Houtkin & Associates

ECHNICAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT
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WHITE PAPER

Working with the Facilities Building Manager in Creating the Business Safety Continuity Plan

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Introduction

The Fire Department of New York City has created a new law: FDNY Local Law 26.04 (guidelines: 26.02). This new rule requires that Building Management be prepared to respond to both fire and non-fire emergencies. The Building Management must create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that includes an evacuation process, an assembly point that is as far away from the building as the building is high, the shelter-in-place process and an organization that supports the plan. The Building Management must also perform annual evacuation drills that take tenants from the building to the assembly point and permit the tenants to perform their accountability process. Tenants are required to create an Accountability Process that is responded to at the assembly point as well as be well-versed in the Emergency Action Plan and support it by creating whatever processes are required within the business, itself.

Many companies own and maintain their own buildings. Many companies work in leased buildings. There has always been a clear differentiation between the two scenarios - primarily from that of an insurance/liability and organizational perspective. Staff in a company-owned building rely on Corporate Services, whether Corporate Security, Facilities or the Global Business Continuity Management Team to create and support any safety-related processes. And, if you were a tenant, you assumed that the building had things under control and felt no need to interact with the building manager or their safety staff, if they had one. But with this law, which is being "watched" by other American municipalities, there is more reason for tenants in leased buildings to get to know their building manager, their Fire/Safety Director and their responsibilities to their staff - especially in response to non-fire emergencies, Shelter-in-Place and Staff Accountability.

Another point to consider is the difference between Fire Emergencies and Non-Fire Emergencies. A non-fire emergency is any situation that could impact the building: a terrorist attack; a weather-related issue; a bio-chemical impact as a result of an accident or civil unrest.

This article presents some points in communicating with your Building Manager and for complying with your Local Laws through the creation of internal processes that are in synch with that of the Building Manager and ensure the safety of your staff - and your ability to continue your business after an interruption.

Preparedness

1. Download a copy of the New York Fire Department Local Law 26.04 and review it for guidance.
2. Call your local Fire Department for information about your particular building and any issues it may have experienced in the past. Most importantly, ask whether your building manager is compliant with the new law, if applicable.

Who do you Communicate With?

1. Find the number of your Building Manager and call them.
2. Ask for the name of their Fire/Safety Director if the Building Manager does not fulfill this role.
3. Call the Fire/Safety Director and make an appointment to discuss their plans.

Your First Interview with the Fire/Safety Director

Your first interview with the Fire/Safety Director should just cover the basics:

1. Their fire emergency process. Ask them to explain their fire emergency process and whether they have experienced any issues in the past and how they resolved them.

2. Their non-fire emergency process. If a building manager does not have non-fire emergency laws to comply with, you may need to negotiate the following items. Ask them to tell you what process they support and what their policies are regarding:

    *   Evacuation: Do they have a process for non-fire emergencies? How will they respond to tenants who choose to leave on their own volition?
    *   Assembly Points: Have they defined assembly points for tenants or do they expect tenants to provide their own?
    *   Shelter-In-Place: Do they support Shelter-In-Place? If not, what is their policy for tenants who chose to stay in the building?
        *   Will a skeleton crew still be available to maintain the building?
        *   What services will be pending: generators? Hall lights? Stairwell lights? elevators and elevator services? Will the vents be shut or open? Will air conditioning be kept going?
        *   Are tenants left to their own devices?

    Most importantly:

    *   Ask them if they are compliant with new laws and if not, where they are in the approval process.
        *   If they are compliant, ask for a copy of their plan.
        *   Find out, as well, if they have created an organization to support the non-fire emergency and to introduce you to the team.

3. Ask them if they have a Fire Warden team, process and education program. If so, ask who the Fire Warden is for your floor. If you do not have one, ask them who they inform of the name of your new Fire Warden and how they will integrate them into the education program. If there is a Fire Warden and they work with another tenant on your floor, ask the Building if you can create one for the floor area inhabited by you and your staff.

4. Ask them what they expect of their tenants in case of a non-fire emergency.

5. Ask them for a copy of their plan and a copy of all contact information for the building and for the area if they have it.

6. Ask them if they perform on-site drills for new staff. See if they would not mind coming up to our floor to perform a basic presentation of the building safety processes and where the exits are and how/when to communicate with the Security Team.

7. Ask them how they support physically-challenged staff during any kind of emergency.

8. Do they have a decontamination program?

9. Ask them how they would like tenants to respond to medical emergencies, bomb threats and/or physical crimes within the building? Do they call 911 and then Lobby Security or just Lobby Security/Security Number?

Always remember to follow-up for pending information.

What is Required for Your Business

Once you gather information from the Fire/Safety Director, you need to consider your business process and your staffing situation to determine what safety-related processes you may need to create for your business.

1. Are you regulated? Do you have compliance issues? Do you have to show compliance with safety processes/procedures?
2. Do you have any physically challenged staff that require additional education or support in case of an emergency?
3. Get to know your staff. Who is expecting a child? Who has children? Who is newly married? Who is suffering through illness in the family? This will help you to identify, in advance, how your staff may respond to emergencies.
4. Do you know about the area? Is your area prone to serious weather conditions? Do you and your staff know various ways out of the area? Is your area in a part of the City or Town that is considered to be historical and open to visitors? Is your city a possible soft-target? financial center; center for oil companies, etc.
5. Where are the fire departments, police stations and hospitals in relation to your building? Do staff know how to get there if they needed to?
6. Where are other branches/offices of your company located in relation to your specific office? What are the various ways to travel there? What different routes are there? Can your staff go their in case you are evacuated? Do they have the correct access cards?
7. What are your mission critical business processes and their recovery time objectives? If shelter-in-place were called by the building or if a situation occurred outside that would impact the performance of these mission critical processes, would you have the time to perform them in consideration of evacuation, travel outside or area? Or, would you have to consider shelter-in-place to ensure that your team is safe and that the processes could meet their temporal requirements.

NOTE: It may be very easy to consider delegating this work to someone else in the office but remember that this direction is about safety process for your team and as the Business Manager you are ultimately responsible for your staff's safety and your business' bottom line. Your business' most important asset is your staff. Business process is not performed without someone to drive it.

Create your processes

Once you have a handle on your business requirements and the requirements and needs of your staff, determine the following:

Fire Warden

- If your floor already has a Fire Warden but they work for another tenant on your floor, make a point of meeting with them and introduce yourselves. Because of security issues, you may have to provide an additional Fire Warden as the other tenant may not access to the area in the building where you and your staff work.
- Check the floor Fire Warden notification to see that the contact information is correct. Try dialing the number to ensure accuracy of information.
- Check the location of the fire extinguishers and the date on the tag around the neck. Take note of the date.

Crisis Management Team

If you do not have a Crisis Management Team/Process, create one. The Crisis Management team can be the primary contact point for the building and other City/State agencies. This team makes the following, basic decisions:

1. When to evacuate, if a concern, such as a weather-related incident is evident.
2. Staff Accountability.
3. If/When to invoke the Disaster Recovery plan.

4. If/When to return to normal business process

Communication

1. Create the call tree process (primary/alternate callers and who will be accountable for who) for each Business/Department in your office.
2. Identify who will be accountable for the call tree process and for its administration and maintenance.
3. Consider the purchase of an emergency notification system.
4. Gather the call tree information: Office, Home, Cellular, Emergency Numbers.
5. Create the hard copy call tree and the electronic call tree.
6. Ask staff to share the tree with their families.

Staff Accountability

Determine how you plan to account for staff and how staff will communicate their status and purchase a hotline / emergency number if possible.

- If you prefer now to have have number answered by people, purchase voice mail box/boxes per business and ensure that everyone is educated on how to leave / access messages.
- Determine two primary and two alternates who will own the number, be accountable for required logons and passwords as well as change greetings.
- Create the team who will gather and analyze the accountability information.

Create a phased-in process to ensure that you can communicate with staff during the onset of an incident, after they have travelled home, in the evening to discuss business.

- amount of data that is transported to the client if working remotely
- Consideration of smart-sourcing to handle failover of those manual processes and procedures supporting the failover process
  - Performing the DNS push
  - Isolating the injured site to ensure that
  - If the site is not isolated, Stopping Replication processes in the production site and Stopping (if applicable) database processes in the production site
  - Changing the personality of the alternate data repositories and mapping storage to the appropriate servers
  - Starting database processes at the alternate site
  - If using Citrix, promotion of the alternate site permissioning
  - Promotion of User logon-scripts at the alternate site, if required
  - The support paradigm for both production and the alternate site
  - Inter and intra-disciplinary cross-training

    The Accountability Process.

    - Staff follow directions of Building Management/Director of Fire/Safety regarding Evacuation.
    - Staff evacuate and are directed to the Assembly Point.
    - PHASE I ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff visibly account for staff and identify staff who are not at the Assembly Point by take note on their call trees.
    - Staff attempt texting/emailing the missing staff quickly. Staff wait roughly 3 minutes between calls and only make 2 attempts.
    - Staff follow direction of Building Management/Director of Fire/Safety regarding leaving the Assembly Point.
    - Staff provide their call tree to the Building Manager Fire/Safety Team or to a First Responder in order to direct their search back into the building to look for staff that are known not to be accounted for.
    - Staff leave the area and at a point of safety and connect with their families.

- PHASE 2 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff arrive home and call into the Emergency Hotline to leave their status re: arrival home.
- PHASE 3 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff commence their Departmental Conference Calls via their Conference Bridge to discuss business status and next day continuance of the business process. The Department Manager or Alternate communicate their results re: accountability with their Business Head or Alternate on the Crisis Management Team.
- PHASE 4 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff re-commence their Departmental Conference Call via their Conference Bridge, at the alloted time or through trigger of a notification call/system, to discuss any changes in Accountability that may have occurred through the night and hence any changes to the continuation of the business. The Department Manager or Alternate communicate their results re: accountability with their Business Head or Alternate on the Crisis Management Team.
- PHASE 5 ACCOUNTABILITY: Business Continuity and Human Resource Teams review the input from the Hotline and the Departmental Conference Calls and begin identifying who is still missing. The first list would be sent to Corporate Security within 24 hours of the event and a revised list, 48 hours. Corporate Security will then work with City Agencies to perform Search/Rescue and create death certificates.

There are those who may prefer to leave on their own volition. In this case, the process can look like this:

- Staff evacuation the building on their own volition.
- Staff leave the area and at a point of safety connect with their families.
- PHASE 1 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff responds to any emails or text messages, if possible, from those attempting to account to them.
- PHASE 2 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff arrive home and call into the Emergency Hotline to leave their status re: arrival home.
- PHASE 3 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff commence their Departmental Conference Calls via their Conference Bridge to discuss business status and next day continuance of the business process.
- PHASE 4 ACCOUNTABILITY: Staff re-commence their Departmental Conference Call via their Conference Bridge, at the alloted time or through trigger of a notification call/system, to discuss any changes in Accountability that may have occurred through the night and hence any changes to the continuation of the business.
- PHASE 5 ACCOUNTABILITY: Business Continuity and Human Resource Teams review the input from the Hotline and the Departmental Conference Calls and begin identifying who is still missing. They make an attempt to communicate with those who are missing and their family to determine status.
  - The first list would be sent to Corporate Security within 24 hours of the event and a revised list, 48 hours. Corporate Security will then work with City Agencies to perform Search/Rescue and create death certificates.

Evacuation/Assembly Points

1. If your Building Manager has not defined an evacuation plan, call your local Fire Department for support.
2. If your Building Manager has not defined an Assembly point, choose a point that is as far away from the building as it is tall. Remember that you would like to have at least 2: East/West or North/South.
3. Invest in a good bio-chemical/smoke mask for your staff. If you are not sure what to purchase, ask a member of the local Fire Department.
4. If affordable, provide small flashlights and whistles. Otherwise, recommend them to staff.
5. Create a small evacuation kit for your staff that includes, mask, flashlight, single water supply, batteries, whistle and blanket.

Shelter-in-Place

If you choose to create a shelter-in-place solution, consider what kit would be required and put together a budget to see what is feasible for your business. Your kit would include[1]:

- Water;
- Bio-chemical/smoke masks;
- Refrigerator to store medications;
- Medical Kit;
- MRE's;
- Pillows/Blankets, if you choose.
- Some companies supply plastic and tape for air vents. Check with your building to determine whether they support Shelter-in-Place and their methodology and process before you consider this.
- Air purifier. You may to purchase more than one depending on the layout of he floor and the placement of staff in relation to columns and cubicles.
- Ask staff to put together their own kit of a change of clothes, medication, vitamins, toiletries to keep at work.

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[1] You may want to plan for 1-3 days at the most.

Your Second Interview with the Fire/Safety Director

- Make another appointment with the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director and review your processes. Try to work with them with the Building processes to see how they integrate to ensure a seamless end-to-end safety process.
- Provide all contact information to the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director.
- Ask to be placed on their notification schedule for fire and non-fire emergency drills There are two basic drills:
    - One that is held in-house where the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director comes to your floor and goes through the basic training for a fire drill and
    - An actual evacuation drill which directs tenants out of the building.
- Ask the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director to schedule an in-house review of their processes for new staff, if possible.
- Provide the Building Manager with the name and contact information of your Fire Warden, if required. Ask that you be kept informed of the training schedule and the status of the program. Once your Fire Warden is trained, be sure to keep in touch with them regarding additional training and general process changes.
- Once there is an understanding of how you both can work-out a Shelter-in-Place program, if this is a requirement of yours, be sure to identify the kit and where you will be storing it on your floor.
- Inform the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director of any corrections on the Fire Warden notification and/or if you have concerns regarding the dates of the fire extinguishers.

Create Your Tools/Document Your Process

1. Ensure that all staff have a call tree that includes: home, cellular numbers (all), blackberry number, emergency number (someone that you can call on their behalf).
2. Create a desk-card for staff with important building-related processes/procedures; e.g. you notice something; you smell smoke; you see fire/smoke; medical emergency; the numbers and addresses of local fire departments; hospitals and police departments; ambulance services and city and government agencies, where required. Maintain on a quarterly basis.
3. Create the call tree card.
4. Distribute the desk-card, the call tree card to the Building Manager/Fire-Safety Director so that they know what your process is.
5. Maintain education on a regular basis.
6. Ensure that new staff are trained in the safety process.
7. Teach staff to use the sms or text message facility on their pda's and cell phones.

Create a Testing Calendar

1. Schedule Call Tree Testing on a quarterly basis.
2. Test the Hotline number with staff and owners on a quarterly basis.
3. Participate in all Building drills: in-house fire drills and evacuation drills.
4. Practice Staff Accountability on a quarterly basis and annually, with the evacuation drill.

Last Thoughts.

If your business is an off-shoot from the primary corporate office, it is still important that you understand that your Corporate Security department resident in another building, if you have one, will not be available to support you and may not choose to because of liabilities in dealing with a leased building.

If you are a small business, it behooves you to seek out the Building Manager and Fire-Safety Director to find out how to evacuate - at the very least. Do not assume that they are going to coddle their tenants.

It is your responsibility to identify how you will account for your staff.   And remember that accounting happens as soon as the incident occurs. We can save lives if we know someone is left in the building. Our call tree, handed to a First Responder, provides them the means to help search and rescue your Staff member. Accountability also occurs after evacuation, when staff return home and as a start to the next business day. You will not know how staff may react to an event. You need to keep them engaged in this process. The sooner you know where your staff is and their status, the sooner you can re-focus on your business.

Get the basics in line to ensure safety of your staff. Safety includes their knowledge of what services and processes the building has in-place and what processes you have created as a team. They need to be reminded and they need to take ownership of their part in the process.

Do not under-estimate the importance of Staff Accountability. If you are a small business, you cannot afford to wonder where your staff are and whether you can rebound within the next day or two.

The time you take now can only result in saved lives, loyalty from staff - at least to the process and hopefully, a sound and resilient business.