Emergency Preparedness Program

The speed of an entity's response to a crisis will determine the outcome for the organization. This outcome can be positive or negative. An active crisis management program allows you to provide organizational coordination, clear instruction on what is expected of management and line personnel, continual assessment of crisis while in process, and continuity of the entity's operations.

1. **Develop the crisis team**: A team should be formed to develop the plan. The goal of the team is to reduce the vulnerability of the entity and its responsibility posed by the crisis. The team should establish authority, ensure the plan does not violate federal, state, and local laws, and establish a schedule and budget to carry out the plan.

2. **Analyze capabilities and hazards**: The team's next goal is to determine what the entity has in place and to conduct a vulnerability analysis.

   A. *Where Do You Stand Right Now?*

   - Review Internal Plans and Policies: Ensure that they are updated and include changes in operations, personnel, facilities and exposures.

   - Meet with Outside Groups: such as fire, police, local industries, EPA, DEP, Red Cross, local humanitarian groups, utilities, railroad, tank farm, and any other operation that could present a hazard to the organization's operation; or provide guidance in event of the need to implement the plan.

   - Identify Codes and Regulations: By what standards are the entities with exposures governed. What are the minimal standards the organization's plan has to meet?

   - Identify Critical Products, Services and Operations: Which operations are necessary to ensure the success of the plan
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   - Identify Internal Resources and Capabilities: What does the organization have in place to meet the needs of the plan.

   - Identify External Resources: What external resources are available to help the organization's plan be successful.

   - Do an Insurance Review: Are facilities, equipment and business interruption coverages in place? Are the limits adequate?

   B. *Conduct a Vulnerability analysis*

   - List Potential Emergencies: tornados, hurricanes, industrial, terrorist, fire, etc.

   - Estimate Probability: What is the likelihood that this will occur? A low percentage does not reduce the need for the plan. The highest likelihood should be developed first.

- Assess the Potential Human Impact: Where are displaced people going to go – shelter, food, water and clothing needs should be incorporated.

- Assess the Potential Property Impact: Where will entity services be housed?

- Assess the Potential Business Impact: How will the entity continue to operate?

- Assess Internal and External Resources: What does the entity have in place to reduce the business and human impact? What is needed?

- Prioritize Vulnerabilities: Prioritize the type of exposures.

3. **Develop the plan**: The plan should be a written document that contains all the plan components. The components should include all measures taken to prevent, prepare for, respond to, mitigate and recover from a crisis.

   A. *Prevention.* The goal is to reduce the chances of a crisis from happening, or reduce the effects of a crisis.

      - Administrative: Identify conditions/signs that could lead to crisis, and develop policies and procedures to intervene: violence, natural and manmade disasters, terrorism, fires, etc.

      - Facility/equipment: Assess exposure and develop protections.

      - Human factor: Life safety code planning, security, emotional needs of employees and citizens (before and after crisis).

   B. *Prepare.* Measures action taken to identify and assess the severity of a crisis.

      a. *Policy statement:* Should address the type of crisis, participant responsibilities, who is accountable for ensuring compliance, and who is responsible for coordinating plan activities.

      b. *Direction and control:* The following criteria should be in place to give clear direction to those involved to ensure that the entity has a quick and competent response in the event of a crisis.

         - Planning considerations/types of emergencies
         - Security
         - Coordination of Outside Response
         - Emergency Management Elements
         - Emergency Response Procedures
         - Support Documents
         - Identify Challenges and Prioritize Activities
         - Establish a Training Schedule
         - Continue to Coordinate with Outside Organizations
         - Maintain Contact with other Participants
         - Review, Conduct Training and Revise
         - Seek Final Approval
         - Distribute the Plan

c. *Implement the plan.* In order for the plan to be successful it needs to be integrated into the overall organization's operations.

- Training should be conducted, as this is the most important aspect of the plan. The more training the better the response.
- Evaluate and modify the plan, which should be conducted after practicing the plan and the annual review.
- Ensure that changes in the organization are reflected in the plan.

C. *Respond.* This is where all aspects of the plan are put into action. The response to the crisis will determine how extensive property damage may become and how many lives may be lost.

a. *Communications plan:* The plan should include emergency communications, community communications, and notification of news media (one organization employee should be in charge of each area). This should be strictly controlled.

b. *Life Safety Planning:* The plan should include planning for public evacuations from buildings, impact zone, potential impact zone, and so on. It should also include evacuation routes, assembly areas, accountability, shelters, community preparedness, and routine training.

c. *Property Protection:* Planning considerations should be given to the following areas:

- Protection Systems: What protection systems are in place? Are they adequate? Working? Maintained?

- Mitigation efforts: Controlling the extent of the damage.

- Facility shutdown criteria: What are they? Who decides?

- Records Preservation: Are backup files maintained? Backups should be kept in a safe, dry, and structurally sound place separate from the originals.

d. *Community Outreach:* It is important to involve the community in planning for the event. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Mutual Aid Agreements: police, fire, medical, etc.

- Community Service: What services are in play? Who coordinates volunteers?

- Public Information: What will be provided? Who will provide it?

- Media Relations contacts established: Who is the organization's liaison? Do all organization employees know to refer media to them?

D. *Mitigation.* Measures taken to reduce the effects of the crisis. These measures should be discussed, arranged, and established before the event happens. A plan should be established, and reviewed annually and expanded as needed. The plan should include the following measures:

- Pre-event measured response – most important part of plan

- Protection of non-essential equipment

- Pre-qualify contractors with emergency phone contacts

- Establish financial responsibility with contractor

- Post incident response plan

- Salvage / clean up procedures

- Power lines shut down

- Building assessment for occupancy

- Food and water supply

- Media representative control

E. *Recovery.* Measures taken to return to pre-crisis conditions or normal operations. As with the mitigation plan, these measures should be discussed, arranged, and established before the event happens. The recovery plan should also be reviewed annually and expanded as needed. This aspect of the plan will determine how fast the organization will "get back on its feet". The plan should include the following measures:

- Recovery planning

- Continuity of Management

- Insurance contact list

- Employee Support

- Resuming Operations

- Human factor. Emotional needs of those that went through crisis. Aspects of getting back to normal operations.

For further information on dealing with these emergencies visit: www.ready.gov