

Getting Ready in Indian Country: Preparedness Discussion Questions

The following are preparedness discussion questions for tribal archives, museums, libraries, and culture centers are designed to spark conversations on getting ready for emergencies. The six basic questions can be used at tribal gatherings, workshops, or staff meetings.

1. Communication is one of the most important elements in responding to an emergency. If cultural resources in your care are threatened or damaged by flood, fire, wind, or other events, who will be available to help? Can you contact them easily? Are your emergency phone numbers up to date?
2. What are the tribe's priorities for rescuing cultural resources and important records? Have these priorities been communicated to your colleagues and other people you may need in an emergency?
3. Have you walked in and around buildings and sites to look for risks to your resources – potential leaks, electrical problems or other fire hazards, blocked exits, collections stored below ground level? Did a public safety official accompany you?
4. Emergency management agencies and fire departments are essential to emergency response, and they expect to take charge after major incidents. Do you know who will help you in emergencies? Are they aware of your important cultural resources and how they should be handled?
5. Having supplies on hand to deal with emergencies is essential. Do you have a cache of items such as tarps, flashlights, and absorbent towels?
6. Are you aware of information and training resources to help you prepare for emergencies? The “Inventory of Disaster Resources for Cultural Heritage” has links for emergency planning, risk assessments, disaster supplies, and tips for working with emergency responders.