

Pocatello Idaho Stake Emergency Plan

DRAFT

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0.0. Overview

The emergency plan for our stake consists of two parts. The first part will identify resources to help each member to become better prepared for personal emergencies, community emergencies, and natural disasters. The second part will outline how the stake will maintain communications during an emergency or natural disaster. It will outline methods of communications, identify key points of contacts, and outline coordinating church and government resources.

Wards/branches should build a detailed plan for how their unit will respond to emergencies. The church has provided [a guide](#) in developing this plan. The unit plan should complement the information found in this stake plan.

1.0. Individual and Family Preparedness Resources

Numerous resources are available for individuals and families to prepare for personal or community emergencies and natural disasters.

1.1. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Preparedness Guide

The church has provided [a guide for our area](#) that will help members become better prepared. It discusses the following topics.

- Emergency planning
- Home storage and production
- Financial preparedness
- Emotional preparedness

1.2. Bannock County Guides

Bannock county's [Office of Emergency Management \(OEM\)](#) site provides information that may be helpful for individuals and families to consider when planning on how to respond to emergencies. A [Family Emergency Preparedness Guide](#) is provided with ideas for preparation as well as actions to take during an emergency.

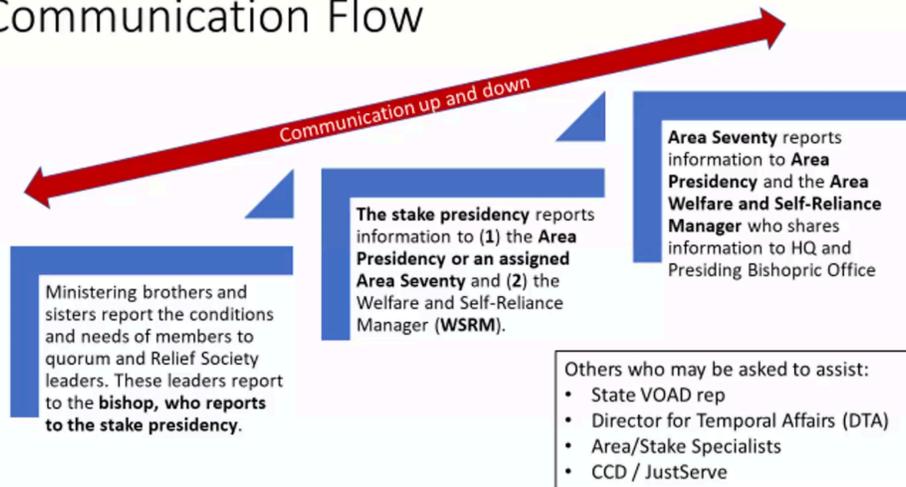
1.3. FEMA Resources

The FEMA site [provides guidance](#) on preparing for natural disasters and common emergencies. It also provides recommendations for preparing a [72 hour kit](#).

2.0. Stake Communications During an Emergency

[Section 22.9.1.3.](#) of the church's General Handbook outlines how individuals, wards/branches, stakes, etc. are expected to communicate during an emergency. The diagram below summarizes these instructions.

Communication Flow



2.1. Stake Communication Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles are necessary for effective communication within the Stake during an emergency.

Role	Description
Individual Members	Responsible for their family and other members for which they minister to. Report on status/needs during an emergency. Render aid/service.
Area/District Leaders	As needed, area leaders can be assigned to gather neighborhood information and relay status/needs to the Elders Quorum or Relief Society presidents.
Elders Quorum and Relief Society Presidents	Gather information on status/needs during an emergency. Provide aid using available ward/branch resources. Communicate status and unmet needs to the bishopric/branch presidency.
Bishopric/Branch Presidency*	Coordinate aid using available ward/branch and other resources (e.g. service from members, bishop's storehouse, etc.) Communicate status and unmet needs to the Stake Presidency.
Stake Presidency*	Coordinate aid using available stake resources (e.g., buildings, labor, etc.) Communicates status and unmet needs to the Area Presidency or assigned Seventy.
Welfare and Self-Reliance Manager	Supports area and stake leaders.
State VOAD Representative	At the direction of the Area Presidency or Assigned Seventy, coordinates with government and other volunteer/aid agencies.

* Counselors from area, stake, ward bishopric, and branch presidency may also be involved at the direction of their respective president/bishop.

The following primary points of contact have been identified for our stake.

Role	Name
Stake President	Vance Nielsen
High Councilor over Stake Emergency Preparedness	Dana Barnett
High Councilor over Missionary Work (location of missionaries)	Dustin Morden
HAM Radio Operator (Regional/National)	Michael Bright
Area President	David J. Pickett
Southeast Idaho Welfare and Self-Reliance Manager (WSRM)	Janey Grover
Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) Representative	Steve Taylor

2.2. Communication Methods

During an emergency, cell/phone service may be limited or unavailable. Contact between members and leadership will use these services, in the order indicated, when available.

- Cell service (lines may be limited during an emergency)
- SMS (doesn't require a dedicated line to make or receive a call, but delivery of messages is uncertain)
- Radio (GMRS/HAM)
- Meet in person (runners from/to Arbon will be required)

Because cell phone systems can become quickly overwhelmed during an emergency, wards/branches should be prepared to use radios, see [Radio Communications](#).

2.3. Communication Check-ins

During an emergency, the stake will make a morning check-in with the Bishops/Branch Presidents. These check-ins will be used to provide an overall report of the status of the ward/branch members, homes, church buildings, and any specific needs. Additional time may be arranged following these check-ins for planning, coordination and discussion of needs.

- Daily check-in with Bishops/Branch Presidents at 9:00 AM (~45 min)

Because this check-in is meant to be brief, be prepared to discuss 1) number/names of households not accounted for, 2) number of households with unmet needs, 3) specific ward/branch needs (e.g., 50 individual meals, 200 gallons of drinking water, 30 beds, 20 blankets, etc.) Follow the guidance in [Stake Communication Roles and Responsibilities](#) on collecting this information.

The schedule of the ward/branch check-ins will be:

- 9:00 AM / 5:00 PM - Arbon Branch
- 9:05 AM / 5:05 PM - Cedar Hills Ward
- 9:10 AM / 5:10 PM - Gibson Jack Ward
- 9:15 AM / 5:15 PM - Indian Hills Ward
- 9:20 AM / 5:20 PM - Johnny Creek Ward
- 9:25 AM / 5:25 PM - Juniper Hills Ward
- 9:30 AM / 5:30 PM - Kinport Branch
- 9:35 AM / 5:35 PM - Mink Creek Ward
- 9:40 AM / 5:40 PM - Pocatello 1st Ward

When cell phones are used, the Stake President will call each Bishop/Branch President. If radios are used, a formal radio network, see section 2.3.1, will be used at this time. If an in person coordination meeting is held instead of a call/radio, it will be held in the stake high-council room at 9:00 AM. An alternate location may be used at the direction of the Stake President.

See the [Radio Net Check-in Schedule](#) section for how these check-ins fit into the radio communications process.

2.3. Radio Communications

When radio communications are required, the stake will use the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) to check in with ward Bishopric/Branch Presidency and/or assigned emergency/communication specialist(s). GMRS radios have a range of 1 to 5 miles, depending on radio strength, location, antenna/height, and weather conditions. Radio communications are “line of sight” and obstacles will reduce the range (e.g., metal siding on a home, hills). We recommend wards typically use a 4-5W handheld.

Stake and ward/branch leaders should identify members who have radios or are interested in radio communication. They should identify several individuals in the unit boundaries that would be willing to assist with radio traffic. Units are [instructed not to purchase radios](#).

Household registration is required to use a GMRS radio, see [General Mobile Radio Service \(GMRS\) Registration](#) for details.

Wards/branches are encouraged to use the Family Radio Service (FRS, aka walkie-talkie) or runners to communicate between households, area/block captains, quorum or Relief Society presidents, and Bishop/Branch Presidents. FRS does not require registration. When distance requires it, GMRS radios may be necessary. Wards/branches can use in person meetings when radios aren’t available or are impractical.

Ward/branch emergency communication specialists should work with stake leadership to outline an emergency communication process for their unit. This plan should be tested to verify that assigned members: 1) are familiar with the plan, 2) know how to use the equipment, and 3) ensure that equipment is maintained/charged. This test should be performed at least quarterly. Stake representatives should be invited to these tests.

The stake president will receive/send messages to the Area Presidency and/or VOAD via a designated HAM radio operator. This is done via the ERC, the church’s emergency communications network.

2.3.1. Stake Radio Network

The stake radio network (net) will use a [formal network](#) (aka directed net) process for efficient communication. A directed net means that one operator is in charge of the net, and this person is the net control station (NCS). The NCS is sort of a traffic cop for the net, directing who does what and when. The NCS gets the net started, keeps it orderly, manages net activities, and closes the net down when finished. Net participants are requested to follow the direction of the NCS regarding when to speak and what information is requested. All households are invited to participate.

A radio network is **not** private and sensitive information should **not** be shared via the network. Use in person meetings to discuss **specific** needs for medical care, medication, emotional needs, etc. Protecting the privacy of members should be top of mind while using the radio.

The Net Control Station, either an assigned emergency preparedness specialist or member of the Bishopric/Branch Presidency, should use a script similar to the following to keep things orderly.

This is the [Unit Name] emergency communication net held the 1st Sunday of each month at [selected time]. This is [state your name and call sign], acting as net control.

This is a directed net. Please do not transmit unless directed to do so by Net Control. Relay information and emergency traffic will be accepted at any time. Routine traffic should be listed during roll call. If there is any priority traffic, it should be listed now. *Pause for possible traffic.*

Are there any questions from any net members? *Pause for possible traffic.*

Conduct a roll call using district/area captains/ministering district supervisor's/auxiliary titles, as applicable. An example is given below using districts.

[District leader's name] for District 1, what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

[District leader's name] for District 2, what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

Repeat for as many districts as needed.

[Emergency preparedness specialist's name], what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

[Relief Society president's name], what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

[Elders Quorum President's name], what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

[Bishopric member's name], what is your report? *Pause for traffic.*

Are there any questions or additional comments from any net members? *Pause for traffic.*

Thank you for your participation. This concludes today's net.

This is [state your name and call sign], this channel is now clear for normal communications.

The stake radio network will use the following channels:

- FRS channel 7 (primary) and channel 6 (backup).
- GMRS channel 22*

** A Digital Code Squelch (DCS) privacy code is required, also known as a Digital Quiet Talk (DQT) code, to communicate with the stake HAM Radio Operator. The code to be used on channel 22 is D205N for transmit (TX) and receive (RX). Contact the HAM operator or the High Councilor over Stake Emergency Preparedness for assistance in programming your GMRS radio.*

2.3.2. Radio Net Check-in Schedule

The stake recommends that wards/branches follow the schedule outlined below. Evening check-ins can be performed, as necessary, and to check on those with specific medical needs.

The stake coordination will always occur daily at 9:00 AM and last approximately 45 minutes.

1. 7:30 AM - In person/radio household checks (collect/assess household status/needs)
2. 8:30 AM - Ward/branch leadership coordination (discuss status, needs and organize ward/branch resources and responses)
3. 9:00 AM - Stake and Bishopric/Branch Presidency coordination (discuss status, needs and organize stake resources and responses)
4. 9:45 AM - Ward/branch leadership coordination (communicate action plan and updates)
5. 10:00 AM - Household coordination (communicate action plan and updates)

2.3.3. General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) Registration

Registration to use a GMRS radio is required by law. There is a registration fee (\$35 as of 2023). Registration lasts for 10 years. Please read the information provided during registration carefully.

Register on the FCC sites as follows:

1. Register with the FCC. This process will provide you with an FRN number.
(<https://apps2.fcc.gov/fccUserReg/pages/login.htm>)
2. Login to the ULS License site using your FRN and password.
(<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>)
3. Click on "Apply for a New License".
4. Select "ZA - General Mobile Radio (GMRS)".
5. Complete the form.
6. Login to the CORES site. (<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>)
7. Click "Manage Existing FRNs | FRN Financial | Bills and Fees".
8. Click "ULS Pay Fees".
9. Select your FRN number in the drop-down and click "Continue to Pay".
10. Complete the payment form.
11. Allow 24 to 48 hours for payment and registration processing.
12. Verify your registration by logging into the ULS License site.
(<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>)
13. Click on "My Licenses" on the left.
14. Verify the information for your license.

2.4. Coordination with Local/State/Federal Government

Emergencies or disasters are managed by the Bannock County Office of Emergency Management (BCOEM, <https://www.bannockcounty.us/oem/>). They are responsible for planning and communicating the response. The church's role is to aid in their response. The county government is supported by state agencies (e.g. [Idaho Office of Emergency Management - IOEM](#)) and the state is in turn supported by federal agencies ([Federal Emergency Management Agency - FEMA](#)).

To coordinate emergency response efforts between the church and local/state/federal agencies, the church participates in the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \(VOAD\)](#).

"[The VOAD] is a humanitarian association of independent voluntary organizations active in emergency disaster relief. VOAD was founded in 1969 with the purpose of coordinating relief efforts between voluntary agencies, faith-based groups, and government organizations involved in disaster response. ... By participating in VOAD, the Church is an official part of the emergency response community in the United States. ... Organizations such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army are active members of VOAD. Also, many national, state, and local government organizations including Homeland Security and FEMA actively participate in preparation and coordination efforts. It is important to develop working relationships with other response organizations before an emergency or disaster occurs."

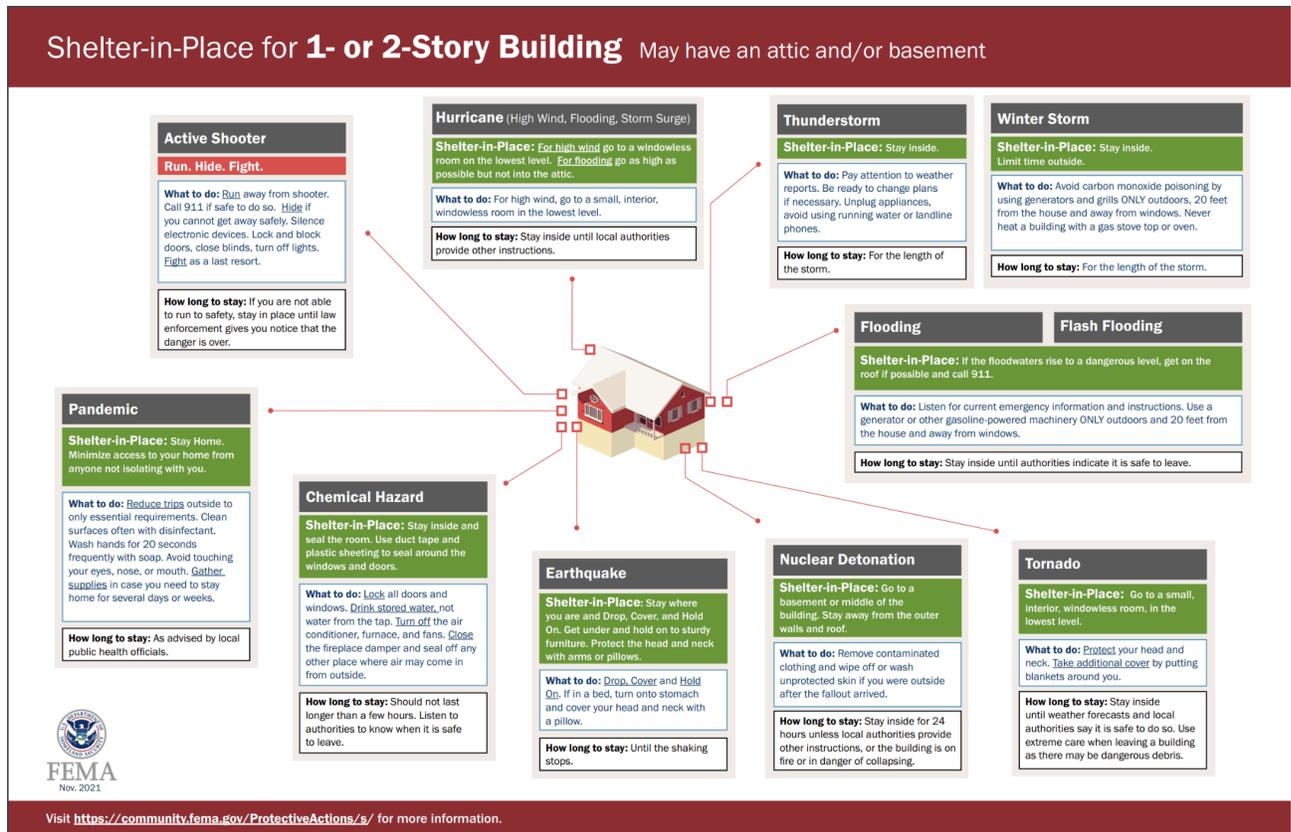
<https://providentliving.churchofjesuschrist.org/leader/emergency-preparedness-and-response/are-a-planning-guide/preparation/voadrep?lang=eng>

The church's VOAD Representative for the State of Idaho is the designated church representative for coordinating disaster response with the government.

All questions during planning/preparation for emergencies should be directed to the VOAD and not the county/state offices.

2.4.1 Evacuation and Shelter in Place Orders

Government entities may issue evacuation or shelter in place orders. Typically, shelter in place orders are given. FEMA provides [detailed guidance](#) about how to respond to these orders. The following diagram, taken from the guidance document, summarizes this information.



2.5. Identify Members Impacted

It is important that each member of the stake be accounted for. During an emergency or natural disaster, power, cellular, and internet outages might prevent using digital tools to access information.

The stake will maintain a list of the full time missionaries serving within our area. This list will be maintained by the high councilor assigned to oversee missionary work.

Each ward should maintain a list of each member, identifying those with special needs (e.g., elderly, disabled, wheelchair, etc.)

[Pocatello Women's Correctional Center \(PWCC\)](#) is within our stake boundaries.

Appendix 1 - Planning References & Resources

Stake Council’s Role in Emergency Preparedness - Church Handbook 22.10

[The Stake Council] develops and maintains a simple written plan for the stake to respond to emergencies.

Our VOAD suggested that this plan be reviewed regularly (every one to two years). All contact information should be kept current (e.g., Area, Mission, Stake Leaders). In addition, the plan should be practiced!

Ward Response to Emergencies - Church Handbook 22.7

Ward councils ... prepare a simple written plan for the ward to respond to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with the stake’s emergency plan.

Our State VOAD representative recommended that the plan be, 1) written at a 6th grade reading comprehension level, 2) well written so that it can be understood and practiced by all. Avoid making the plan too long or brief, and avoid “word salad”.

Stake and Ward Planning Guide

<https://providentliving.churchofjesuschrist.org/emergency-preparedness-and-response/stake-ward-emergency-planning-guide?lang=eng>

https://providentliving.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/providentliving/content/emergency%20response/PD10052395_000-Stake-and-Ward-Emergency-Response-Guide.pdf?lang=eng

State of Idaho Hazard Mitigation Plan

The state’s [2023 hazard mitigation plan](#) provides many valuable insights about the risks that we face in our area.

Section 2.4 of this plan identifies hazards of concern for our area.

Table 2-3. Hazards of Concern Assessed by Local Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Avalanche	Drought	Earthquake / Seismic	Flood (includes dam failure)	Landslide	Severe Storms (includes wind, tornado)	Volcano	Wildfire
Ada County	-	√	√	√	√	H	√	√
Adams County	-	-	√	√	√	H	-	H
Bannock County	√	-	√	√	√	H	-	H

Section 4.2.3 identifies key risks identified by FEMA “lifeline” resources. This identifies a key risk for our county that involves providing adequate food and shelter during an emergency.

Table 4-4. Community Lifeline Counts by County and Category

County	Energy	Food, Water, Shelter	Health & Medical	Safety & Security	Transportation	Total
Ada	64	2	29	234	15	344
Adams	15	0	0	10	23	48
Bannock	26	1	7	58	20	112

Latest version can be found on <https://ioem.idaho.gov>

Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)

A PSPS is when an electric company proactively turns off power to an area where wildfire risk is especially high due to extreme weather conditions, usually some combination of high temperatures, strong winds, and dry conditions. This action is taken as a last resort. All customers of electric companies should be prepared for outages. More information is available at <https://idahopower.com/wildfire> and <https://www.idahopower.com/outages-safety/wildfire-safety/be-prepared-for-wildfire-season/>.

Flood Map Search

Flooding is a key concern in areas of our stake. Flooding can occur from the Portneuf river. In addition, flash flooding can occur in several locations containing creeks. Flood maps are available on the FEMA site, <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>.

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Appendix 2 - Ward Plans

Here are links to each of the ward plans.

- [Gibson Jack](#)
- [Johnny Creek](#)
- [Juniper Hills](#)

Appendix 3 - Change Log

This document has had the following changes.

Jul 2025

- Add the Juniper Hills ward plan to Appendix 2.

Jun 2025

- Added the ward plans to Appendix 2, and moved the change log to Appendix 3.

Apr 2025

- Removed Stake Communication Director from roles and responsibilities.
- Expanded links in the GMRS Registration section.
- Improved phrasing about GMRS recommended strength.
- Fixed page numbers in the table of contents.

Jan 2025

- Updated Stake President from Kim Smith to Vance Nielsen.
- Updated church area guide to the North American Central version.
- Added an example formal network call script to the Stake Radio Network section.
- Moved change log to Appendix 2.
- Minor typographical changes.
- Made notes of areas of the plan to get clarification.

Aug 2024

- Updated high councilor over missionary work.
- Added radio DCS/DQT code for channel 22.
- PSPS information added to appendix.
- Minor grammar and punctuation fixes.

Feb 2024

- Initial version.