

PUCPR BEFORE THE HURRICANE





HURRICANE MARIA:

LESSONS FOR OUR DISASTER POLICIES

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LESSON ONE: There is nothing that prepares you for a disaster of the magnitude of a category 5 hurricane. This will almost certainly also be true for earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and wildfires causing widespread and major damage

My apartment and the view during the hurricane from my front porch.



THE NEW NORMAL: Lines up to 7 hours for everything



PUERTO RICO ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2017 (24 hours after the hurricane)



100 % of the island with no electricity
No hospitals fully functional: some with generators offering emergency service

100% of Puerto Rico with no water

100% of Puerto Rico with no communication
(Internet, telephone, cell phone)

70-80% of trees and other vegetation destroyed

100% of banks, stores and businesses closed

All airports closed



PUERTO RICO ON OCTOBER 13, 2017

17% of electric service is restored

64% of water and sewage service restored

62% of banks open

396 of 456 groceries and supermarkets open

43 of 72 hospitals have electricity from the Energy Authority of Puerto Rico

100% of commercial flights restored.

14 of 18 Casinos open

These were houses



Hurricane Maria



twisted metal and
broke concrete

LESSON TWO: YOU REALLY, REALLY NEED A DISASTER POLICY

I admit to only having a couple of paragraphs which say that the federal depository collection will follow the disaster policy of the university. My library disaster policy states that the library will follow the disaster policy of the university. The university disaster policy says nothing about the library.

We only have minor damage from water in the carpet and some mold in a few areas, but it could have been worse. One classroom building for the music department was destroyed.

LESSON THREE: YOU MAY NOT HAVE AN AVAILABLE DEPOSITORY LIBRARY TO TAKE OVER THE FUNCTION OF PROVIDING GOVERNMENT INFORMATION IN YOUR AREA

As I write this, there is no open depository library in Puerto Rico or the US Virgin Islands. Our library personnel (PUCPR) are reporting tomorrow from 8:00am to 12 Noon. (October 12, 2017). This is three weeks after the hurricane. I only have contact with one friend who works at the University of Puerto Rico Library in San Juan but not with the depository. There is almost no communication with the US Virgin Islands. There is also only intermittent electronic communication of any kind.

One depository of the University of Puerto Rico has reported in. The University of Puerto Rico remains closed and the depository apparently has problems with asbestos. The University of Puerto Rico was also hit by Hurricane Irma shortly before Hurricane Maria.

My university, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico has administrative personnel and administrative faculty (which includes the librarians) reporting from 8:00am to 4:00pm from October 16- 20, 2017. There is no functional air conditioning (the storm damaged the motors that run the “chiller” units. There is no Internet because of damaged cables and water damage to most of the wifi boxes. The Internet is also an island-wide problem due to damage to fiber-optic cables and satellite antennas.



LESSON FOUR: YOU NEED TO DEFINE WHAT POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES CAN OCCUR IN YOUR AREA AND INCLUDE EACH ONE SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR DISASTER POLICY

Some of these possible emergencies are:

Fire in your building

Wildfire

Flood

Tornado

Shooting or other violent incident

Bomb

Biological Threat

Earthquake

Volcano

Hurricane

You need to define your policy for dealing with each of these and at what level each may occur. There is a big difference between a Category 1 Hurricane and a Category 5 Hurricane.

LESSON FIVE: MAKE SURE , IF POSSIBLE, THAT YOUR LIBRARY AND YOUR UNIVERSITY HAVE DISASTER POLICIES THAT INCLUDE THE DEPOSITORY COLLECTION AS PART OF THE OVERALL DISASTER POLICY.

Please do your disaster policy now and please consult with GPO about the policy before it is too late.

LESSON SIX: LOCATE,
DOWNLOAD AND PRINT
CONTACT INFORMATION
FOR FEMA AND LOCAL
AGENCIES BEFORE A
DISASTER OCCURS AND
FILE IT. (I wish I had done
this. I thought about it
and in the chaos of
preparing for the storm
did not get it done.)





GRACIAS/THANK YOU

Puerto Rico se levanta

Statistics taken from WAPA Radio, El Vocero, La Primera hora, and El Nuevo Día
Photographs taken by Dallas E. Alston and Jane Canfield