Creating Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans

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For copies of the slides presented during today’s session, please visit: http://agil.me/sbaevacshelter
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3. Before You Start
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Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans

What to Plan For
What to Plan For

EVACUATION ROUTE

STORM SHELTER
Once a threat is identified, orders to evacuate or shelter-in-place are issued to protect life safety. These actions can be due to any unforeseen situation, natural or manmade, that threatens employees, customers or the general public.

Plans should help determine:

- Conditions that would require either EVAC or SHELTER
- A clear chain of command for those authorized to issue EVAC or SHELTER orders
- Specific EVAC or SHELTER procedures including routes & exits
- Procedures for assisting visitors & general public, including those with disabilities or non-English speaking persons
- A means for accounting for all personnel & guests after an EVAC or SHELTER order is given
What to Plan For

Threats to consider:

- Building Fire
- Severe Weather Event: Tornado, Earthquake, Flood, Hurricane
- Toxic gas, chemical spill or radiological accident
- Natural gas leak or other utility accident
- Civil Disturbances
- Workplace Violence (Active Shooter/Assailant)
- Unique threats caused by building or environment nearby

Be sure to follow all threats identified in your Risk Assessment
www.PrepareMyBusiness.org
What the Plans Should Include

Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans
Starting the Process

Who to include:

- Organization Leadership
- Departmental Management
- Facilities Management or Landlord
- Human Resources
- IT and Communications personnel

Leadership: Person or persons...

- ...familiar with overall Crisis Management Plan
- ...with ability to assess situation, coordinate response and communicate the specific threat
- ...with authority to make decisions regarding operations
At a minimum, plan should include:

- Commonly accepted method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- Evacuation policy and procedure
- Shelter-in-place policy and procedure
- Emergency route assignments, maps and signage
- Names, titles, departments & contact information for EVAC & SHELTER Manager, as well as floor or department wardens
- Procedures for safely shutting down operations and systems during evacuation
- Plans for accommodating those with special needs: sight or hearing impaired, mentally or physically handicapped, children, elderly, non English-speaking
- Plans for any medical or rescue training
Provisions for Notifying Building Occupants (Alarms)

- Alarms must be distinctive and recognized by all those within your place of operations
- Alarm should automatically notify first responders if possible
- Alarm system should have auxiliary power supply as backup to power loss
- Alarm should be unique to the threat to indicate the action to be taken, in this case either EVACUATION or SHELTER-IN-PLACE
- Notification System should include means to notify those with sensory impairment and non-English speaking persons
Before You Start

Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans
First Steps

- Commit to training and regular drills of the plan
First Steps

- Incorporate training into new employee onboarding process & include in Employee Handbooks
First Steps

• Hold initial educational sessions to make employees aware of most likely threats (they are often the first line of defense)
First Steps

- Assess the location & condition of existing signage & emergency equipment
First Steps

• Consider First Aid & CPR Training for all employees
Evacuation Planning

Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans
Plan Logistics

- Clear, concise explanation of situations that would require an evacuation
- Plan should identify a clear chain of command to authorize & issue an evacuation command
  - Can also identify those charged with assisting others, i.e. “evacuation wardens”
- Specified evacuation procedures for each defined area within the office, floor, building & complex, including primary & secondary routes and exits
- Detailed, accurate maps and diagrams posted along routes
  - Including at least 2 escape routes from each room
  - Indicate location of any special equipment like fire extinguishers and first aid kits
Plan Logistics

• An exterior Assembly Area should be identified (at least 100 yards away)

• Suitable arrangements must be made for those with disabilities

• A means of accounting for all employees and known visitors
  • Evacuation Wardens should have access to employee lists and any known absences or traveling staff

• Designation of what, if any, employees will remain after the evacuation alarm to shut down critical operations or utilities before evacuating
  • NOTE: Employees must be trained to recognize when to abandon the operation and evacuate themselves
Determining Routes

- Clearly marked and well lit
- Wide enough to accommodate traffic
- Unobstructed and clear of debris at all times
- Unlikely to pose additional threats or hazards (avoid hazardous materials storage locations)
- Able to accommodate those with disabilities
- NOTE: locate fire extinguishers, first aid kits, defibrillators, etc. along route
Important Reminders

• Be sure to account for guests and supplier deliveries

• Evacuation can be due to incidents OTHER than building fires, including hazardous material leaks, nearby emergencies, structural issues, etc.

• Include provisions for further evacuation in the event incident expands

• Consult or collaborate with area emergency management entities

Evacuation Planning
Shelter-In-Place Planning

Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans
Plan Logistics

- Consider scenarios appropriate for taking Shelter:
  - Severe Weather Event: Tornado, Earthquake, Flood, Hurricane
  - Toxic gas, chemical spill or radiological accident
  - Natural gas leak or other utility accident
  - Civil Disturbances
  - Workplace Violence
- Ensure Shelter location is stocked with supplies:
  - Food, water
  - Battery powered radio
  - First aid supplies
  - Flashlights
Shelter Location

Ensure chosen shelter location satisfies the following:

- Interior room, with fewest windows & vents
  - Note: for tornado or explosion risk, below ground location preferred
  - Note: for toxic chemical threat, above ground floor location preferred
- Room for all personnel & guests to sit
  (10 sq.ft. per person recommended)
- Avoid mechanical equipment rooms
- Has access to some kind of communications device (landline preferred)
  - Remember: Cellphones may not work
- Room for storage of emergency equipment & supplies
Plan Elements

- Closing & Securing office, building or business site
- Request that all persons present REMAIN, to ensure their safety
  - Shelter-in-Place orders are to be followed immediately
- If safe to do so...
  - Notify emergency contacts of location & plan
  - Forward inbound phone calls
  - Close & lock all exterior windows & doors
  - Shut down HVAC Systems
- If a Chemical or Toxic substance leak, seal all doors, windows & ventilation
Important Considerations

- Critical Operations that require specific shut down procedures (manufacturing)
- Building Security (think schools)
- Asset Security (think banks or retail operations)
- Situational Awareness
Testing the Plans

Evacuation & Shelter-In-Place Plans
Evac & Shelter-in-Place Drill Best Practices

• Conduct drills at least twice annually
• Coordinate with fellow tenants and building management
• Ensure drill scenarios are as realistic as possible
  • Activate actual alarms (for familiarity and testing purposes)
  • Be sure that any automatic alarms that notify 1st responders are accounted for
• Use multiple different scenarios over time
• Introduce unexpected wrinkles, like blocking primary exits or shelter locations
• Carefully monitor quantifiable elements that affect the plan’s effectiveness
Evac & Shelter-in-Place Drill Best Practices

- Notify neighboring organizations or general public ahead of time
- Coordinate with HR to ensure new hires are trained to expected procedures
- Take into account drill timing with scheduled events, deliveries, guests, etc.
- For larger organizations and multi-building campus environments, consider collaborating with local Emergency Management officials
- Conduct “After Action” discussions or debriefs afterwards to identify areas for improvement

Testing the Plans
“Planned Drills” vs. “Unplanned”

- All drills should be planned by the Crisis Management Team
- HOWEVER, drills should be conducted both WITH NOTICE and WITHOUT to simulate unusual conditions that can occur during an actual emergency
  - **Announced Drills** should be structured learning exercises during which employees walk through actions they are trained and expected to take when alarm sounds. Also allows business to plan for downtime.
  - **Unannounced Drills** will always provide the most accurate indication of what will occur during actual crisis conditions
Questions?

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