DANE COUNTY'S DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

GENERAL Emergency Planning Guidance for Organizations

Emergency planning efforts are essential for the safety of an organization's employees, customers, and operations. They produce guidance for an organization's members by defining leadership roles and assignments, decision making processes, and communication structures. Effective emergency response plans (ERPs) can help an organization manage expectations (before and during an emergency) and clarify responsibilities making response more efficient and increasing people's safety.

DCEM has developed this document to help organizations prepare for emergencies. The information contained herein is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide legal advice. A well written ERP should also be complemented by trained staff and appropriate resources. Emergency preparedness requires a commitment of time and resources from organizational leadership.

Developing an ERP:

- *WHO in the organization should develop the ERP ?* – Personnel who have a firm understanding of the organization's operations and are in a position that allows them the flexibility and autonomy to interact with all divisions of the organization.

- *WHAT should be in an ERP ?* – Guidance for an organization's leadership and members that facilitates timely decision making, supports safety measures, and quickly organizes emergency communication and coordination processes. (See attached *ERP Development Checklist*).

- *WHERE should an ERP apply ?* – All organizational processes with responsibilities for member and customer safety should be addressed in the ERP. This include operations on-site and off-site (e.g. delivery personnel).

- *WHEN should an ERP be used ?* – When there is some potential for an emergency to occur as well as during an actual emergency.

- *WHY develop an ERP ?* – ERPs should guide organizations through emergencies to increase the safety of an employees, customers, and operations.

- *HOW should it be developed ?* – The same way organizational policy is developed; utilizing input from appropriate levels and divisions of an organization to produce a written document summarizing the purpose, process, and desired outcome of the organization's emergency response activities. The ERP should have the approval of senior management and be promulgated throughout the organization through regular training and testing.

Purposeful Consideration

Development –

There are many ERP templates available on-line. While potentially useful, often they are quickly completed and reviewed with little input or attention leading to unsubstantiated expectations over time. Involving the right staff in an organized, facilitated development-process is critical to producing a realistic and organization-specific ERP.

User Application –

How an ERP is organized greatly affects a user's ability to apply and implement the procedures in the ERP. The attached *ERP Development Checklist* is designed to demonstrate suggested plan organization and content.

Policy –

An ERP should be considered official policy of the organization and be approved as such. This includes defining the intent and functionality of the ERP, referencing the ERP development process, and clarifying who is responsible for training on and maintaining the ERP.

Emergency Functions –

There are four general functions organizations need to perform throughout the emergency response:

1. Identifying / learning when hazards exist.

2. Notifying persons of the emergency and when to act.

3. Maintaining clear and consistent communications with organization members and outside agencies.

4. Expediting the organization's decision making and management processes.

Many situations will necessitate additional guidance for people using the plan beyond the four functions listed above. This guidance should be listed in a manner that is both complimentary to these functions and makes sense for users.

All Hazards –

ERPs should be written to support an organization's response during both normal *and off-hour* emergencies to all emergency conditions including natural (e.g. severe weather), human caused (e.g. bomb threat), and technological (e.g. cyber). Certain emergency response actions will be needed for every response (e.g. notification, emergency communications, and management/decision making). Other response actions will be hazard specific (e.g. sheltering for a tornado warning). The attached checklist suggests an organization of regular and hazard-specific emergency response actions.

ERP Development Checklist

This checklist is designed to provide suggestions for both ERP content and organization of emergency actions.

I.   **Purpose / Function –**

- ☐ Clearly define when, where, and how the plan is expected to be used.

- ☐ Document how plan was developed (e.g. by safety committee, human resources department, ???)

- ☐ Reinforce the authority of the plan by documenting who approved of and is responsible for promulgating the plan.

II.   **Notification –**

- ☐ List all *sources of information* the organization will monitor /subscribe to maintain situational awareness (e.g. broadcast media web pages, local emergency text alerts, weather radio, etc.).

- ☐ List all *means* the organization has to provide notification (e.g. email lists, text / cell phone numbers, phone numbers, automated calling software, public address / speakerphone systems, etc.).

- ☐ Identify *who is responsible* for providing emergency notification.

- ☐ List (types of) hazards / events employees will be notified for (e.g. active shooter, severe weather, violation of restraining orders, etc.)

- ☐ Identify *thresholds* for providing emergency notification to employees / customers / off-site employees of hazards.

- ☐ Identify *procedures* for providing emergency notification to employees / customers / off-site employees of hazards.

- ☐ Identify procedures for providing *after-hours emergency notification* to management / employees.

III.   **Communication Procedures**

- ☐ Describe and list the means the organization will use to support emergency communications:
  - Conference calls.
  - Radios (frequency / channel #s).
  - Phone numbers (cell, home, work).

- ☐ Identify process for receiving, tracking, and sharing appropriate information (e.g. messaging / activity tracking).

□ Identify individuals / positions responsible for liaising with outside agencies (e.g. EMS, fire, law enforcement, 9-1-1, emergency management, etc.).

IV.   **Management / Decision Making Structure –**

□ List all persons responsible for making decisions for the organization in emergency situations. This can include individuals, positions, or management groups (e.g. department heads).

□ List an order of succession for the organization's decision makers.

□ Describe process for maintaining accurate, current, and relevant situational awareness across the organization.

□ Identify a (scalable) emergency organizational structure that will:

- Support the collection and analysis of information.
- Make decisions specific to the organization taking into account current and future conditions / needs.
- Provide direction to employees and customers.

V.   **Situation Specific Guidance –**

There are many emergencies that will require hazard-specific response actions based on both organizational responsibilities (e.g. healthcare, food service, etc.) and the hazard itself. This section should document hazard-specific procedures. There is no limit to the types of hazards that can be included in this section. Suggested hazards to be addressed include:

□ Severe weather procedures.

□ Sheltering-in-place (e.g. for both haz-mat releases and severe weather).

□ Active shooter.

□ Cyber disruption.

□ Physical threat (e.g. bomb, armed person on premises).

□ Violation (potential) of Temporary Restraining Orders.

This checklist is meant to provide information to any local organization that seeks to develop an organization-specific emergency response plan. All emergency response plans should be vetted and approved by the local organization's leadership.

Please contact Dane County's Department of Emergency Management (608 / 266-4330) if you have any questions.