPLAIN CHRISTOPHER KUTCHER

	Exercise / Event Information
Event Name	Hurricanes IRMA/MARIA
StartEx	01 Sep 2017
EndEx	01 Dec 2017
Event Type	Actual
Submitting Organization	Sector San Juan Chaplain
Type of Mission	NATURAL DISASTER
Type of Exercise	RWE

Name:	LT Christopher Kutcher
Location:	Sector San Juan
Address:	5 Calle La Puntilla
City, State, Zip Code	San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00901
Email:	Christopher.A.Kutcher@uscg.mil
Phone:	123-456-7890

SECTOR SAN JUAN LESSONS LEARNED (EXAMPLE):

1. Expect and Plan for The Unexpected

Observation: In order to best prepare for hurricane season, expect and plan for the unexpected.

Discussion: In 2017, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands were absolutely devastated from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Coast Guard first evacuated all personnel and all dependents from the Virgin Islands as Hurricane Irma approached. The Coast Guard then evacuated some personnel and many of dependents from Puerto Rico a week and half later as Hurricane Maria approached. Between personnel and their dependents being scattered, and the pure devastation the hurricanes wrought, it created many logistical and practical challenges in best ministering to the needs of the command.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice: The District 7 Chaplain had a team of chaplains ready to receive all my members and dependents back in the states prepared to provide immediate

care. CISM teams were immediately deployed to support and provide much needed deck plate ministry as the breadth of care was wide.

Recommendation: Encourage CISM to keep the same team members in theatre for a longer period of time rather than rotating them so regularly.

2. Run Towards the Aftermath of The Disaster

Observation: In keeping with being where it matters when it matters with what matters, go as quickly as possible, with command approval, to where needed.

Discussion: After Hurricane Irma hit, St. Thomas became ground zero for the worst destruction the Sector would face until a week and a half later when Hurricane Maria would hit Puerto Rico. Thus, after Hurricane Irma, many members began going to St. Thomas for initial relief efforts. With the Sector commands and District 7 and LANT Area Chaplain's approval, the Sector Chaplain boarded the first Cutter from San Juan to St. Thomas. Being one of the first ones on scene, the Sector Chaplain was subsequently able to welcome the follow-on members providing them the necessary spiritual care to optimize their relief efforts. When Hurricane Maria threatened Puerto Rico, all personnel returned from St. Thomas. In Puerto Rico, base housing became command central. After a nine-hour storm, losing all electricity and cellphone coverage, the Sector Chaplain was one of the first ones knocking on doors and checking on everyone. In subsequent days, the Sector Chaplain regularly identified where people were serving and was there to best minister to their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice: Carefully and strategically plan to be at the center of where the hardship is for your members.

Recommendation: Carefully and prayerfully join in their suffering in order to provide spiritual.

3. Have an "All-hands-on-deck" mentality

Observation: With the sheer magnitude of destruction and physical human suffering inflicted by these hurricanes, everyone was simply pitching in where they could to help.

Discussion: Upon arriving to St. Thomas, the island and the Coast Guard base were incredibly damaged. People were simply looking for hands to help move this or that, clean up this or that, or help in unloading or offloading anything and everything. So too, after Maria hit there was just absolutely so much to clean up, houses flooding, trees downed, widespread destruction, people simply needed extra help.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice: When a natural disaster hits, be prepared to simply work, to pitch in where help is needed, to do anything and everything to alleviate physical suffering and to regain normalcy.

Recommendation: Demonstrate and communicate to the command that you are willing and available to be utilized to help in any way natural disasters hits.

4. **Be the Calm in the Storm**

Observation: Emotions, tensions, and stress by the members and their dependents were tremendously high immediately after and in the months following the disaster.

Discussion: The angst among the members and their dependents were high and certainly justified. There were absolutely so many unknowns – what would this destruction mean for the islands? How would the locals react? How long would we be separated from our families? When would the infrastructure be restored? Would we each financially be okay? And the list goes on. Members would begin thinking the worst in regards to the motives of command decisions, various leaders would think the worst of the motives of members. Distrust amongst various members and dependents were created. All this created often times overreaction of emotions and anger in the unit.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice: It was essential to be as calm as possible amidst their storm. If the Sector Chaplain got riled up in the franticness of the moment, The Sector Chaplain ran the risk of creating greater emotional distress rather than defusing the situation.

Recommendation: Think about being as objective and calm as possible when fielding the intense emotions of members reeling from a natural disaster.

5. **Stay Close to Leadership**

Observation: The amount of chaos following a natural disaster is unfathomable. Everyone is immediately seeking to organize themselves, to reconstitute command structure and mission. The driving force in this effort was the command leadership.

Discussion: The constant questions everyone was asking and seeking after the storms: “Who’s is in charge?” “What are we supposed to do?” The Sector Chaplain as a part of the command team, was regularly asked for updated information and what the plan was.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice: Regularly interacting with the chain of command, even entering into the decision-making process with them in regards to decisions impacting personnel and dependents, expanded the Sector Chaplains usefulness and impact. Not only was the Sector Chaplain regularly aware of what was going on, but he was able to inform others as well.

Recommendation: Regularly gravitate toward your leadership so you can hear the most up to date information with what is going on.

APPENDIX D. MOBILIZED CHAPLAIN HURRICANE BIO

Name/Rank: LCDR Belcalis Almanzar, CHC, USN
Employee ID: USCG-CHAPxxx
Date of Birth: 11 OCT 1992
Birth State: California
Birth Location: Springfield
Effective Date: 13 Jul 2018
Education: Graduate Level (M.Div.)
Marital Status: Married **As of:** 20 SEPT 2017
SSN: XXX-XX-XXX
Home Address: 100 Main St., Springfield, VA 23702
Mobile Phone: (757) 867-5309
Email: Belcalis.M.Almanzar @uscg.mil
Region: USA
Ethnic Group: Mixed Race
Effective Date: 17 DEC 1989 **Military Status:** Active Duty
Passport No: XXXXXXXXXX **Issued:** 13 JUL 2018 **Expires:** 12 JUL 2023
DoD ID No: XXXXXXXXXX **Expires:** 31 DEC 2021

APPENDIX E. OTHER RESOURCES

USCG Chaplain Incident Command Systems Job Aid

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/Attachments/2916/Chaplain%20ICS%20Job%20Aid%20Aug12.pdf>

National Hurricane Center:

<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gtwo.php?basin=atlc&fdays=2>

National Weather Service:

<https://www.weather.gov/>

NOAA Hurricane Preparedness:

<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php>

DHS Hurricane Readiness:

<https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

FEMA Hurricane Readiness:

<https://www.ready.gov/prepare>

Disaster Assistance:

<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System:

<https://navyfamily.navy.mil/cas/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fnavyfamily.navy.mil%2F>

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance:

<http://www.cgmahq.org/>

Navy/Marine Corp Relief Society:

<http://www.nmcrs.org>

CG Support:

<https://www.cgsuprt.com/portal/landing>

National Center for PTSD

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/materials/manuals/psych-first-aid.asp>

Free training in both PFA and Skills for Psychological Recovery

<https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=11>