

SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA LEGAL SERVICES

DISASTER MANUAL

September 2006

Overview of Contents

This Disaster Manual includes information that you will need in order to prepare for and recover from a hurricane disaster.

It includes:

- How to secure client data and office for disaster
- Personal items that you should take with you in an evacuation
- Staff phone list, including cell and alternate phone numbers
- How to remotely access your e-mail (office and home) and voice mail
- How to use technology resources for disaster legal services
- Summary of our recovery plan

*****TAKE THIS MANUAL WITH YOU IN A DISASTER*****

SECURE CLIENT FILES AND DATA

Client Files

All Staff

- Store client files in file cabinets
- As ongoing practice, open files should be kept separately from closed files
- Before evacuation, mark your “open case file” cabinet (if not marked)
- Critical documents and files should not be left on floor
- Offices with security (such as 1010 Common) should leave “open case” file cabinets unlocked for evacuation

Back Up and Print Your Client Information and Work

All Staff

- Download work product and information that you need for remote work to your flash drive. Work in progress with deadlines should always be saved. **Take your flash drive with you.**

Note: unless you have very large files, most or even all of your WP files can be quickly saved to your flash drive.

- Back up your work and data from the last day.
- Print your case list.
- Print your ticklers.
- Take your flash drive, case list and ticklers with you

Technology Manager

- Help staff with backing up their data
- Back up tapes must be taken off-site
- Check to see if tape has actually recorded

Manager and computer responsible person should make sure tape(s) are taken off-site, (more than 1 person should take a tape—do not leave tapes in car overnight as thieves target evacuees)

Make sure Directors and Administrator have most current information on how to restore back-ups from tapes and on-line vendor

SECURE THE OFFICE—CHECKLIST

Secure valuable computer equipment

All Staff

- Unplug computers and move to safe room (preferably a window less room)
- Put your name on your computer
- Securely wrap computer(s) in plastic to protect against overhead leakage (check with Tech Manager or office supervisor for plastic bags or sheets)
- Computers should not be left on the floor (best practice is to keep computer off floor at all times, not just in disaster evacuation)
- Each person should check on immediate office neighbor(s) to determine if help needed in securing computers
- Work with Tech Manager or office supervisor to complete “computer preparation” work for absent staff)
- Monitors may be left in your room
- If you have an office notebook computer, take it with you

Managers

- Managing attorneys should check to see if all department/office computers have been secured
- Tag doors with note when computer has been removed, blinds drawn and office prepared

Technology Manager (or Office Supervisor) and Team

- Assemble team to help with securing computers of staff who are not at office
- Wrap central server with plastic or plastic bag
- Servers should be properly downed and unplugged (staff other than Tech Manager need to know how to do this)
- Assign back-up tapes to management or other staff for off-site evacuation
- Assign unused notebook computers to staff for use during evacuation

Other office preparations

All Staff

- Draw the blinds in your office (and neighbors' if absent)
- Put away everything possible from desktops, tables, floors, etc.
- Close the doors to all offices (leave note on door stating that computer removed and office prepared for disaster)
- Equipment such as monitors, lamps and radios should be turned off every night
- Remove all your perishables from refrigerator

Managers

- Assign person to make sure refrigerator is fully emptied

Client Communications

Each Unit or Office

- Cancel your appointments as necessary
- Designated person in each unit/office should take phone numbers of clients who could not be reached to cancel appointment

Each Office—Intake Staff or Receptionist

- Post sign on office doors informing public of closure
- Change recorded message to announce closure

Attorneys

- If indefinitely displaced, update your LSBA membership information on www.lsba.org

Management

- Local media should be advised of closure

Court or agency communications

- Take your SLLS disaster manual with you—it has a directory of courts

Personal Preparations Checklist

Personal preparations

Take the SLLS Disaster Manual with you!

Before you leave the office, take:

- Client data or work product that you backed up
- Your case list, tickler list and personal calendar
- Notary seal
- SLLS Disaster Manual
- Business cards
- Office rolodex, if paper

In evacuating, you should take:

- Cell phones and chargers (for you and family traveling with you)
- Drivers license, passport, birth certificates
- Health insurance cards
- Extra cash
- Credit cards
- Check book
- Bank statement
- Insurance policies
- Last tax return
- Title/mortgage for your home, including payment addresses
- Your landlord's phone numbers and addresses
- Business clothes (necessary for court appearances)

- Clothes for a week
- Booster cables
- Flashlight
- Office notebook computer if you have one
- Office keys

Staff Communications

Before the Disaster:

- Telephone tree will be used to notify staff of office closure
- Closing will be posted on www.slls.org web page
- Also, check your office e-mail for notice of closing
- Take your office phone lists, e-mail lists and your e-mail/voice mail passwords with you
- If you have not updated your contact info, tell your manager now and e-mail the administrator
- You should have plan to evacuate and your alternative phone number (relative/friend who will know your whereabouts) should be listed in our Disaster Manual (e-mail Administrator if you change your plan)
- Take your SLLS Disaster Manual or kit with you, keep 1 copy at home (it will have most information. Manual, absent personnel information will also be posted on probono.net/la)
- Make sure you know how to use text messaging on your cell phone (if you have this feature)
- Our slls.org web page will be used to communicate personnel information, polices, office openings/assignments, special disaster related job assignments, etc.

After the Disaster:

Staff communications on return to work

1. A telephone tree will be used to the extent phones work
2. Messages on office closings, openings and post-disaster personnel policies will be posted to our slls.org web page (alternatively, to nolac.org if slls.org does not work).

Information will also be left with legal services offices in Shreveport, Baton Rouge and Lafayette.
3. Generally, our offices will be open if the local city/parish government or courthouse is open

4. Phone number for 1010 Common building management is 504-544-7025. The phone number for building security is 587-7164. (the building opens if it is OK to open).

5. Staff should be back to work when office re-opens.

If re-opening of your office is delayed, you should be available to report to another SLLS location. In the event of a disaster that makes SLLS offices inaccessible for more than a week and if you can't communicate with the directors, you should contact other Louisiana legal services programs to help with the disaster legal services delivery system. If you won't be back when office re-opens, you should advise your manager or other management staff

6. Be sure to let your emergency contact (relative or friend) know where you are and how you can be reached

If an office or staff housing are destroyed

1. Report immediately to one of the Directors or the Administrator on status of your housing options, when and where you can return to work
2. Report any post-disaster contact information or status of other employees if known
3. Possible temporary office space will include other SLLS offices, other legal aid offices, or short-term rentals
4. Check our slls.org web page if you can't get a Director or the Administrator
5. Alternatively, contact the LSBA webpage, the LSBA disaster hotline or another Louisiana legal services program to leave your contact information and to find out the status of our offices.

Contact information on other legal services programs can be found at www.lsc.gov, and in our Disaster Manual.

Disaster Recovery Plan–Brief Summary

Restoring Client Services

Our overall goal is to re-establish client services as soon as possible. Other general goals include assessing:

- Need for any adjustment of our direct services (or priorities)
- Need for new client services
- Plan for client education relative to disaster
- Need for systemic advocacy related to disaster

Also, we would expect to work with the LSBA Disaster Hotline in the first phase of a major disaster, conduct outreach at major Disaster Recovery Centers, work closely with key agencies such food stamp offices and unemployment compensation offices, implement our own Disaster Law phone advice systems, and collaborate with pro bono and other advocacy organizations on systemic or policy issues related to the disaster.

Covering emergencies in our existing clients' case (and mitigating damages) is, of course, a major function during the first phase of a major disaster.

The legal needs will vary in disasters. The legal aid needs in the first phase of a disaster generally will include:

FEMA claims and appeals
Food stamps
Unemployment compensation
Eviction defense, lease terminations and security deposits
Insurance advice

Specific Steps to Restore Client Services Include:

Assess status of our offices
Communicate office re-openings and closings
Ascertain status of staff and availability for return to work
Assign temporary offices as needed
Secure temporary office space and computers if necessary
Restore computers, internet and data—expand remote connections if necessary
Assess cash flow, need for additional funds to sustain operations

Each staff member re-assess ticklers and needs for continuance
(If not available for some reason, manager or other employee to assess)
Determine office access to client files
Secure client files as needed for staff use and to protect confidentiality
Ship client files as necessary to re-located staff
Determine need for file reconstruction

Switching of phones

Change of addresses with post office, state bar associations and funders

Communications to public

Disaster law experts will be assigned

General training on disaster-related law for all staff

Annual staff training—refresher just before hurricane season

Disaster law brochures and training manuals need to be reviewed and updated

(Recommended package of brochures for all outreach work)

Develop simple “disaster cards” similar to UNITY model for distribution to disaster victims

Various recovery duties will be assigned

Client education—post materials to web pages, use media wherever possible

Staff to coordinate with Disaster Recovery Centers and LSBA Hotline

Other outreach strategies will include:

1. Meet with local disaster recovery consortiums
2. List contact information with media
3. Appear on radio and TV
4. Systemic analysis of high priority Disaster Recovery shelters or centers to staff outreach through staff and volunteers—and strive for consistent schedule
5. Update contact information with ViaLink and United Way if office displacement is prolonged
6. Identify partnerships with other agencies and implement outreach as appropriate
7. Hand out flyers highlighting our disaster law services (models will be available on probono.net/la and in your Disaster Law Manual)

Disaster Law materials for staff will be posted on web pages

Disaster Law listserv available for staff discussions

(Ongoing project---Materials, forms for regular work should be contributed to our probono.net/la web page so that they are available remotely to displaced staff)

Methods to re-establish contact with clients in prolonged displacement will include:

1. Calls to cell phone numbers (be sure to collect on ongoing basis)
2. Letters to last known address
3. Always ask caller if a client of our office, update contact information in TIME and refer contact information to case handler

During our ongoing intake process, you should always ask for client’s cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses. This information can be helpful in re-establishing contact with clients after a disaster.

My Passwords

(Keep your passwords confidential)

Voice mail _____

Office web mail: _____

Home web mail: address _____

password _____

Probono.net/la username: your office email address

password _____

How to access your email when not in the office

1. Open up Netscape or Internet Explorer. Go to web page webmail.i-55.com. Do *not* enter "www." before the address.
2. Enter username and password.
3. Click on "login" or just hit enter.

Notes: Anyone who doesn't remember their password, let me know. I have a complete list.

Remember, anyone with the address @nolac.org you must type nolac after your username_

Example : kemaddennolac

How to access your voice mail when not in the office

Southshore

1. Call the office.
2. When you hear the greeting, enter * * (bottom left key twice) on your phone.
3. You will be prompted to enter you mailbox number and password. Enter your extension number and password together and then # (bottom right key on dialpad).

Messages will play.

Northshore

1. Call your office.
2. When greeting begins, press *7
3. Enter extension then #
4. Enter password then #

Important Web Sites for Disaster Recovery

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services web sites

www.slls.org –disaster related news posted

www.nolac.org –alternative site for posting disaster related news if goes down

slls.org site

Advocacy Resources

www.probono.net/la –pleadings, briefs, staff rosters, program policies. Also check for disaster related materials. If evacuation extended, change your e-mail address on roster. **Note:** every SLLS attorney and paralegal should be registered with [probono.net/la](http://www.probono.net/la) civil section.

www.lawhelp.org/la –client information on disaster law. Check disaster folder. Also contains court information.

www.katrinalegalaid.org and www.femaanswers.org – disaster related advocacy materials

www.abanet.org –American Bar Association usually posts disaster related materials

www.lsba.org –State Bar Association should post Disaster Law Manual and important court orders relative to disaster. Attorneys should change their contact information for extended displacements.

www.fema.gov –FEMA’s website

Other Legal Services Programs

www.lsc.gov –contact information for LSC programs in every state

How to Use Probono.net/la

1. How to register

Go to home page of www.probono.net/la

Click on Civil Law and then “Join this Area”

Follow instructions for joining

2. How to update your address

Go to Roster, click on My Profile, and then on Edit My Profile

Type in new address and email and save

Note: you can check Roster in Civil Law section to find contact information for

other members

3. How to join Louisiana disaster listserve

Go to Civil Law

Go to Groups

Click on "subscribe" under LA Disaster

4. How to submit resources, news announcements, pleadings, etc.

Go to Civil Law section

Click on Library

Click on "Add resource" in upper right hand corner

Follow instructions to upload document

5. How to find documents

Scroll through relevant folders, or

Type key words in "Advanced Search"

Disaster Evacuation Audio Conferencing

(This is confidential firm information. Only a guest code may be given to those outside the firm and then only for firm business)

If we need to audio conference more than 3 persons during a disaster evacuation, you may use the New Orleans-2 account:

Conference No. 800-973-7370
Host Pin
Guest Pin

The person calling the meeting, should first dial 1 and the conference number. When prompted, enter the host pin.

Guests join the conference call, by dialing 1 and the conference number and

entering the guest code when prompted.

If you need help, call our vendor at 800-760-7274

At the end of the conference, everyone should make sure that the phone call has been disconnected. Report the call and funding code, if any, to our Administrator.

Other Legal Services Offices in Gulf South

These legal services and bar association offices may be willing to allow our staff to work temporarily out of their offices during a displacement caused by a disaster:

Louisiana

Baton Rouge

Capital Area Legal Services
200 Third St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
800-256-1900
225-387-5173

Other offices: Donaldsonville, Gonzales, Houma

Baton Rouge Bar Association
544 Main St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
225-344-4803

Louisiana State Bar Association
Disaster Legal Hotline
800-310-7029

Lafayette

Acadiana Legal Services
1020 Surrey St.
Lafayette, LA 70502-4823
800-256-1175
337-237-8839

Other offices: Lake Charles, Alexandria

Shreveport

Legal Services of North Louisiana
720 Travis St.
Shreveport, LA 71101
800-826-9265

318-222-7186

Other offices: Monroe, Natchitoches

Texas

Austin

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
4920 N. IH-35
Austin, TX 78751
800-369-9270
512-374-2700
www.trla.org

Dallas

Legal Aid of Northwest Texas
1515 Main St.
Dallas, TX 75201
214-748-1234
www.lanwt.org

Houston

Lone Star Legal Aid
1415 Fannin St.
Houston, TX 77002
800-733-8394
713-652-0077
www.lonestarlegalaid.org

San Antonio

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
1111 N. Main Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78212
800-369-0356
210-212-3700

Mississippi

North Mississippi Rural Legal Services
2134 West Jackson Ave.

Oxford, MS 38655-0767
800-898-8731

Mississippi Center for Legal Services
111 East Front St.
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1728
601-545-2950

Alabama

Legal Services of Alabama
207 Montgomery St.
Suite 1200, Bell Building
Montgomery, AL 36104-3534
334-832-4570
www.alabamalegalservices.org

Florida

Legal Services of Northern Florida
2119 Delta Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303-4209
850-385-9007
www.lsnf.org