

Expedite Post-Disaster Access Through Credentialing

At the February 17, 2015, Miami-Dade County Public-Private Sector Partnership meeting, the topic of credentialing arose. (It was also a topic of discussion at the 2013 Alliance for Response Miami kick-off forum.) How do cultural stewards gain access to their institutions following a disaster, given the critical need to stabilize the environment and assess damage to collections? Steve Detwiler, Whole Community Recovery Planner of the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management and AFR Miami's co-chair, shared information on credentialing essential employees. Use the following tips and guidance to kick-start a discussion with your local and state emergency managers.

Employers are encouraged to:

- Issue employees a photo ID (preferably a company ID).
- Issue a letter (on letterhead) to their essential employees. The letter should:
 - Include the date the letter was issued and when it expires. (These letters should be re-issued on a regular basis, e.g., annually, biannually.)
 - Describe the essential employee's position and duties during and following a disaster.
 - Include the signature of the institution's executive director, president, or chief operating officer.
 - Include a 24-hour phone number so law enforcement officers can confirm the information.
- Provide a letter to their vendors stating the need for them to enter the area for deliveries or services. For example, such a letter should go to your disaster recovery vendors (yes, plural) to help them gain access to your damaged collections for pack-out and environmental stabilization. (This is another reason to establish a relationship with disaster recovery vendors *before* disaster strikes.)

If employees are stopped by local law enforcement, remind them to:

- Be courteous and truthful to the police officer at all times.
 - Have all necessary documentation:
 - Driver's license
 - Proof of registration
 - Insurance card
 - Company ID and essential employee letter

If the police officer refuses to let an employee pass, the employee:

- Should not argue with the officer.
- Should follow the officer's directions and contact his or her employer.

The State of Florida's guidance on credentialing and the essential employee letter can be found at: http://www.floridadisaster.org/PublicPrivateSector/reentry_information.html