



DSPN

Disaster
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Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients November 2008

Here are some tips and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we provide information about life safety. 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 Life Safety

Did you know...

- Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services are typically unable to meet the sudden overwhelming demand for their services. In this situation, the number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will likely prevent them from providing the emergency services you have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. To survive, your employees may need to rely on each other for life saving and life sustaining assistance.
- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is a national program that can help your employees prepare for this contingency. The CERT Program provides training about basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. In the public sector, this training is usually delivered in 2.5 hour sessions by emergency response professionals, one evening a week over a 7 week period.
- The primary reason for CERT training is to give an organization the decision-making and practical skills it needs to offer immediate assistance to employees while waiting for help. Certainly most employees will respond to others in need without any special training. But the goal of the CERT program is to help them respond effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.
- The CERT concept was originally developed and implemented as a program by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985. Since 1993 when this training was made available nationally by FEMA, communities in all 50 states and most U.S. possessions have conducted CERT training. Over 1100 communities have listed their training programs on the CERT web site under the [Directory of CERT Programs by State](#).
- In the private sector, many companies elect to purchase life safety training from specialized companies that tailor the CERT curriculum for special needs and schedule the training at more convenient times. Two examples of such companies are [Life Goes On](#) and [Borden/Lee Consulting](#).

- Some employers have devised perks to recognize employees who become trained to deal with people issues during an emergency. Examples: photo ID cards for training graduates, FEMA certificates of completion, hard hats and vests.
- When your employees complete life safety training, it is important to keep them involved and practiced in their skills. One suggestion is to offer periodic refresher sessions to reinforce the basic training. Also, your life safety teams can sponsor events such as drills, picnics, neighborhood clean up, and disaster education fairs which will help them stay involved and keep their training current.
- A good way to provide refresher training for your life safety teams is to stage an event that includes a skills competition for the various teams.

Brain Teasers

True or False

1. A Federal law passed in 1997 protects volunteers from liability for their actions if the volunteers were properly certified and authorized to perform their activities.
2. All members of a CERT team must be able-bodied adults.
3. Employees are generally reluctant to volunteer for life safety training because of liability concerns.
4. CERT is a national program sponsored by FEMA and Citizencorps.
5. Life safety training can be accomplished in a reasonable number of hours.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *True.* [The Volunteer" Protection Act of 1997](#) is also known as the "Good Samaritan Act".
2. *False.* CERT is for employees of any age and physical ability. Following a disaster, CERT members are needed for documentation, comforting others, logistics, etc. Non-disaster related team activities may include keeping databases, developing a website, writing a newsletter, planning activities, helping with special events and organizing exercises and activities.
3. *False.* Most employees welcome life safety training because the skills are useful if a disaster occurs during work hours but also for everyday life events that can happen at home.
4. *True.* As of January 2004, 50 states, three territories and six foreign countries are using CERT training.
5. *True.* Most CERT members receive 17.5 hours of initial training.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Does your emergency response plan recognize that first responders may not be immediately available should a regional disaster occur?
2. Do you have teams in each building who are trained on fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations?
3. Have you identified appropriate training resources for life safety in your program?
4. Do you provide perks to recognize emergency response volunteer efforts?

5. Are you prepared to discuss liability concerns with candidates for your life safety teams, should the question arise?

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

One effective method to help your executives become more aware of their roles during a disaster is to invite them to participate in a tabletop exercise. DSPN can help you design and conduct such an event. These events are engaging and cost effective. Your your executives will enjoy themselves, even though they are being challenged.

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