

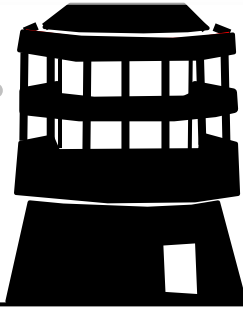
---

---

---

# THE Board Beacon

*“Exclusively for those who serve the community”*



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10

AUGUST 2005

## Inside This Issue

Implementing a Disaster Plan.....	1
Welcome Aboard .....	2
Staff Achievements.....	2
HCMS Book Club.....	2
Weatherproofing your Building.....	3
Community Websites.....	4
Associa Newsletter.....	4
dialUp Associa.....	4

## **Implementing a Disaster Plan**

In the midst of an active hurricane season, the importance of developing and implementing a disaster plan is self-evident. Prior to September 11, 2001, the term “disaster” was generally associated with naturally occurring events such as fire, hurricane, earthquake, mudslides or floods. Now, acts of terrorism need to be factored into the equation. The first step toward developing and implementing a disaster plan is identifying the potential consequences of a disaster. They include:

**Dislocation Caused by the Total or Partial Destruction of the Premises.** A properly prepared disaster plan will anticipate and plan not only for the possibility of a total casualty loss, but also the need to relocate, temporarily or permanently, due to the loss of both one’s residents and, potentially, one’s place of work.

**Loss of Life.** In addition to the potential for permanent injury, all disasters bring with them the risk of loss of life. In addition to key members of the board and committee chairs, this potentially impacts management and staff, as well.

**Destruction of Property.** At risk are the furniture, fixtures and personalty of the association and the unit owners. Those items of most concern to the association include: furniture, fixtures, equipment/computers, historical records, data bases, accounting records, unit and personnel files

**Economic.** The economic impact of a disaster is felt on many fronts. Unit owners displaced from work may be unable to meet their financial obligations to the association. Uninsured, underinsured or non-covered losses will necessitate special assessments, which could further stress the already overtaxed unit owners. The higher cost of goods and services resulting from shortages further compounds the problem.

**Designation of a Disaster Coordinator:** The ability of the community association to react quickly with a clear and decisive plan, thereby minimizing damages and speeding up recovery, to a large extent, will be dependent upon the association’s ability to react quickly and decisively when a disaster strikes. The ability to do so is dependent upon having a pre-designated person or committee in place prior to the disaster with full power and authority to implement the Disaster Plan.

**Designation of an Information Facilitator:** In times of crisis, people want to know – they need to know! A major hurdle to recovery is rumor and misinformation. Left unchecked, both can hamper the recovery efforts. This can be short-circuited through the use of an Information Facilitator. Today’s computer technology provides the ideal vehicle for this purpose. Every association should have its own website.

*Continued on page 2*

### HOUSTON COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

18333 Egret Bay Blvds., Suite 445  
Houston, TX 77058

*The Board Beacon* is published quarterly by HCMS for our associates.

We welcome your questions, comments or story ideas.

Office: (281) 333-5173

Toll Free: (800) 568-6807

Fax: (281) 333-4475

E-mail: [info@houcomm.com](mailto:info@houcomm.com)

#### EDITOR

LEJEAN GRIFFITH, CMCA, AMS

#### ASSISTANT EDITOR

SHANNON LONG, CMCA, AMS



**WELCOME  
ABOARD**

**NEW CLIENT  
COMMUNITIES**

- Village Grove East Townhomes
- Lakes of Falcon Ridge
- Inwood West HOA
- Barker Village HOA
- Aspen Club Condominiums
- Harborwalk POA
- Tuscan Lakes Commerical POA

**NEW EMPLOYEES**

- Gloria Beam
- Sandie George
- Debora Hassell
- Nan Jackson
- Trisha Jacobs
- Johnnie Moore
- Joey Powers
- Courtney Smith

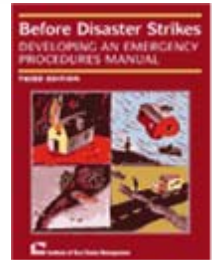
**Staff  
Achievements**

**Congratulations...**

Manager **Cheryl Copeland** for earning the CMCA (Certified Manager of Community Associations) designation from Community Association Institute (CAI).

**HCMS Book Club**

**Before Disaster Strikes  
Developing an Emergency  
Procedures Manual**



By: Institute for Real Estate Management

This 2-piece set includes a book and a diskette to download key resource material. Learn how to minimize injury, loss of life, or damage to property, or prevent an emergency altogether. This valuable book contains information how to develop emergency plans, teams, and manuals; how to assess security systems; when and how to evacuate; public relations; and how to report and document an emergency situation.

**Implementing a Disaster Plan** *Continued*

During normal times, it is the ideal resource for disseminating information and staying in touch with the unit owners. At times of a disaster, it is the vital link. The Information Facilitator works in concert with the Disaster Coordinator, as a type of "Press Secretary."

**Disaster Preparedness: Relocation: "Where will I go?"** A properly prepared plan will include plans for temporary relocation of the residents in situations where the community must be evacuated during the crisis. This can include Red Cross or other emergency shelters, hotels, schools, or staying with family in other cities. Said relocation may require more extensive stays during periods of reconstruction or substantial emergency periods.

**Photographic Imaging of Premises and Records.** A necessary prerequisite to disaster planning is video documentation of each unit owner's home, and the association's office and property. Keep in mind the old cliché: "a picture is worth a thousand words." With today's digital technology, photographic records can be conveniently and safely stored off premises and easily retrieved, if needed. In addition to photographic records or videotaping of the community, it is also recommended that the records reflect the date, place and cost of each item of personalty. What should be photographed? Specifically, include:

**Inside and outside of buildings and premises;** furniture; fixtures; art work; equipment/computers; books; accounting records; files; insurance policies; bank accounts; personnel records; records of units/unit owners; as built plans and specifications. In addition to photographic records, quick reference lists might contain: names, unit numbers, other residences, next of kin/emergency contacts, identifying features, social security numbers, medications, cell phone numbers, e-mail addresses (maintained in "groups").

**Storage of Emergency Supplies:** Most casualties, such as fire, generally affect only the immediate residents, who can be evacuated to nearby hospitals, hotels or emergency facilities. Finding food, shelter and clothing is not an issue. However, in the case of a widespread disaster, such as a Hurricane, residents might be forced to stay in their damaged homes and neighborhoods for extended periods of time.

*Continued on page 3*

---

---

---

---

A disaster plan should consider the need for emergency medical supplies, food, water, waterproof matches, a defibrillator, and an emergency generator. In addition, tools, which might be required to excavate someone from a collapsed structure, such as shovels, crowbars and a power saw, might be considered.

**Building Plans:** A set of as-built plans and specifications is essential to both the immediate response and long term recovery. Knowing the whereabouts of shut-off valves and structural components can be the difference between life and death. The as-built drawing will greatly facilitate the reconstruction effort. Along with the building plans, should be the names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the architects, engineers, contractors and sub-contractors who designed and built the structures. They can be an invaluable resource in disaster recovery.

**Emergency Planning: Evacuation Route.** Every high rise structure should have emergency evacuation routes visibly posted. **Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills.** It is not childish to take a lesson from our youth and, on a periodic basis, rehearse evacuation of the building. **Buddy System.** This is another positive lesson from our childhoods. Valuable time can be saved if your neighbors know your whereabouts at the time of an emergency. For example, if the Fire Department is informed that the Smiths are in Europe, by their neighbors, emergency response teams can focus their efforts on known victims.

**Maintenance of Adequate Insurance:** Maintaining adequate insurance is easier said than done. Nevertheless, the documents must be examined in concert with the law to ensure that the scope of coverage satisfies both. Many homeowners fail to maintain coverage for their personal effects and building upgrades within their homes.

**Activate the Plan:** Following a disaster, the disaster coordinator and information facilitator move into action. The information facilitator opens lines of communications with the unit owners. The disaster coordinator contacts emergency services and notifies the contractors and employees, advising of their duties and needs. In some cases, it may be necessary to suspend or cancel on-going contracts such as lawn and pool maintenance. Hopefully, provision was made in the contract for such right of suspension without penalty in situations such as a disaster when the contracted services are no longer needed. Within hours of any disaster, the affected community will be besieged by companies and individuals looking for work and/or offering disaster recovery services. This group will consist of qualified professionals, ranging from public adjusters to companies specializing in disaster recovery. The larger of these companies will arrive decked out in color-coordinated uniforms, large debris removing equipment and even helicopters. The best advice is to stick to your disaster plan which, hopefully, will include a plan that anticipates the five (5) phases of reconstruction: Project planning/scheduling; Construction bidding; Contract negotiations; Construction/rehabilitation; and Project completion/close out. The most urgent needs immediately after the disaster will be: Securing the community from acts of vandalism and looting.

Disasters do not respect geographic location or economic status and can occur at any time. Their effects can last for years; however, predisaster readiness coupled with a well-orchestrated and executed disaster plan will minimize damages and promote a speedy recovery.

*Article by Gary A. Poliakoff, J.D., President of Becker & Poliakoff, P.A.*

*Article can be read in its entirety at [www.becker-poliakoff.com](http://www.becker-poliakoff.com).*

## **WEATHERPROOFING YOUR BUILDING**

When most people think about rains, they think about their roofs and for good reason: the roof may never have had routine maintenance. If the Association or the homeowner has any work done that requires accessing the roof, now would be a good time to have a roof inspection done, as the odds of a leak occurring have increased. A qualified professional should perform an inspection and provide a report outlining the repairs and maintenance requirements. With a good preventive maintenance program in place the useful, trouble free life of the roof can be extended.

The report should address some of the following issues: proper installation of the roofing, broken or missing tiles or shingles, roof penetration and flashings, installation of valleys and crickets, sheet metal flashing installation at the roof-to-wall junction, condition of the gutters and diverters, and debris located on the roof or in the gutters.

After addressing the actual repairs needed, the roof can be maintained with a preventive maintenance program at a relatively inexpensive cost (depending upon the size of the roof). A roof maintenance program will save the Association money on potential interior damage repairs.

Once the roof and gutters have been addressed, the Association should insure that the water that has been collected is then routed away from the buildings. That means the next area to review is the landscaping.

Now would be a good time to do a walk through with the landscape to address drainage needs. This may require grading and/or installing drainage lines to direct the water away from the buildings to avoid the possibility of damage to the foundation or below grade areas of the buildings.

*continued on page 4*

**Weatherproofing continued**

It is best to contract with qualified professionals who have experience in these areas.

Your Association Manager can work with you to create and implement a preventive maintenance program to meet your needs and your budget. Contact us today for more information and be ready before the rains begin!

*Article courtesy of N.N. Jaeschke*

# dialUp Associa

Internet access for only \$9.00 a month! Sign up at [www.houcomm.com](http://www.houcomm.com), click on Shop at Associa Living, then click on dialUp Associa! •

## Associa Newsletters

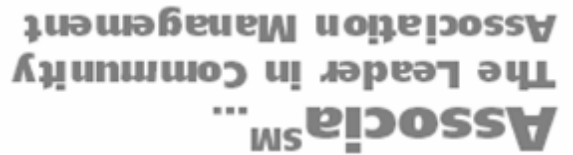
Your associations can now receive a professionally prepared COLOR newsletter with Associa Living advertisements at no additional cost above your local office cost for black and white copies!

Send us your unformatted, plain text content ... in 3-4 days, we will send you a color PDF (read-only) to review and approve. When you say you are ready, we will print it!

Whether the association has 50 or 1,050 units/lots/homes, Associa will ship the completed COLOR newsletters to the local office for processing! The association will still be responsible for the costs of mailing the newsletter to owners.

## Community Websites

You don't have to be dependent on volunteers who may move away. Your website will be actively managed by HCMS. We make available to each of our associations a personalized website that allows your association's residents access to a wealth of online services, including a community calendar, private board and committee discussion groups, access to association documents and much, much more. Open up a new form of communication with your members. Residents can get involved at any time and on their own schedule. Catch up on news & announcements, meeting minutes, and share ideas. A Community website is a valuable asset for your association.



Phone: (281) 333-5173  
Fax: (281) 333-4475  
Web Site: [www.houcomm.com](http://www.houcomm.com)

Houston Community Management Services  
18333 Egret Bay Blvd., Suite 445  
Houston, TX 77058

### THE BOARD BEACON

PRSRTS TD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
WEBSTER, TX  
PERMIT NO 48