Mission Possible: Safety First
Emergency Response for Cultural Heritage Institutions in Puerto Rico & USVI

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3rd Annual Safety and Cultural Heritage Summit
Preserving Our Heritage and Protecting Our Health

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TOPICS

- Background
- Scope of real-world challenges we’ve faced in area-wide environmental disaster (post Hurricanes Irma & Maria)
- Resources
- Areas for improvement
- Panel discussion / Q&A
HERITAGE EMERGENCY NATIONAL TASK FORCE (FEMA-HENTF)

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative
www.culturalrescue.si.edu
### GENERAL / published


Office of Safety & Health Administration [OSHA Fact Sheets](https://www.osha.gov)

### SPECIFIC / internal

Smithsonian Occupational Health Services & Travel Medicine

Department of Interior for NARA, NPS *Emergency Response & Recovery Activities: Storms, Floods, & Hurricanes Safety & Health Guidance*

FEMA JFO / Disaster Safety Officer (DSO)

- Environmental & Historic Preservation (EHP)
  - DISASTER HAZARD ASSESSMENT PLAN (DHAP)
    - HAZARD IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION & CONTROL

| Potential hazard associated with EHP field activities | Confined Space Entry | Head shall not enter the plane of the manhole, crawl space, or other confined space. Do not enter a confined spaces. Not identified as a task for this position. Contact the Disaster Safety Officer for guidance. Working in confined spaces requires compliance with 29 CFR 1910 requirements. |
PHASE 1: 60-90 days post-event

- Rapid site assessments via:
  - Walkabouts, staff interviews
  - Compare to self-reported or unreported due to communications outages

- Report:
  - Scale & types of damages
  - Priorities & Needs
  - Resources: available or interrupted
PHASE 1: 60-90 days post-event

• **Hot** (avg. 85°F)
• **Humid** (avg. 85-90% RH)

GENERALLY HAZARDOUS
• Dark
• Slippery / uneven surfaces
• Water uptake in most materials
• Mold growth evident  
  • depending on air circulation, standing water, damp or wet building fabric
• Unstable power  
  • frequent blackouts, diesel delivery dependent
Phase 1: Workshop demonstrations of mold remediation techniques

UNSTABLE ELECTRICAL ENVIRONMENT
Universidad de Puerto Rico librarians providing critical reference services to students outside while building was closed.
Maintaining awareness of head injury, electrical, & laceration risks

MITIGATING RISK ONSITE

“Field dressing” interventions for people & objects at imminent risk
CONFINED SPACE ENTRY
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO A CULTURAL HERITAGE RESPONDER?
FEMA-HENTF TEAM’S OWN RISK ASSESSMENT – TRAINING TO ENABLE MASS SCALE, LONG-TERM, SELF-DIRECTED RECOVERY

Mission Assignment Goal: to “provide expertise & technical assistance” in recovery.
Inform workers of strategies, resources, responsibilities and revised priorities for cultural heritage orgs in recovery.

➢ Can we do our part better by asking for partnership regarding health & safety?  
  YES!
➢ Invoke NIOSH/CDC’s Health Hazard Evaluation program
➢ https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/
Normal practice

- Stable, known conditions & expectations
- Knowledgeable staff make best practice decisions

vs. Response & Recovery

- Stress on people, objects and systems
- Knowledgeable staff make risk-based, prioritized decisions
- Much written guidance is short-term
- Long term recovery = long term stress

LONG-TERM RECOVERY

- **OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL**
- **TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH**
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) **Disaster Distress Helpline**
  - [https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)
  - 1-800-985-5990 / TTY 1-800-846-8517
  - Text SMS: TalkWithUs to 66746
NOBODY TRAINS FOR IGUANAS

ANIMAL CONTROL AND OTHER BIOHAZARDS
DISPLACED WILDLIFE
POTENTIAL DANGERS OF REGION SPECIFIC ANIMALS
BITES & LACERATIONS
INFECTIOUS DISEASES
FROM BATS
MOLD
THE SHEER EXTENT AFTER A DISASTER
FOOD/WATER BORNE ILLNESS
TRAVEL PREP

- Water purification bottles
- Yellow Card/Traveler’s Vaccinations
- Emergency medicine (antibiotics, rehydration salts etc.)
PPE & PRACTICES
More awareness & focus on:

- MANAGING RISKS & EXPECTATIONS
- MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS & TOOLS
  - OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL
  - TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH
- CONFINED SPACE ENTRY
  - Usually more highlighted for Search & Rescue; or structural & facilities operations staff
  - what does it look like to a cultural heritage responder?
- FALL RISKS
- ELECTRICAL RISKS
- HEAT STRESS

- ANIMAL CONTROL
- PERSONAL SAFETY
  - TRAVEL SECURITY
  - RESIDENCE SAFETY
  - BUDDY SYSTEMS

NEEDS FOR RESPONDERS & SUPPORT STAFF
Travel teams:

- Donald Booher, CDC
- Beatriz Centeno-Pineiro, Vicki Lee, Abigail Aldritch NARA
- Elizabeth Milnarik, Diana Pardue, NPS
- Ashley Jehle, NMAfA
- Rebecca Kennedy, NPM
- Nora Lockshin, SIA
- Katie Wagner SIL
- Stacy Bowe, Cori Wegener, SCRI
- Viviana Dominguez, Art Conservators Lab LLC

WITH THANKS TO OUR PUERTO RICO & US VIRGIN ISLAND HOSTS

Supporters:

- Smithsonian Office of Safety Environmental Health and Management, Travel Medicine
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- Katelyn Averyt, Stacy Bowe, Cori Wegener, SCRI
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- Lori Foley, Lois Coulter, David Jones, FEMA
- John McDade, Keenan Adams, FWS / FEMA-NCRR
- Jennifer Groman, NASA / FEMA-EHP
- Ann Hitchcock, NPS
- John Nelson, ESF #11 NCH/COOP
- Preston Huff, William Bosanko, NARA
- Jayna Marques, Angela Chongo, Constellation Travel
Panel Q&A

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