



Algorithm for Disaster Information Preparedness: Checklist for Medical Librarians Third Edition - Revised 05/11/05

(Revised based on library participation in U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security TOPOFF 3 Exercise
http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0588.xml
See also: NJHA TOPOFF3 Web Site <http://www.njha.com/topoff3/>)

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This algorithm offers basic steps to assure a medical library is prepared to support the information needs of clinicians and patients in the event of a biochemical attack. It should be supplemented and revised initially and regularly based on your local needs, the emergency response plan of your health facility and any special facility plans for biochemical terrorism.

In these unprecedented times, this checklist is solely a starting point for further development of a comprehensive local plan for a medical library's information preparedness for biochemical disasters.

(Planned Improvisation + Training + Documentation) ADJ (Communication + Coordination)
< / > Readiness \cong Implementation

Personal - Assure personal safety and disaster readiness

- Family planning and communications
- Access preparedness information from the American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/> and FEMA
http://www.fema.gov/preparedness/community_prepare.shtm Web sites
- Charge your cell phone regularly
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Professional - Assumptions

- Facility is part of what local or regional public health system for disaster response, what support does this provide? (In N.J. see: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/lh/lincs/> Your state: _____)
- How ready is the facility for biochemical disasters, status of facility-wide planning efforts, is there a command center in the event of an emergency, what role does it play?
- What support does the medical library have for information preparedness, what additional information may be needed in this regard?
- What is the information system's disaster and contingency plan and how does this impact your system-based resources and services? Consider these implications in areas that follow.
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Chain of Command

- Review facility's emergency response plan, your role.
- Who is your facility's designated disaster preparedness and/or bioterrorism key emergency contact(s)? Can you define core teams you need to be aware of?
- Who is your facility's 'public information officer(s)' (PIO) and are they aware of the services the library can provide the PIO for communications disseminated to the public in an emergency?
- Identify lines of authority and key individuals for disasters and biochemical incidents, document.
- Create e-mail groups and paper lists of chains/contacts/teams.
- Consider primary, secondary and tertiary communication groups for communication of library resources, actions and services both within and external of medical library.
- Is key staff aware of your home and cell phone numbers?
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Planned improvisation (The ability to improvise in a planned and coordinated manner to any one of a series of likely biochemical events, based on an established medical library information response plan.)

Needs/Resources/Services

- Assess local information needs for biochemical/emergency and disaster related information**
 - Textbooks, journals
 - Research sources, databases
 - Multimedia
 - News services
 - Graphics: Pictures, Photographs, Radiographs etc.
 - Translation Services
 - Training on information sources
 - Resources for PALM or other PDA formats.
 - Consumer health resources
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 - _____
- Create a Web Site Plan for an emergency event**
 - If library is responsible for updating the Library and/or Hospital Internet or Intranet, develop a plan, include policies and procedures for handling the Web site(s) during an emergency
 - In advance, create a separate Web area for content related to an emergency event. Advisable to create area with Web functionality that allows content to be added in real-time
 - Determine individual responsible for final approval of Web content during an emergency
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- Listserv/Discussion Forum Management**
 - If library is responsible for managing any institution-based listservs, determine who adds or updates subscribers during an emergency event
 - If moderated listserv create procedures for responsibilities for moderating, posting and approving messages, especially if 24 hour coverage is needed
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Needs/Resources/Services (continued)

- Inventory existing locally owned information resources for biochemical disasters.
- Inventory existing Web-accessible information resources for biochemical disasters.
- Identify budget or secure additional funding needed.
- Determine priorities, select new resources needed for purchase.
- Intranet access for library's biochemical disaster resources or other local information access.
- Establish new services required; consider an internal library listserv specifically for this purpose.
- Establish information triage plan for emergency and non-emergency information needs
- Plan back-up staffing as needed (be aware yourself and/or some library staff may be unable to travel due to local or state-wide restrictions related to the emergency and/or quarantine).
- Do you have a "buddy system" (with another library) in place in the event local electronic resources are inaccessible?
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Training

- Assess professional training needs of yourself and library staff.
- Budget for and attend library-training programs.
- Assess/create training syllabus for clinician's use of biochemical disaster information resources.
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Documentation

- Identify and document local, state and national contacts 24-hour emergency information**
- Document all items listed on checklist as part of medical library's information preparedness plan, in both electronic and print formats.
- Print key intranet resources and bookmarks in paper and diskette backup (i.e. non servers).
- Locate plan, intranet resources and bookmarks in three places, with at least one location not local.
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- Annually review and revise plan.

Communication

- Establish need for plan with executive or manager to whom library director reports; communicate final plan priorities.**
- Create plan's legitimacy with potential users via agreement for need of plan; draft plan for their review and approval.
- Clearly communicate with library staff the plan, library staffs' priorities, responsibilities and lines of authority during a biochemical disaster.
- Share your information readiness plan with key groups listed in "chain of command."
- Market biochemical information resource, training, services and access to users.
- Determine best method to periodically inform/remind users of information resources for biochemical disasters.
- Communicate via listservs as needed or create/use new listserv service specifically for this purpose.
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Coordination

- Coordinate information preparedness activities with key biochemical disaster staff as needed.
- Determine in advance what actions and activities of the medical library need coordination with key staff during a biochemical disaster.
- If coordination meetings occur during a biochemical disaster response, provide the latest printed materials as needed at each meeting.
- Post biochemical disaster incident; provide summary of medical library response and support.
- Coordinate activities with the library's local, regional or state consortia as needed.
- Coordinate consumer health information resources with your community health educator and/or public relations department, make available in key areas of hospital
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Other - During Biochemical Disaster

- Determine key authoritative, high quality updated Web site or contact for *local* information on specific disaster event and communicate to key staff. This will differ for each event and should be evaluated as event occurs. Change as needed.
- Remember the human element and adjust accordingly; don't underestimate the traumatic and stressful responses that occur by everyone. Acknowledge emotions without judgment.
- Remember telephones and Internet access may be disabled temporarily or occasionally.
- As needed, establish medical library as formal or informal response for verification of information rumors or hoaxes using standard information skills.
- Determine library staffing needed during biochemical disaster.
- Determine if triage plan for information requests is needed and implement, communicate with users if plan is or is not in effect.
- Create one filing area for all library records and ready reference for biochemical disaster requests, especially if routine reshelving, etc., needs to be suspended for the duration of the disaster.
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