

Museum Emergency Support Teams

What is a MEST?

MESTs are groups of museum staff members organized by region in order to be most effective for local disaster planning and response.

Who are the MEST Members?

MESTs are made up of staff members from museums, libraries and archives within a defined region. Directors, curators, facilities managers, and security staff have all been a part of active MESTs.

When do MESTs React?

In a localized emergency involving one or several museums in the immediate area, the local MEST members have the best knowledge of what the museum(s) have and needs, and what is available in the local area.

What do they do?

- Learn local emergency procedures; involve emergency management officials from local level
- Assist each other with disaster plan preparation if needed
- Determine local resources for disaster planning and recovery; coordinate usage of those resources to benefit all local sites
- Find speakers or instructors to come and offer training opportunities related to disaster planning
- Set up communication between all local sites, for both ongoing and emergency support
- Visit local sites at each meeting so all members are familiar with a museum's layout in case their help is needed in an emergency