

VILLAGE OF POQUOTT

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Introduction

Emergency situations by their very nature are unexpected and can be dangerous or potentially so. The Mayor and the Board of Trustees of Poquott recognize the importance of prior planning in order to anticipate the consequences of sudden emergency situations and therefore be able to respond quickly and appropriately. By developing a pre-planned, measured set of responses, it is hoped that disruption, damage, and particularly casualties, can be avoided or at the very least minimized.

What is an emergency situation?

For our village, the operational definition of “emergency” is a situation that is sudden, unanticipated, and presents a danger or potential danger to the residents or properties within the village. Because of overlapping jurisdictions, certain situations might not be formally declared “village emergencies” because they are matters handled by the Setauket Fire Department or the Suffolk County Police Department or other law enforcement. Such events might nevertheless be declared emergency situations if they are deemed to be potentially dangerous to other residents within the village.

It is impossible to list every event that could be deemed an emergency. Common examples are weather-related and would include but not be limited to blizzards, hurricanes, and other storms causing extensive wind damage. Weather emergencies are often anticipated by forecasts predicting potentially damaging storms on the way; hence there can be emergencies declared prior to the actual event.

Other examples might be traffic accidents or utility issues that block access or egress to the village. It is not inconceivable that even a plane crash or ferry accident could happen within the village boundaries. The important factor would be that the event is of a magnitude that requires immediate response and village-wide communication, and which may also result in significant cleanup costs. In such a case, it is responsibility of the Mayor or acting mayor to declare a village-wide **Emergency**.

Declaration of Emergency

Upon learning of a situation that meets the above criteria, the Mayor or designee may confer with residents, trustees, responders, or other emergency management representatives to verify and assess the scope of the emergency. It is the sole responsibility of the Mayor or designee to make a determination that the emergency situation requires coordinated action in behalf of the village residents.

The public announcement of an **Emergency** is made via news media, but the technical filing of an emergency is accomplished by the signing of a Declaration of a State of

Emergency form by the Mayor which is forwarded to the state by the Village Attorney. Filing a Declaration of Emergency with New York State allows the village to apply for state aid if it is subsequently found to be warranted. In addition, the pronouncement of an **Emergency** allows the Mayor to temporarily suspend the enforcement of village codes, thus allowing Safety Officers and others coordinating the village's response to close roads, redirect traffic, designate allowable parking areas, etc.

Communication Before and During an Emergency

In instances where there is time to make preparations prior to an event, such as when there is an approaching hurricane or blizzard, the mayor will utilize emails, texts, and telephones to alert residents and Board members and to coordinate readiness planning, which will continue as long as these means of communicating are available. In conformance with FEMA emergency guidelines, the mayor will assume or delegate the role of Public Information Officer (PIO) during a formally declared emergency.

All residents should be alert to damaged or potentially damaging conditions to structures, trees, and roads that could affect public safety or vehicular traffic, particularly to responding emergency vehicles. Blocked or damaged roadways should be reported to:

941-4900

Village Hall may be used as a communication center and emergency shelter if needed, although residents should be aware that Village Hall will be closed in the event that electrical service to it is lost.

When communication during and after a storm is impeded by utility outages and/or blocked roads, the Mayor will initiate alternate communication to village residents through other means including the soliciting of volunteers to go door to door. In addition to checking on the well-being of residents, particularly the elderly, volunteers can further assess where and for whom emergency responders are needed. The use of village bulletin boards should also be utilized for the posting of news regarding the emergency and subsequent traffic restrictions and cleanup.

Responsibilities of Emergency Coordinator

The Mayor or designee will gather and assess information about conditions or forecasts that might indicate the need for emergency communication and response at the earliest possible time. If the decision is made to declare an **Emergency**, immediate notifications will be made first to the Village Attorney and village Safety Department Chief and then the corresponding emergency management departments within the Town of Brookhaven and Suffolk County. Additional calls are to be made to LIPA, Setauket Fire Department, Suffolk County Police Department, and individual trustees within the village. In each case, information regarding conditions and available means of communication should be conveyed.

Post-Emergency Assessment

As soon as practicable after the emergency is over, the Mayor will convene an open meeting of trustees, responders, and residents interested in discussing the village's

response to the emergency, with a particular emphasis on making recommendations that might be incorporated into this Plan for future responses to emergencies.

Individual Emergency Preparedness

Common consequences of weather-related emergencies in Poquott have been the loss of electricity and inability to access stores for food and other supplies. It is important to emphasize that residents need to develop their own individualized plan for coping with these types of emergencies which seem to occur with some regularity.

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees would also like to request that residents maintain an awareness of their neighbors' well-being. During an Emergency, the elderly and people with difficulty getting out may not have the ability to adequately prepare, and more importantly, may need assistance in the aftermath of a storm or disaster. The Public Safety Department maintains a list of residents who have requested that officers check on their well-being at specified times; anyone interested in adding their names to receive this service are encouraged to contact Safety.

For additional information on personal preparedness for storms and other emergencies, the websites of the Suffolk County Office of Emergency Management and the Town of Brookhaven Office of Emergency Management provide emergency phone numbers and offer useful information regarding assistance and necessary supplies that should be assembled prior to the next emergency.