No matter what time of year, it’s always “disaster season” somewhere in the country. Natural disasters such as tornados, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and wildfires, as well as structural fires, accidents, and crime, can injure staff and visitors, and damage or destroy collections, historic structures, and other park resources. Disasters do happen without warning, as evidenced by the September 2002 fire that destroyed Arlington, a circa 1818 Natchez, Mississippi mansion.

Does your park have an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to deal with such crises? If so, is it up to date? Does it include all relevant information pertaining to the protection of the museum collection and associated cultural and natural resources? If you answered no to any of these questions then it’s time to begin planning and programming for an EOP. NPS Management Policies (2001) 8.2.5.2 “Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Operations” requires each park to develop an Emergency Operations Plan “to ensure an effective response to all types of emergencies that can be reasonably anticipated.” NPS Museum Checklist question E8 relates to the park’s EOP as well. If your park does not have an Emergency Operations Plan or if your EOP does not include information concerning the museum collection, you can request Museum Collection Preservation and Protection (MCPP) program funds to correct this deficiency.

For information concerning Emergency Operations Plans see the NPS Museum Handbook, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning, on the web at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/mushbkI.html](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/mushbkI.html). Contact your Regional Curator for assistance in revising or initiating an Emergency Operations Plan. Other individuals and organizations that you can contact for help include:

**Park staff:** your park’s EOP Coordinator, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), Chief Ranger and law enforcement staff, Safety Officer, maintenance staff, and structural and wildland fire teams

**Local Agencies:** county emergency preparedness office, police, fire, and EMT personnel

**State Agencies:** emergency preparedness/Civil Defense office, state police, and state fire marshal


You might also want to contact other parks and museums in your area for help; perhaps they have contingency plans applicable to your situation as well.

Resources in Print


