Emma Dadson. *Emergency Planning and Response for Libraries, Archives and Museums.*

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Disaster and emergency planning for libraries and heritage institutions can be a daunting task, especially for individuals not already familiar with creating these plans. As someone who has recently been tasked with updating an existing disaster plan—or emergency plan, as Dadson prefers to call it—I approached *Emergency Planning and Response for Libraries, Archives and Museums* as both a reviewer and an interested reader. Despite coming in at only 230 pages, this book is a fully comprehensive guide to both creating and using a disaster plan. A quick glance at the table of contents told me everything I needed to know about the organization and extent of the information provided in this book. There are eleven chapters, each of which covers a main section of emergency planning. Each chapter is further divided into around five to seven subsections for easy navigation of the information presented.

Dadson, who has an extensive and distinguished career in emergency recovery and response, starts at the very beginning, spending most of her introduction convincing the reader of the importance of having an emergency plan in place. At first I questioned the need for such an extensive argument, figuring most who pick up the book are already convinced of the need for emergency planning; however, after reading through the rest of the book, it is entirely possible for readers to be so overwhelmed by the information presented that they might question the time and effort it takes to produce an effective emergency plan. In a way, the introduction acts as a reminder of why the time and effort is worth it in the end.

One of the most useful sections of the introduction was a small bit on why existing plans fail. Dadson states several main reasons a plan may fail to execute as desired, and helpfully includes the chapters where information on remedying those failures can be found. By presenting this information at the beginning, the reader can keep these ideas in mind throughout the process of emergency planning, leading (one would hope) to a more efficient end product.

Chapter 2, which focuses on case studies, serves to reinforce the arguments for emergency planning presented in the introduction. After skimming the table of contents, this chapter on case studies was the one I was looking forward to the most. After all, it is one thing to have a disaster plan in place; it is another thing entirely to see how those plans are actually used, and analyzed, in real-life/real-time situations. In this chapter, Dadson, playing the role of compiler, provides a collection of case studies that illustrate a variety of disaster types in a wide range of cultural institutions, both large and small. Probably most useful is the section that indicates the key lessons learned in each situation, which serves to reinforce typical plan weaknesses.

The next eight chapters are devoted to the various parts of a disaster plan, including roles and responsibilities, collections salvage, and ensuring a plan’s efficacy. The information presented in these chapters is so dense that simply trying to read a chapter the whole way through was practically panic inducing. Coupled with the uncomfortable thoughts of disaster that usually accompany emergency planning, this barrage of information is enough to overwhelm just about anyone. However, this book is clearly not intended for a straight read-through. Both the breakdown of the table of contents and chapter references sprinkled throughout the text make it apparent this book should be used in the style of a reference book—skip- ping around to the information needed at a given time and focusing solely on that section. This approach is obviously quite useful for one who is not starting a plan from scratch but is instead revising a plan that is already in place. Dadson provides a wealth of information that can be held against an existing plan to see where im- provements and additions are needed. That does not mean that the information is not also quite helpful for beginners. Rather, the deliberate breakdown of informa- tion encourages the reader to take the planning process one step at a time, which, after the highly convincing introduction, is an excellent way to slow readers down and force them to think through each individual section of an emergency plan.

Dadson ends with a conclusion that once again reiterates important points that she has made repeatedly throughout the book, such as having a clear, easily navigable plan that is flexible, scalable, and unique to an institution’s needs. With its wealth of information, based on real-life situations and experiences, Dadson has created a somewhat dense but easily navigable guide to emergency planning that is useful to seasoned professionals and newbies alike.—Ashley Jones, *Preservation Librarian, Miami University Libraries*

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