



Contact Information

Holston Conference UMC

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Disaster Response Coordinator

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Early Response Team Training

Holston Conference Disaster Response Early Response Teams (ERT) are trained by UMCOR Certified Trainers. The team members understand that at no time do we respond until we are called to do so, have been assigned a mission, a reporting location, and after consulting with the requesting conference agree that we can meet the requested needs for our services. The notification will come from the ERT Coordinators normally via e-mail to the ERT members. Fully realizing it may be several days/weeks until the initial disaster assessment is completed they monitor the news and weather in the disaster area, and begin to gather their clothing and support gear for the possible deployment. There are times when we await deployment and it does not happen because the conference in the disaster area can meet the needs without outside help. We realize that not all members can deploy but our focus is to train many so a few can deploy. Call or e-mail any of those listed above to register for ERT Training.

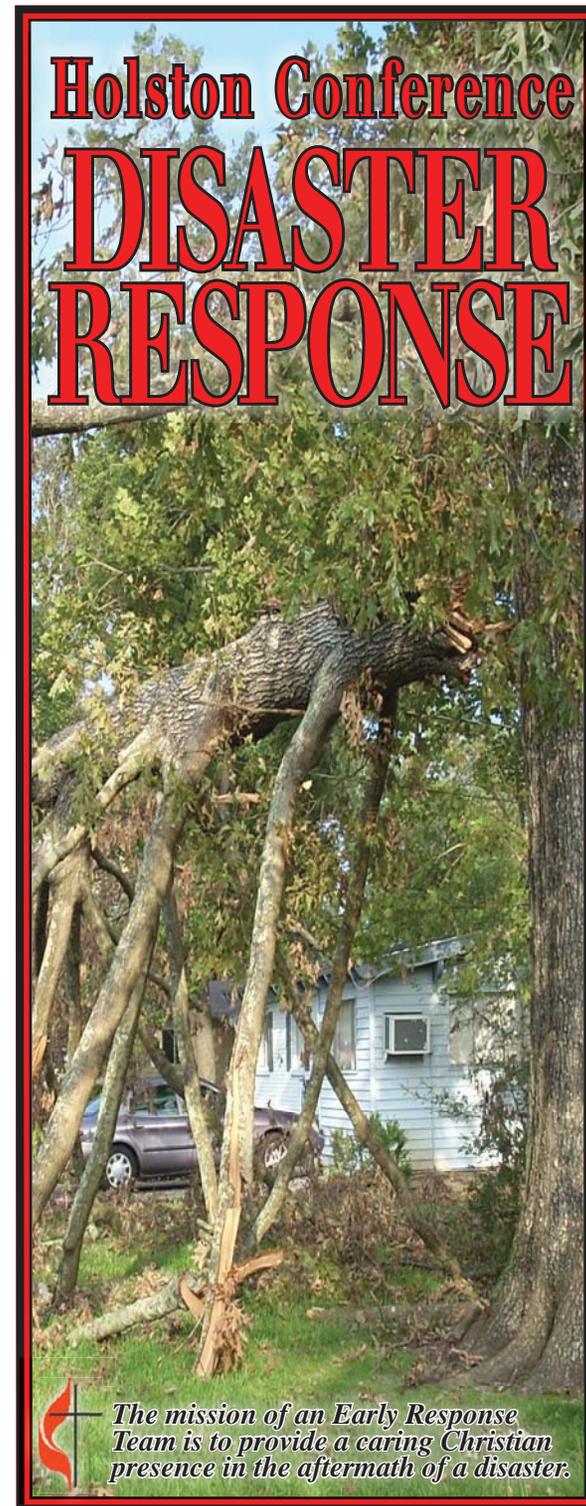
Early Response Team members

- possess a spiritual commitment
- are able to be team players
- understand that people are always more important than the task
- complete training prior to the assignment
- have a positive attitude
- are observant and listen
- understand cultural differences
- understand the psychological stress victims are suffering
- admit that you do not have all the answers
- are realistic about the issues and problems that are likely to be faced
- understand that ownership of a disaster must stay with the local community



Holston Conference Early Response

The purpose of Early Response Teams is to share the love of Christ in ways that make a Christian difference. We share our abilities in partnership with our team members and those who host our teams. As servants we participate in accomplishing particular goals set by and in cooperation with our hosts in their time and in their way.



The mission of an Early Response Team is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster.

Disaster Response

Early Response Teams fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to establish the presence of the church. There are specific tasks assigned to a team, but their first priority is the people they serve. These teams are different from the regular UMVIM teams you might be familiar with. Careful attention should be paid to the responsibilities of team members.



Early Response Teams ...

- share the love of Christ in ways that make a Christian difference.
- take steps to prevent further damage to property, by doing tasks such as tarping, and cleaning out flooded homes.
- take note of the victim's needs and report them to the local conference, or other disaster relief operations.
- listen and help victims begin to heal.
- provide an opportunity for Christian service for those who want to give their time.

Why do we need Early Response Teams?

- Disaster victims are reassured that the church cares for them.
- Members of the United Methodist Church and the community are able to see the church in action.
- Immediate assistance is available to persons who are usually older or disabled without a family support system nearby.
- Teams provide immediate and quick response care for victims. (United Methodists can be "first in" and "last out.")

What is a disaster?

A disaster is any specific event that results in overwhelming physical, economic and/or emotional damage to a community. ERTs are flexible so that they can respond to natural disasters that may occur in the local setting.



Photo by The Dawson Springs Progress, Dawson Springs, KY

Team Size

- An ERT team size varies with the tasks that need to be performed.
- There are 7 to 14 members on a team (UMCOR recommendation)
- We recruit at least three times as many persons as the final team size that needs to be deployed. This will allow for the deployment of two or three teams at once.

Knuckey Rule – at the time of any disaster occurrence, only half the people you were counting on for assistance will be available.

Equipping an Early Response Team

Each team must be self-sufficient and self-sustaining. As a team is making preparations, responders need to keep in mind the need for basic necessities, such as food, fuel, water and sleeping gear, as well as debris removal equipment. (Equipment trailers are available in the conference for team use.)

Early Response Team Members

Here are the team members that are essential to any ERT team and a brief job description for each.

Team Leader

needs to have leadership qualities and have an understanding of the Early Response Team's role.

Assistant Team Leader

serves as a back-up to the team leader

Logistics

finds the needed supplies and transportation for the team and shares responsibility for team safety at the work site with the Safety Officer.

Base Camp Manager

is responsible for meals, water and lodging if it is necessary for the team to spend the night.

Equipment Maintenance

is responsible for keeping equipment in the ERT trailer repaired and in working condition.

Listener/Team Recorder

is designated to listen to the survivors and get their stories, but not provide pastoral care (all team members should put the people before their tasks). This person also keeps the team's forms and is able to relay the survivors' needs to the local conference disaster officials.

Safety Officer

is designated to pay attention to the individual team members' safety. They check to see that the proper safety equipment is being used and that all team members are performing at optimal efficiency. When team members start to get tired, the safety officer pulls those persons out to rest and hydrate.



Photo by The Dawson Springs Progress, Dawson Springs, KY