

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND INSTITUTION EMERGENCY PLANNING AND OPERATION

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ABSTRAKT

Kultúrna inštitúcia spracováva preventívne plán pre prípad mimoriadnej udalosti skôr, než k nej dôjde. Plán je všeobecne zameraný na záchranu návštevníkov, zamestnancov a zahŕňa ochranu pozemkov, historických budov a stavieb, archeologických nálezísk, historických dokumentov, vzácných artefaktov a zbierok. Osoba, zodpovedná za spracovanie plánu pre mimoriadne udalosti spolupracuje s ďalšími osobami, ktoré sa podieľajú na riadení kultúrna inštitúcia s cieľom začleniť do plánu položky týkajúce sa zásob, materiálu a spôsobu komunikácie, plán pravidelných cvičení, ako zvládnuť dlhšie trvajúca a mimoriadnu situáciu. Je potrebné mať k dispozícii špecialistov pripravenej pomoci pri obnove, tak aby inštitúcia mohla pokračovať vo svojej činnosti.

Kľúčové slová:

Kultúrna inštitúcia, overenie plánu, realizácia, povinnosti, mimoriadna udalosť.

ABSTRACT

Cultural institutions maintain an emergency plan expecting difficulties before they occur. An emergency plan first cares for visitors and staff and safeguards natural lands, historical buildings and structures, archeological sites, historical records and irreplaceable artifacts and collections. An emergency program manager cooperates with a protection as well as institution managers in order to create a relevant emergency plan (having predicted what threats might occur) comprising emergency supplies, material and communication system; the plan has to comprise scheduled regular exercises to be prepared to survive long-term or otherwise demanding emergencies. Specialists have to be ready to assist in the recovery from emergencies so that the institution starts up again and continues its original function.

Key words:

Cultural institution, plan testing, accomplishment, duties, emergency.

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1 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RISKS

Regardless emergency planning, the cultural institution works permanently on its development; it develops from the existing property, collections, exhibits and valuable artifacts. The motivation to develop the culture-focused and oriented institution consists in donations, chances to purchase, decisions of antique-loving individuals, last will inherited valuables, etc. Cultural institution managers continuously conduct studies to plan further services and operations that are still and might be required and desirable as well as profitable in the future; they try to estimate the public support for an extended and expanded cultural institution operation or for a completely new operation; potential visitors' characteristics and interest is often a significant factor for trendy design, arrangement and exhibition purposes.

The cultural institution feasibility studies conducted should always evaluate estimated number of visitors, spectrum of activities, conservation-restoration requirements, accessibility for handicapped visitors, role of the institution in cultural research, physical security, expected professional strategy and work requirements.

A cultural institution has a plan ready to respond to various emergencies and difficulties before they occur. Emergency plans first care for visitors and staff and guard buildings, artifacts, collections, archeological sites, natural land, irreplaceable valuables and collections. A team of professionals headed by an emergency manager has to work together in order to create a cultural institution emergency plan, emergency material and supplies and efficient communication system. An emergency manager should be responsible for testing the plan with exercises and drills and preparation so that long-term survival is easier. Regardless the fact that not every emergency or combination of circumstances is predictable, the plan should contain many response varieties and choices that permit flexibility to adapt to circumstances. The emergency program manager should plan a long-term protection of valuables and collections stored and deposited inside buildings by preparing to act at emergencies.

First, the emergency threat assessment and risk analysis has to predict what threats might occur. The emergency program manager determines what problems to expect to occur resulting from their frequency of occurrence in the recent years and in the past. A smart emergency programs manager talks to experienced staff members who recall past emergencies and consider their response and activities from previous events. They also add the probabilities of loss from historic weather data and from historic records. When asked, managers from other cultural institutions may offer assistance and experience from their risks and insurance companies may do the same; the seriousness of the threats can therefore be more generally determined. There can be determined how the institution should fight fires and flood without fire service assistance, how to provide medical assistance without medical support from ambulances and hospital unavailability. The emergency manager should ask other professionals to review the survey for completeness, coordination and effectiveness with emergency plans of other cultural-institution organizations within a region or district.

2 CULTURAL INSTITUTION MANAGERS DUTIES

The emergency plan has to be prepared in advance. The cultural institution managers (emergency program manager, protection manager and institution manager) as well the other staff approve the emergency plan; the emergency program manager is given the authority to start the plan and manage the institution and its staff to take unified course of activities before, during and after an emergency. The emergency plan expects the occurrence of the more commonly expected emergencies, related emergencies caused by domino effect, and a course of action when the execution of a plan diverges from the expected course.

Most emergencies start without any time for preparation. Therefore the emergency team members must know what to do without another reading of a plan. An effective emergency plan must be simple, short and easy to understand and follow. An emergency team manager is in charge of various activities both at the time of emergency and “no-threat” time: he declares that there is a real emergency and officially starts the emergency plan, notifies institution authorities and other organizations, calls the emergency members team to assemble, starts the re-evaluation of the threat, orders the staff to perform initial checks, accomplishes special tasks, cares for visitors and staff at the institution, inspects valuables, schedules duty and relax time of emergency team members, rescues valuables, starts evacuation steps of valuables including triage and safe packing, conducts regular physical security to prevent theft and looting, etc. Additional untrained members of the staff should be given printed instructions to support trained individuals as well as professionals.

Protection managers develop property control programs to safeguard collections through procedures covering inventory and exhibit checks, removing or evacuation management, access to non-public areas, storage and collection records areas. Physical security programs are concentrated on safeguarding human life (both staff and visitors), collections, security building perimeters, interior space, safe landscape and exterior including sound tree and plant species to protect everybody concerned from health hazards, injuries and accidents; guard programs prevent fire, theft, damage and injuries both within and outside the cultural institution. The protection manager accomplishes each protection program by identifying and establishing protection goals, developing long-term security objectives, building an adequate protection organization, evaluating, testing and modifying the program as the actual situation calls for.

The emergency program manager coordinates many people inside as well outside the institution for services and activities during emergencies; he also prepares specialists to assist in the recovery from emergencies so that the institution can start up again and continue its original activity. Institution managers and emergency program manager plan fire and flood evacuation exercises or drills to condition staff for future emergency exercises or drills. Practiced and arranged exercises help the staff to be more cooperative. Drills are more realistic when unexpected difficulties occur, e.g. lack of electricity, water, blocked or closed roads, troubles in communication, however such situations may be added in the middle of the drill not at the beginning. Simultaneously, defensive programs have to be developed to reduce the loss from emergencies and disasters. Such programs should include more realistic plans, better

warning system or improved defense of the building or institution from threats such structural collapse, flood, fire, etc.

Emergency program managers prepare to protect their facilities, collections and valuables from loss during long-term emergencies in various ways.

Conservation-restoration, fire and protection professionals have to work as a well-integrated team with rapid, accurate and reliable communication. Anybody who is at the cultural institution when an emergency occurs can perform as part of the emergency team. Every collection requires and deserves a consistent level of adequate care and the institution should be prepared to survive during a major emergency or disaster by developing a long-term emergency protection plan.

3 DISASTER OR EMERGENCY?

Sometimes the term “disaster” and “emergency” is used differently: a disaster is considered a long-term or widely spread unexpected disruption such as a major flood with losses; an emergency is a common or expected disturbance such as a minor flood that usually repeatedly occurs. Both an emergency and a disaster are situations that are out of control. An emergency may grow in a disaster and a disaster may change in an emergency.

When an emergency occurs, what fundamentals activities are recommended to be accomplished:

- to save people (visitors, staff),
- to alert others (rescue units and emergency centers),
- to save valuables and try to stop or limit an emergency if possible,
- to continue emergency activities.

Most cultural institutions have commonly known (sometimes unwritten) emergency response plan, which is sometimes called contingency plan. The emergency staff first account for every person in the institution; the emergency program manager checks for the damage of the building, artifacts, collections and valuables; after that he maintains and protects the site until the institution recovers and starts its everyday operation.

In case when a serious emergency occurs, the appointed and trained emergency manager and his team start the emergency program without any delay. The staff team starts acting: emergency managers have to integrate existing safety, fire protection and building evacuation program (including valuables evacuation and farther restoration-conservation treatment) into an emergency plan; they are also responsible for training and practicing emergency operation steps by the staff.

What should be accomplished before the emergency occurs:

- to evaluate and assess how the building is vulnerable to damaging by weather phenomena and recommend how to reduce possible damage,
- to get the possible information on a collecting refrigerated vehicle and companies for freezing collections damaged by water and for transfer to freeze or dry facilities,
- to provide training considering using fire extinguishers and general fire protection to the staff, to provide a fail safe warning system for visitors and staff,

- to have available updated list of conservator-restorer specialists,
- to procure required equipment to use during emergencies,
- to ensure, that everything necessary is on hand,
- to test the plan regularly using a scenario of various emergencies that might occur.

Having “survived” an emergency, there should always be determined what areas of damaged building are safe for further use and which parts have urgently to be repaired and recovered not to cause further domino-effect damage. Particular attention has to be paid to electrical wiring and installation, gas, water and steam piping. The emergency team should assemble and divide the duties and responsibilities, distribute instructions for the response and collect available tools, devices, equipment and material for recovery activities.

4 RECOVERY, RECONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION

A major task for the cultural institution manager is the additional work consisting in recovery and further activities having survived an emergency. What is done and included into planning steps may effect the function of the institution and the attitude of the staff, public and visitors. The cultural institution manager should be involved in activities of a building committee, financial planners, construction contractors and many others. “Construction” is a period of change resulting in a better, safer and less vulnerable facility. Managers, in general, value the opportunity to improve facility and its neighborhood conditions. They try to avoid frequent misunderstandings, disagreements, confusion and chaotic behavior accompanying extensive construction projects. Every cultural institution project itself presents threats of fire, water troubles, safety problems, loss, injuries, various accidents, biodiversity preservation, landscape protection, etc. During recovery and reconstruction period, protection manager representatives organize staff in teams and participate in every step development from the selection of the architect, restoration-conservation specialists to final inspection of the completely reconstructed and recovered building. Managers should be prepared for many repairs, changes and improvement of a building any time; therefore in case of a small-scale emergency less time is needed to start an adequate response treatment, both construction and conservation-restoration focused.

CONCLUSION

Managers of any cultural institution have to develop protection programs and emergency plans covering both the interior and exterior including adjacent and surrounding grasslands, parks and forested areas having learned from major and minor losses from fire, floods, theft or disasters in the past. Adequate rules, procedures and operations should be available before an emergency occurs as little adjustment or “facelift” is easier than “in-situ” made decisions.

In many places public expects protection, particularly with other building and services. The image of good security and good training of guard projects a proper impression to

visitors and staff and therefore may “offer” a generally safe feeling in case of potential emergency.

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