

# Emergency Response Reference Guide

## Epiphany Parish

### Sayre, Pennsylvania

1<sup>st</sup> Edition, November 2020



# Introduction

Epiphany Parish is dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of our parishioners, visitors and staff during times of emergency. No crisis plan can truly prepare for all possible catastrophic events, but much can be done to reduce the seriousness of these events and that is the objective of this guide.

This Emergency Response Reference Guide should be used as a reference and training tool for Epiphany Parish ushers, greeters and other parishioners who may be called upon to respond to an emergency. Its primary purposes are to advise on how and where to get help in case of an emergency and what actions are appropriate while waiting for that help to arrive. In the event that a crisis situation occurs, common sense and good judgment should be used for those situations that are not covered in this reference guide.

“Call 911” is a recommendation for many of these crisis situations. Our local police, fire and 911 officials assure us that you should call 911 if you need help. Do not be concerned about making an unnecessary call. If you think perhaps you should call 911, **call 911**. The 911 dispatchers would far rather receive an unnecessary call than not receive a necessary one.

When calling 911, remain calm and be prepared to tell the dispatcher the nature and location of the emergency and to answer all questions clearly. When emergency responders arrive, be available to provide the details of the incident and follow their directions.

As soon as practicable, i.e., when critical first responses have been initiated or completed, notify the pastor of the incident and its current status.

In addition, as soon as you can, write down what you saw and heard before, during and after the incident. Your accurate description of the event can be extremely helpful in understanding how it happened and how to prevent it from happening in the future.

# Contents

- 2 Introduction
- 3 Contents
- 4 Intruder
- 4 Confrontational Person
- 5 Group Disturbance/Altercation
- 5 Assault on Visitor, Volunteers or Staff
- 5 Hostage Situation
- 5 Kidnapping
- 6 Active Shooter
- 7 Death on Campus/Office
- 7 Bomb Threat
- 7 Suspicious Object or Package
- 8 Medical Emergency
- 9 Fire Emergency
- 9 Evacuation Plan
- 10 Electrical Malfunction
- 10 Gas Leak – Known or Suspected
- 10 Hazardous Material Release
- 11 Severe Weather/Tornado/Earthquake
- 11 Dealing with the Media
- 12 Telephone Contact Information – Emergency and Parish

## Intruder

1. **If you see or suspect that there is an intruder in the church or rectory, call 911, even if the intruder has left the building.**
2. Alert others in the building of the presence of an intruder and the need to exit the building.
3. Exit the building immediately, if you believe it is safe to do so, locking doors as the last person leaves.
4. If you cannot exit the building immediately, shelter in place behind a locked door.
5. You want the intruder to leave, so do not block routes for the intruder to exit.

## Confrontational Person

1. Remain calm and maintain a professional demeanor.
2. Attempt to defuse the situation.
3. Use non-aggressive body language.
4. Refrain from arguing.
5. Show interest – be a good listener.
6. Offer to help with the person's concerns.
7. Request to continue the conversation in a location away from others or send others away.
8. Always leave an exit route open for the confrontational person to leave the building.
9. **If the situation appears to be dangerous or escalating beyond your control, call 911.**

## Group Disturbance or Altercation

1. Remain calm and maintain a professional demeanor.
2. Clear bystanders and prevent others from getting involved.
3. If possible, attempt to verbally defuse the situation with compromising the safety of others.
4. If no intervention is possible, attempt to prevent further escalation by restricting access and directing others around the location of the incident.
5. Ask for assistance from other ushers/greeters or parishioners to de-escalate the situation if appropriate and clearly without risk to their safety.
6. **If the situation appears to be dangerous or escalating beyond your control, call 911.**

## Assault

1. **Call 911.**
2. If medical attention is required, provide first aid. Follow the UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS listed under MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

## Hostage situation

1. **Call 911.**
2. Do not attempt to intervene or defuse.

## Kidnapping – Witnessed or Confirmed Abduction

1. **Call 911.**
2. Be prepared to describe the missing person in detail.

## Death on Parish Property

1. **Call 911**
2. Secure the area: limit access and disturb as little as possible.
3. Do not interview witnesses.

# Active Shooter

1. **Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.**
2. Be prepared to report:
  - a. The number of shooters.
  - b. The location of the shooters.
  - c. A physical description of the shooters.
  - d. The number of actual and potential victims.
3. **RUN** from the area if you can safely do so.
  - a. Plan your escape route.
  - b. Leave your belongings behind.
  - c. Keep your hands visible.
4. **HIDE** if you are unable to safely leave the area
  - a. Hide in an area out of the shooter's view, preferably an area that you can secure.
  - b. Block entry to your hiding place, locking the doors and moving objects in front of the doors. Do not open the doors under any circumstances.
  - c. Silence cell phones.
  - d. Remain in place until released by law enforcement officers.
5. **TAKE ACTION** as a means of survival if you are unable to leave the area or hide
  - a. Act with physical aggression and be fully committed.
  - b. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
  - c. Look for items to throw at the shooter or to use in an attack.
  - d. When law enforcement arrives, neutralizing the shooter will be their first priority. Allow them to take control.
    - i. **DO NOT STOP OR DISTRACT OFFICERS** to ask for help or direction.
    - ii. Remain calm and follow instructions.
    - iii. Keep your hands visible at all times.

## Bomb Threat

1. Keep the conversation going – don't hang up.
2. Try to get the following information:
  - a. Caller's name and address
  - b. Phone number the call is coming from – check your phone display
  - c. Time of call
  - d. Ask:
    - i. Where is the bomb?
    - ii. What time will it go off?
    - iii. What kind of bomb is it?
    - iv. How many devices are there?
  - e. Note:
    - i. Is the caller: Male...Female...Adult...Child...Local?
    - ii. Is the caller's speech: Fast...Slow...Accented...Slurred...Stuttering...Lisping...Nasal...Raspy...Pleasant...Disguised?
    - iii. Is the caller's manner: Emotional...Angry...Calm...Laughing...Cursing...Using poor grammar?
    - iv. Is the message: Read...Taped?
    - v. Background noises: Street sounds...Music...Office Sounds...Static...Radio/TV?
3. After the caller hangs up
  - a. Dial \*69 to try to recover the number of the caller.
  - b. Call 911.**
  - c. Do not use cell phones or other electronic equipment.
  - d. Evacuate the building. If during Mass, follow the Evacuation Plan on Page 9.
  - e. Secure the area to prevent re-entry.

## Suspicious Object or Package

1. Do not touch or move the package or item
- 2. Call 911**
3. Evacuate the building. If during Mass, follow the Evacuation Plan on Page 9.
4. Secure the area to prevent re-entry.

# Medical Emergency

1. **Call 911.**
2. Administer First Aid as appropriate. Follow Universal Precautions below.
  - a. Utilize contents of the available First Aid Kit
  - b. Perform CPR if necessary and you are qualified
  - c. Use the available AED if necessary. The device itself will instruct you on how to use it.
  - d. Help the victim to use his/her EpiPen if needed.

## Universal Precautions

Anyone who comes in contact with blood and/or body fluids must follow these procedures:

1. Avoid direct contact.
2. Wear sanitary gloves.
3. Protect eyes, nose and mouth with mask.
4. Use pocket mask if CPR is to be administered.
5. Cleanup:
  - a. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after administering first aid.
  - b. Remove and bag your contaminated clothing if possible.
  - c. Use bleach disinfectant (1:10 chlorine bleach:water) as disinfecting agent for objects and surfaces.
  - d. Use leak-proof bags for contaminated items that will be disposed of. Do not dispose with office trash.

# Fire Emergency

1. Activate fire alarm if system is not sounding.
2. Evacuate the building. If during Mass, follow the Evacuation Plan below.
3. **Call 911.**

## Evacuation During Mass

1. Begin moving parishioners to the appropriate exits at the front and rear of the church.
2. Request assistance from other members of the parish to help older parish members down the steps.
3. Move parishioners quickly and carefully but make certain they do not stumble or fall so they do not block an exit. Have extra help at the stairs, paying particular attention to the elderly and people with disabilities.
4. Ask everyone to move to a safe spot away from the church. The parking lot is likely to be the most appropriate area, but may not be far enough away for safety.
5. Remind parishioners that fire apparatus and ambulances will be arriving and that they must not block the emergency responders. To avoid this, parishioners may have to be directed to an alternate location.
6. Advise evacuees to avoid using cars because they may block traffic for emergency apparatus.
7. Verify that everyone is out of the church. Advise emergency responders of any areas you were unable to reach to confirm that all have exited.
8. Advise emergency personnel of the location of the fire.
9. Use fire extinguishers on the fire if you can do so safely. Use the tips below, but if you are uncomfortable using the extinguisher, let the firefighters handle the situation:
  - a. Never turn your back on the fire – always keep facing it.
  - b. Keep your back to an exit in case you need to quickly escape.
  - c. Remember the PASS acronym to use the extinguisher
    - i. P = Pull the pin near the extinguisher handle to arm it
    - ii. A = Aim the nozzle at the base of the flames.
    - iii. S = Squeeze the handle to release extinguishing agent.
    - iv. S = Sweep the nozzle side to side at the base of the flames.
  - d. When the extinguisher empties, back away from the fire to the exit; do not turn your back on the fire.

## Electrical Malfunction

1. Determine extent of the power outage and if there is smoke or sparking.
2. **If smoke or sparking is observed, call 911.**
3. Determine if the power outage is limited to the building or is a more widespread.
  - a. If limited to the building, check for and correct tripped circuit breakers if possible.
  - b. If more widespread, contact Penelec to advise them of the outage and obtain any information on its expected duration.
4. Protect sensitive electronic equipment, by unplugging computers, projectors, televisions, a/v equipment, electric motors, etc. so they are not damaged by possible surges when the power is restored.
5. If incident occurs during cold weather, conserve building heat by keeping doors and windows closed and turning off exhaust fans.

## Gas Leak – Known or Suspected

1. **Call 911.**
2. To avoid generating any accidental sparks, do not activate fire alarm or turn any electrical devices, including lights, on or off.
3. Open doors and windows to ventilate.
4. Evacuate the building. If during Mass, follow the Evacuation Plan on Page 9.

## Hazardous Material Release

1. Determine the nature of the substance of concern, which could be a flammable or toxic substance, a biological hazard or a pharmaceutical.
2. **Call 911.**
3. Limit access to the area where the hazardous material is located.
4. Do not touch the material without appropriate protective equipment.
5. If the hazardous material is a vapor or an airborne particulate, evacuate the building. If during Mass, follow the Evacuation Plan on Page 9.
6. If the material has been identified and persons have come in contact with it, follow the manufacturer's safety instructions. Contact Poison control if necessary at 1-800-222-1222.

## Severe Weather/Tornado

1. Close windows and doors.
2. Direct parishioners or visitors to a safe location away from windows. The basement is the safest place; otherwise shelter in an interior room if possible.
3. Do not go outside if a severe weather watch is in effect.

## Earthquake

1. In building:
  - a. Take shelter under pews, desks, tables or furniture
  - b. Hold onto a furniture leg.
  - c. Stay away from windows and electrical equipment
2. Outdoors:
  - a. Stay clear of building, trees and power lines.
  - b. Stay in the open.

## Dealing with the Media

1. The Diocese of Scranton has established guidelines for working effectively with the media in a crisis. These guidelines must be followed when any of the situations described above has occurred at Epiphany Parish.
2. In the event of an incident, the Epiphany Pastor will contact the Director of Communications for the Diocese of Scranton, who will address all media relations and contacts by establishing a plan for responding to the media. The Director will also determine if and to what extent other persons will interact with the media.
3. If you are contacted by a media representative:
  - a. Refrain from commenting or naming victims or individuals who may be involved in the crisis.
  - b. Inform the media representative that the Pastor will address their questions.
  - c. Ask the media representative for his/her contact information, including the name of their media outlet and their press deadline, and forward this information to the Pastor as soon as possible.

## Telephone Contact Information – Emergency and Parish

Emergency Contacts	Emergency	Non-emergency
Sayre Police Department	911	570-888-2233
Sayre Fire Department	911	570-888-9612
Ambulance (GVEMS)	911	570-888-6000
PA State Police (Towanda)	911	570-265-2186
Penelec	911	888-544-4877
Valley Energy (Natural Gas)	911	570-888-9664
Sayre Borough DPW	911	570-888-5131

Parish Contacts	Name	Phone Number
Pastor	Rev. Andrew Hvozdovic	570-888-9641