BUILDING MUSCLE MEMORY

Soon after the Mineral earthquake struck in the summer of 2011, I learned the importance of muscle memory. The magnitude 5.8 earthquake, considered Very Strong on the Mercalli Intensity Scale, shook and damaged buildings, shut down a nuclear power plant, overloaded some 911 call centers, and closed streets due to reported gas leaks. Life was disrupted that afternoon in Virginia. Indeed, millions of Virginians can recall exactly where they were at 01:51:04 on August 23, 2011. Ask ten of them how they responded to the quake, and you will likely get a variety of answers.

Building muscle memory involves performing repetitious actions to increase the likelihood of a predicted response. Without it, you are at risk following a traumatic event, as your mind may be too busy trying to figure out what just happened than helping you get out of harm’s way.

Performing a drill is the best way to develop muscle memory, which is why many states set aside a day each year for a statewide earthquake drill. Is an annual drill enough? The answer is yes if you know what three actions to take following an earthquake. (Answer: DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON.) If you didn’t know the answer, then there is no better time than now to drill. Survey your present environment. Where would you DROP to take COVER, and what would you HOLD ON to?

BEFORE-IT-HAPPENS 2016

Getting Started Checklist:
__ Form a disaster team
__ Complete one page disaster plan
__ Develop a disaster ready work culture
__ Reach out to emergency planners
__ Explore volunteer opportunities

Before-It-Happens 2016 website can be found at https://beforeithappens2016.wordpress.com/

The site contains Word template for the one page disaster plan.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Helping libraries become key players in community resilience.
DO YOU WORK IN A DISASTER READY CULTURE?

Level of Outreach with Emergency Planning Community

• Library is a designated site for emergency power
• Emergency planners use our library for meetings/training
• We have partnership with Public Health: vulnerable populations, disaster literacy
• Following a disaster, the library is used as Volunteer/Family Reunification Center
• Library is a designated distribution site
• We flex hours to accommodate needs
• We provide programing on sustainability
• Sense of Normalcy
• Point of Distribution (POD) Site
• Bookmobile Mobilization

1. Our online materials are accessed off-site or through proxy with unlimited power and we have our core print materials available in the event of a long-term power outage or cyberterrorism.

2. We maintain a response station (bandages, flashlights, bullhorn) close to our circulation desk.

3. We have a well thought out communications strategy for staff and public that includes traditional media, social media, and worst-case scenario (i.e., all communication channels are down).

4. We perform at least two drills per year for unplanned incidents and at least one tabletop exercise per year.

5. In the past five years, we have discussed salvage & recovery issues with a preservationist or salvage company (e.g. Munters, Belfor, or BMS).

6. We meet with police officers at least once every two years to go over our response procedures.

7. We have a disaster team that convenes soon after a service disruption for an After Action Review (AAR).

8. Our library staff are aware of the value of home preparedness.

9. We are familiar with the Stafford Act and have developed a relocation strategy.

10. We have mutual aid agreements with other libraries for disaster related assistance.