

Tips for adequate Emergency Management

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Tips for adequate Measures to augment adequate emergency management to prevent or mitigate disasters

Overview

Emergency management is the important discipline of avoiding and dealing with both natural and man-made disasters. It involves preparedness, response and recovery plans made in order to lessen the impact of disasters.

We at Liberty Videocon General Insurance value the importance of having proper and adequate emergency management for preventing or mitigating disaster situations; and intend to suggest some useful measures to augment the same. We sincerely hope that the measures suggested in this document will help follow better practices when it comes to emergency management.



Source: <http://d1dfn78x11yngl.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/1852397.jpg>

Objective

An emergency plan specifies procedures for handling sudden unexpected situations. The objective is to reduce the possible consequences of the emergency by:

- Preventing fatalities and injuries
- Reducing damage to buildings, stock, and equipment
- Accelerating the resumption of normal operations

Hazards / Circumstances

Areas where flammables, explosives, or chemicals are used or stored should be considered as the most likely place for a technological hazard emergency to occur. Following hazards need to be considered while preparing Emergency Response Procedure:

- Fire
- Explosion
- Building collapse
- Major structural failure
- Spills of flammable liquids
- Leakage of toxic substances, hazardous biological agents
- Floods
- Earthquakes

Emergency Procedure

After the assessment of each circumstance that could lead to an emergency, the Emergency Response Procedure should focus on:

- Sound the alarm and declare emergency
- Evacuate danger zone
- Close main shutoffs
- Call for external aid
- Initiate rescue operations
- Salvage and recovery activities

Elements of the Emergency Plan

The emergency plan should include:

- All possible emergencies, consequences, required actions, written procedures, and the resources available
- Detailed lists of personnel including their home telephone numbers, their duties and responsibilities
- Floor plans
- Large scale maps showing evacuation routes and service conduits (such as gas and water lines)

The plan should provide staff members with written instructions about their particular emergency duties.

Training

Educate employees about the types of emergencies that may occur and train them in the proper course of action.

General training for employees should address the following:

- Individual roles and responsibilities
- Threats, hazards and protective actions
- Notification, warning and communication procedures
- Means for locating family members in an emergency;
- Emergency response procedures

- Evacuation, shelter and accountability procedures
- Location and use of common emergency equipment
- Emergency shutdown procedures

Review the following items annually:

- History of incident response and mock drill record
- Changes in exposures
- Change in personnel and training requirement

Safety Tips for augmenting proper emergency management to adequately deal with disasters:

- Identify evacuation routes and alternate means of escape, and make these known to all staff; keep the routes unobstructed.
- Specify safe locations for staff to gather for head counts to ensure that everyone has left the danger zone. Assign individuals to assist handicapped employees in emergencies.
- Carry out treatment of the injured and search for the missing, simultaneously



- with efforts to contain the emergency.
- Provide alternate sources of medical aid when normal facilities may be in the danger zone.
- Begin containing the extent of the property loss only when the safety of all staff and neighbours at risk has been clearly established.
- Use only one type of signal for the evacuation order to avoid confusion.
- Provide all personnel with alerting or reporting responsibilities with a



current list of telephone numbers and addresses of those people they may have to contact.

- Develop procedures for assisting people with disabilities or who do not speak English / Hindi.
- Provide employees with personal protective equipment that they may need to evacuate during an emergency. Personal protective equipment must be based on the potential hazards in the workplace.



Case Study

Early morning fire kills 93 in Kolkata hospital

At least 93 people - most of them patients - died in the huge fire that broke out in the early morning hours in AMRI hospital in Kolkata. The fire began in the basement where a pharmacy and the godown were located. The area was stacked with highly combustible material such as PVC pipes, mattresses, oxygen and LPG cylinders, and even mobil (engine oil). When the fire sparked off, dense smoke started billowing out of the basement and entered the upper floors catching many patients unaware in their sleep.

What Went Wrong

- The fire broke out at around 2:00 am. The hospital staff started firefighting operations on their own without initiating a fire alarm or informing the fire brigade. This resulted in loss of initial crucial time.
- The fire alarm system for the building was found switched off to avoid false alarms. This resulted in no fire alarm alert and the centralised AC system too did not trip automatically.
- Emergency lighting too did not work, nor was adequately available, resulting in total darkness inside the building hampering rescue and firefighting operations.

Key Learning

- Disaster management plan to be prepared and implemented at site providing clear-cut guidelines to staff and requisite actions in various emergency scenarios.
- Reliable source of emergency power to be installed in the building at par with the codes and practices.
- All emergency staircases and lifts should open in enclosed lobby. At least one emergency staircase should open directly outside the building at the ground floor for safe evacuation and rescue.

Trivia

1. 2012 marked the third consecutive year of worldwide natural disaster damage exceeding \$100 billion. 2011 reached a record high of \$371 billion.
2. Between 2000 and 2012, natural disasters caused \$1.7 trillion in damage and affected 2.9 billion people.