K of C Council Emergency Response Coordinator Responsibilities

Diocese of Austin, July 2025

I. Purpose

This Plan document lays out the responsibilities of the Council Emergency Response Coordinator (CERC) and other members of the Council. It also describes the procedures to follow in the event of a disaster such as a fire, flood, earthquake, tornado, train derailment, and other emergencies.

The first thing to note is this: the CERC and Team are **not** first responders. Rescue type work should be left up to the local authorities who are trained and equipped for this work. Moreover, in keeping with the Knights of Columbus mission, help and relief services coordinated by the CERC are limited to Knights and their families (including widows) who are **directly** affected by a disaster.

II. The Emergency Response Coordination Team

The CERC is not alone. Rather, he is part of a team that includes the Council ERC, the Diocesan ERC (Lee Fracker), the Regional ERC (Jerry "G" Giegerich), the State ERC (Larry Pellerito) and potentially Council members with specific skills. These individuals work together to

- Identify Knights and their families (including widows) who have been directly affected by a disaster
- Identify relief services available to those affected
- Assist those individuals in applying for those relief services
- In some cases, distribute financial assistance to affected individuals in the form of gift cards.

The CERC may at times also call upon local Council members who possess specific skills such as carpentry, electrical, or plumbing to assist with limited restoration efforts. These members can be identified ahead of time and constitute part of the Council's Emergency Response Team.

III. An Example

Imagine a five-hundred-year flood affecting 10 councils in three districts within the Diocese of Austin. Each Council has a CERC who identifies the members of his Council who have been affected by the flood. The CERC does not wait for affected members to contact him, although they can do so. Rather, he proactively reaches out to members who may be in the flooded area. If they have been affected, he lets them know help is available and collects whatever information the member is able to share at that time.

If a contacted member has not been affected, he may know of someone who has been and will relay that information to the CERC. In this way, the CERC builds a list of affected members and an initial picture of the extent of the overall damage. Each CERC will then relay this information to the Diocesan CERC who will in turn notify the Regional and State ERCs.

The State ERC will determine the availability of financial resources to meet the needs of those affected in the Diocese of Austin, including grants and gift cards. The State ERC may then

distribute gift cards to the Diocesan ERC who, with the assistance of the CERC's, will distribute the gift cards to those affected based on their need.

At the same time, the State ERC will distribute to the Diocesan ERC the latest approved application form for grants from the Knights of Columbus Texas State Charities. The Diocesan ERC then distributes those grant applications to the CERCs who in turn will work to complete and submit the grant applications along with restoration estimates provided by reputable local contractors.

At this point, the CERC should remind grant applicants to provide estimates for **uninsured damage only**. The Knights of Columbus will not pay, for example, the deductibles for applicants who had home and/or flood insurance.

While CERCs are distributing gift cards and assisting individuals to complete their grant applications, the CERC may also help those individuals apply for assistance from other charitable organizations such as the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities of Central Texas.

In some cases where property damage is manageable by the local Council, the CERC may call upon Council members with specific skills to assist affected individuals as needed. Such skills may include carpentry, electrical, plumbing, cleaning, food preparation, and so on.

IV. Scope of Responsibilities

1. While individual councils can and indeed should assist those outside the Knights who have been affected by a disaster, such assistance is not the focus of the Knights of Columbus Emergency Response program.

2. Rather, the focus of the Emergency Response program and the CERC is to assist Knights and their families (including widows) who have been directly affected by disasters and other emergencies.

3. Assistance to affected members of the community outside the local council is typically provided by appropriate organizations such as Catholic Charities, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the American Red Cross, FEMA, and so on.

V. Council Emergency Response Coordinator (CERC) Responsibilities

Before a Disaster Occurs

4. Work with the Diocesan ERC to review CERC responsibilities and procedures.

5. Build and maintain a contact list of Council members with special restoration skills such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, cleaning, catering, and so on to be called upon to help brother Knights and their families (including widows) when needed. The **Emergency Response Team Member Form** attached to the end of this document may be helpful for this purpose.

6. Ensure council Members have the CERC's contact information.

When a Disaster Occurs

7. Remind Council members to refrain from joining rescue operations: let the first responders do their work unimpeded by well-meaning individuals who may put themselves in danger.

8. Reach out to affected council members to find out what their needs are.

9. To the extent damage is manageable by the local Council, activate the Council's emergency response volunteers to assist where needed. Organize different work groups as appropriate for relief and restoration operations. Examples are minor repairs and restoration, cleanup, food preparation, food and supplies delivery.

10. Keep the Diocesan ERC informed of individuals affected by the disaster and of their needs and progress in obtaining relief.

11. Assist affected members and their families (including widows) in applying for grants from the Knights of Columbus Texas State Charities. These grants do not need to be repaid.

12. Distribute gift cards provided by the State Council ERC to affected members according to the guidelines provided by the State Council.

13. Help affected members apply for aid from other charitable organizations such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities of Central Texas.

14. Maintain communication with the **parish** Emergency Response Coordinator.

15. Maintain communication with local government officials.

VI. Listing of Helping Agencies

1. FEMA
   Federal Emergency Management Agency
   500 C. Street S.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20472
   (202)-646-2500
   https://www.fema.gov/apply-assistance

2. The American Red Cross of Central & South Texas
   4800 Manor Rd Building K, Room 251
   Austin, TX 78723
   (512) 928-4271
   https://www.redcross.org/local/texas/central-and-south-texas.html

3. Society of St Vincent de Paul Central Texas
   901 W Braker Ln, Austin, TX 78758
   (512) 251-6995
   www.ssvdp.org

4. Catholic Charities of Central Texas
   1625 Rutherford Ln, Austin, TX 78754
   (512) 651-6100
   https://ccctx.org

Emergency Response Team Member Form

TEAM MEMBER INFORMATION	
First Name:	Last Name:
Home Address:	
Home Number:	Cell Number:

EMERGENCY CONTACT	
1st Contact Name:	1st Contact Relation:
1st Contact Home Number:	1st Contact Cell Number:
2nd Contact Name:	2nd Contact Relation:
2nd Contact Home Number:	2nd Contact Cell Number:

Skill	Skill Level			
Carpentry	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master
Plumbing	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master
Electrical	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master
Clean Up	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master
CPR	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Certified
First Aid	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Certified
Food Preparation	Novice	Apprentice	Chef	Master Chef
Other	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master
Other	Novice	Apprentice	Expert	Master

Emergency Response Team Member Form (page 2)

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
- ☐ Safety Glasses
- ☐ Hard Hat
- ☐ Gloves – Type: _____
- ☐ Monogoggles / Face Shield
- ☐ Hearing protection
- ☐ High visibility vest

Power and Lighting
- ☐ Generator
- ☐ Power Cords
- ☐ Portable Lights
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other

Cleanup Tools
- ☐ Wet Vac
- ☐ Broom
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other

Electrically Powered Tools
- ☐ Hand Saw
- ☐ Drill Motor
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other

Hauling
- ☐ Pickup Truck
- ☐ Trailer - Open
- ☐ Trailer - Enclosed
- ☐ Straps – Tie down
- ☐ Other

Gas Powered Tools
- ☐ Chain saw
- ☐ Blower
- ☐ Lawn Mover
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other

Gas Powered Tools
- ☐ Portable Compressor
- ☐ Air Gun
- ☐ Hoses
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other

Hand Tools
- ☐ Wrenches
- ☐ Screw Drivers
- ☐ Socket Set
- ☐ Hammer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other