



DSPN

Disaster
Survival
Planning
Network

Continuity IQ

Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients September 2007

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we provide information about mitigation. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Mitigation

Did you know...

- According to Webster's Dictionary, "mitigation" is the abatement or diminution of anything painful, harsh, severe, afflictive, or calamitous; as, the mitigation of pain, grief, rigor, severity, punishment, or penalty. Syn. -- Alleviation; abatement; relief. Business continuity experts recommend two strategies to prepare for events that have not yet occurred--prevention, for those events that can be avoided entirely, and mitigation, for those events that cannot be prevented from occurring.
- One division of FEMA is the [Mitigation Division](#). They manage the National Flood Insurance Program and a range of programs designed to reduce future losses to homes, businesses, schools, public buildings and critical facilities from floods, earthquakes, tornadoes and other natural disasters.
- In the United States the National Flood Insurance Program regulates development in mapped floodplains based on the 100-year flood (1% annual chance of a flood). The Flood Insurance Rate Maps, typically depict both the 100-year floodplain and the 500-year floodplains.
- On July 18, an 83-year old steamline under a New York City street ruptured, leaving a big hole in the ground, causing an evacuation of nearby businesses, and creating serious injury. This event points out our vulnerability to failures in our energy infrastructure. Whether it's steamlines or electrical power lines, these systems are aging, often well beyond their design life. Most of the construction of our electrical transmission system occurred during the rapid expansion of U.S. commerce following World War II. Much of this equipment has a nominal life of 40 years or so.
- "The problem with hurricanes and tornadoes is not the wind," said Rocky Scott, spokesman for Florida's state-run insurance corporation, "it's the debris. A building may be able to withstand a 120 mph wind, but maybe not a 120 mph block or car."
- A common way to mitigate earthquake risk is to secure heavy items that are likely to fall.

- A common way to mitigate terrorist risk is to install barriers that prevent vehicles from getting too close to valuable assets.
- A common way to mitigate biochemical or hazmat risk is to install technology that enables rapid shut-off of HVAC or ventilation systems.
- During the pandemic of 1918, St. Louis layered its interventions, using several social-distancing measures at once. That mitigation tactic caused St. Louis to fare better than 36 other communities as a result. Researchers compare layering tactics to layering Swiss cheese: if the holes are vulnerabilities, with enough layering you'll end up with a solid block of prevention.
- To help mitigate the risk of letter or parcel bombs, employees who handle mail should be aware of these attributes of suspicious mail: foreign mail and/or special delivery, restrictive markings, such as "confidential" or "personal", excessive postage, titles but no names, misspellings of common words, oily stains or discolorations, no return address. The CDC website includes [anthrax information for mail handlers](#).

Brain Teasers

True or False:

1. Most FEMA-funded mitigation grants are focused on mitigation of damage from wind.
2. If you are on the highway when a tornado approaches, a good place to seek shelter is under an overpass.
3. Anthrax is a contagious disease.
4. The safest place to take shelter in a building when a tornado approaches is in the southwest corner.
5. Most state pandemic plans include strategies to close schools to mitigate the spread of disease.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *False.* Most FEMA-funded mitigation grants are focused on mitigation of flooding.
2. *False.* Many people believe this myth because of a news crew that filmed a tornado from this vantage point. In actuality, a highway overpass is an extremely dangerous place to be during a tornado. When directly hit by a tornado, the confined space beneath an overpass acts like a wind tunnel and actually increases the speed of the tornado's winds.
3. *False.* Anthrax is an infection caused by bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*. These bacteria make **spores**, a form of the germ covered by a protective shell. The spores cause anthrax when they enter the body.
4. *False.* While it is true that most tornadoes travel from southwest to northeast, no particular corner of a building is safer than another. A higher priority when selecting a shelter is to find a place that minimizes the possibility of flying glass and other debris.
5. *True.* Closing schools has been recommended to the states by the Center for Disease Control. This move will likely cause many working parents to be absent more frequently from work.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Do your employees practice shelter-in-place drills in addition to evacuation drills?
2. Does your business continuity program include prevention strategies and prevention tactics?
3. Does your pandemic strategy anticipate school closings?
4. Do the people who handle mail in your organization know how to detect suspicious mail?
5. Do your pandemic plans include voluntary home quarantines?

New from DSPN

Check these out on our website:

- DSPN consultants are available to help you [audit your current plans](#) against emerging industry standards, such as NFPA 1600.
- We're bringing our one-day [benchmarking workshop](#) to Chicago on October 24, and Dallas on November 7.
- [Pandemic Experience for Executives](#) is a new tabletop exercise from DSPN that is customized for your situation at your site.

Comments and Contributions

Tell us what you think...



Thanks to all of you have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share with our readers? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

[Paul Klier](#)

Popular Services from DSPN

- [How to Create Drills and Exercises...That Work!](#) is a one-day workshop designed for experienced business continuity coordinators who are looking for best practices in creating tests and exercises.
- **How to Benchmark and Sustain Your Program** is a one-day workshop focusing on emerging standards for building business continuity programs.
- If you are attending DRJ Fall World in San Diego, September 16-19, we'd like to invite you to our private reception on Tuesday, September 18 at 5 pm. It will be our opportunity to offer you some free refreshments and shake your hand. If you can attend, drop by our booth during trade show hours (booth 11) to pick up your invitation.

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