

1. In the past five years, has your community experienced a disaster such as a severe windstorm, flood, wildfire, hazardous materials incident/spill, etc.?

NO (If NO, skip to Question 2)

If YES, which of these natural disasters occurred? (Please check all that apply)

| Event                     | When event last occurred: |               |                |                        |       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|-------|
|                           | Within past year          | 1-5 years ago | 5-15 years ago | More than 15 years ago | Never |
| Drought                   |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Dust Storm                |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Earthquake                |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Flood                     |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Lakeshore Erosion         |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Landslide/Debris Flow     |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Wildfire                  |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Windstorm/Tornado         |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Winter Storm/Ice Storm    |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Hazardous Materials Spill |                           |               |                |                        |       |
| Other:                    |                           |               |                |                        |       |

2. For which of the following disasters do you think your community is at risk? (Check the appropriate box for each hazard)

| Event                     | Extremely Concerned | Very Concerned | Concerned | Somewhat Concerned | Not Concerned |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Drought                   |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Dust Storm                |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Earthquake                |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Flood                     |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Lakeshore Erosion         |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Landslide/Debris Flow     |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Wildfire                  |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Windstorm/Tornado         |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Winter Storm/Ice Storm    |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Hazardous Materials Spill |                     |                |           |                    |               |
| Other:                    |                     |                |           |                    |               |

3. Has your community had damage to facilities or infrastructure (e.g., roads, public buildings, utilities)?

**Please complete both sides of the form**

**COLUMBIA COUNTY HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS & MITIGATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

4. What facilities or infrastructure in your community do you think are especially vulnerable to damage during a disaster?
  
5. Does your community currently have tornado shelters? If yes, how many and where? If no, would your community be interested in establishing a tornado if funds become available and the community supports it?
  
6. How important do you think each of the following projects are in mitigating (i.e., lessening the impacts of) a natural disaster in your community?

| Project  | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Neutral | Not Very Important | Not Important |
|--|----------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| Protecting private property  |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Protecting critical facilities (hospitals, fire stations, etc.)                                |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Preventing development in hazard areas   |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Enhancing the function of natural features (streams, wetlands)                                 |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Protecting historical and cultural landmarks   |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Promoting cooperation among public agencies, citizens, non-profit organizations and businesses |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Protecting and reducing damage to utilities  |                |                    |         |                    |               |
| Strengthening emergency services   |                |                    |         |                    |               |

7. What ideas do you have for your community to mitigate natural disasters?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Do you have any community building projects (e.g., subdivisions, office/industrial parks, roads) slated to be built in the near future? If so, what is the project called and what is its location?

**USE EXTRA PAGES TO EXPLAIN PROJECTS IF NEEDED**

Municipality/Department Completing the survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title of Person Completing the Survey: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date Survey was Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Return Survey to Kathy Johnson by *(insert)*: Mail: P.O. Box 132, Portage, WI 53901, Fax: (608) 742-0598 or Email: [Kathy.Johnson@co.columbia.wi.us](mailto:Kathy.Johnson@co.columbia.wi.us)

**Please complete both sides of the form**

## **GOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC INPUT**

Planning creates a way to solicit and consider input from diverse interests. Successful community mitigation begins with a commitment from government officials throughout the county.

Involving stakeholders is essential to building community-wide support for the plan. In addition to emergency managers, the planning process involves other government agencies (e.g., zoning, floodplain management, public works, community and economic development), businesses, civic groups, environmental groups and schools. Vital information provided by these groups helps insure that the plan is workable within the framework of the community's priorities.

## **ADOPTION OF THE PLAN**

Local units of government participating in a multi-jurisdictional planning process must adopt the final plan for the municipality to be eligible for future mitigation funds including grants available through FEMA. **Local units (i.e., towns, villages, cities) that do not participate would be ineligible to receive such funds until such time that they meet these requirements and adopt a plan.**

## **HISTORY**

Since 1993 more than 400 disasters have occurred in the United States, affecting communities in all 50 states, costing the country over **\$500 million dollars per WEEK and killing over 24,000 people.**

## **MITIGATION PLANNING FACTS**

- ▶ A recent study by the Multi-hazard Mitigation Council shows that each dollar spent on mitigation saves society an average of four dollars.
- ▶ The rigorous building standards adopted by 20,000 communities across the country are saving the nation more than \$1.1 billion a year in prevented flood damages.
- ▶ Hazard mitigation plans and projects reduce overall risks to the population and structures while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations.
- ▶ Since 1993 more than 400 disasters have occurred in the United States, affecting communities in all 50 states, costing the country over **\$500 million dollars per WEEK and killing over 24,000 people.**

## **NOTES:**

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For further information please contact:

**Columbia County**  
**Emergency Management**  
711 E. Cook Street P.O. Box 132  
Portage, WI 53901  
(608) 742-4166 ext. 1309  
(608) 742-0598 Fax

# **Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning**

## **Creating Safe, Sustainable Communities**



**Prepared by:**

Columbia County Emergency Management  
711 E. Cook Street P.O. Box 132  
Portage, WI 53901

## **WHAT IS HAZARD MITIGATION?**

Hazard mitigation is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards.

Floods, ice storms, tornadoes and forest/wild fires – these are all functions of the natural environment and only become hazardous when they threaten our “built” environment with destruction. These hazards will occur one day. When this happens, the results can be appreciably different from past outcomes if our community takes action today.

## **RISK REDUCTION**

The goal of risk reduction is to reduce the risk to life and property, which includes existing structures and future construction, in the pre- and post-disaster environments. This is achieved through regulations, local ordinances, land use and building practices and mitigation projects that reduce or eliminate long-term risk from hazards and their effects.

## **WHY DEVELOP A PLAN?**

Mitigation plans form the foundation for a community's long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage. The planning process is as important as the plan itself. It creates a framework for risk-based decision-making to reduce damages to lives, property and the economy from future disasters.

State, tribal and local governments are required to develop a hazard mitigation plan as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288), as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, provides the legal basis for state, local and tribal governments to undertake a risk-based approach to reducing risks from natural hazards through mitigation planning.

*Like many other people, the residents of Merkel, Texas didn't think much about flooding. Besides, it had not flooded in Merkel for 45 years. It wasn't until the heavy rains in the summer of 2007 that residents realized flooding can hit anyone, at any time. After the flooding finally subsided, officials knew they had to do something: mitigate.*

## **REQUIRED INFORMATION**

- Flood maps
- Identification of potential hazards
- History of occurrences
- Hazard impact projections
- Location of critical facilities
- Identification of high-risk facilities (schools, fire station, nursing homes, etc.)
- Location of repetitive loss structures
- Development & prioritization of mitigation projects
- Other materials as identified

## **HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS**

**1. Organize Resources-** From the start, communities should focus the resources needed for a successful mitigation planning process. Essential steps include identifying and organizing interested members of the community, particularly those with the technical expertise required during the planning process.

**2. Assess Risks-** Communities next need to identify the characteristics and potential consequences of natural hazards. It is important to understand how much of the community can be affected by specific hazards and what the likely impacts would be for important community assets.

**3. Develop a Mitigation Plan-** Armed with an understanding of the risks posed by natural hazards, communities need to determine what their priorities should be and then look at possible ways to avoid or minimize the undesired effects. The result is a natural hazard mitigation plan and strategy for implementation.

**4. Implement the Plan & Monitor Progress-** Communities can bring the plan to life in a variety of ways ranging from implementing specific mitigation projects to changes in the day-to-day operation of the local government. To ensure the success of an on-going program, it is critical that the plan remains effective. Thus, it is important to conduct periodic evaluations and make revisions as needed.