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Business Continuity and Emergency Preparation and Response
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Is your organization ready for this?
Workers comb through debris on Tuesday, July 9, 2013, after a train derailed Saturday causing explosions of railway cars carrying crude oil in Lac-Megantic, Quebec. (AP Photo/The Canadian Press, Paul Chiasson)
1. The railroad
2. The Musi-Café, a popular watering hole that was busy at the time of the explosions
3. The library
4. The former site of a Dollarama store
5. A commercial building
6. An old chapel that housed a restaurant-bar
7. A Bank of Montreal location
8. A stationery store
9. A gift shop called "Ambrequin"
10. A residential area near the Boulevard of Veterans

SOURCE: LA PRESSE

PHOTOS: YVES TREMBLAY / PHOTOHELICO, RYAN REMIORZ / THE CANADIAN PRESS
GRAPHIC: ALEXANDRA BOSANAC & JONATHON RIVAI / NATIONAL POST
How does an organization get ready for that?
There are many thoughts about how to get ready:

- But doing *nothing* is not one of them
- So, what is the *something* that you can do to protect against prepare as best you can for a catastrophe?
- What is the answer when your management asks what you are doing to protect your organization, its customers and management liabilities associated with catastrophic spill or release?
Steps can be taken in advance to answer these questions and prepare for large-scale emergencies, through a combination of techniques designed to benchmark current state of readiness, including:

- **TEST** responsiveness in the form of a real time exercise or drill tailored and designed to test desired target areas or company-wide response as a whole.
- **EVALUATE** emergency response policies, plans and company-wide procedures.
- **REVIEW** the response and identify potential areas needing improvement and review lessons learned.
- **RETRAIN** refresh and update as a result of results.
While it is not always possible to avoid accidents, it is possible to take proactive steps to be as prepared as possible.

Conducting emergency response simulations, drills, exercises and plan review provide a way to answer the questions – are we prepared? And how do we know we are?
Testing emergency preparedness before an accident occurs

Real Time Simulations

- Simulate significant incident in real-time situations.
- Some are planned exercises – others may be random with little warning to participants.
Design drill to test responses from variety of systems, such as:

- Response and role of government relations/media
- Implementability of policies and procedures
- Claims handling
- Operating departments
- Legal department
- Internal Communications
Design of real-time simulations/drill to test target areas/response

Scenario Parameters

— Can design with inside input
— Can span geographically separated facilities/departments
— Exercise control team provides “inputs” through various stimuli
- Timed stimuli of various media to groups (phone calls, emails, press releases, news reports, social media postings, governmental inquiries, etc.)
- Multiple stimuli and simulate real-time disaster scenario
- Simulated communications/demands
- Legal issues put into play
- Communications Modules – Unanticipated inputs
Roles – Law

- Legal advice (assess legal issues and preserve privilege over investigation and response)
- Investigation
- Evidence preservation
- Defense (TRO, injunctions)
- Interface
  - Regulators
  - Government
  - Claims
  - Operating
  - Media
Roles – Communications/ Governmental Relations

- Respond to immediate demands for information from public, Governments, regulators
- Repeated inquiries for interviews – who is going to speak?
- Regulators’ restrictions on ability to release information
Roles – Communications/ Governmental Relations – cont’d

- Internal, external and customer communications
- Coordination with Law and others for press releases/media statements
- Follow your media relations and social media plan
Roles – Claims/Loss Prevention

- Where do people go to obtain redress?
- Claims Center
- Hotline and website information
- Business interruption issues
Roles – Claims/ Loss Prevention – cont’d

- Claims from customers, affected local businesses, potential evacuees
- If dollars need to be committed to address incident, what is the process?
- Coordination with insurance carriers/coverage issues
Roles – Operations

- Coordinate with Law
- Coordinate investigations with Team
- Coordinate retention of consultants
- Train in procedures, press responses, policies
- Make sure operational staff is in the loop and coordinating with legal, others
Table Top Exercise

- Working session or run-through of a potential scenario
- Test an aspect of a plan or response (i.e., developing press statements, responding to social media, finding/implementing company plans/procedures in real time)
- Role playing with a fact pattern to discern familiarity with plans, policies, procedures
Walk Through

- Discussion-based exercise with a potential scenario or focused module
- Series of questions and answers of team to determine whether response is appropriate in circumstance

Notification Exercise

- Check contact numbers
- Exercise to determine whether key players can be reached quickly
- If not, what is plan B to account for absence of decision makers in crisis
Review

- Compile data, response results and conclusions regarding findings
- Time allotted post-exercise for review and discussion of issues identified and lessons learned
- Address opportunities for improvement
- Identify issues for further consideration
- Demonstrate company’s proactive approach to negate later potential allegations of negligence or negligent management/training
Retrain

- Exercises can provide input upon where retraining/refreshing efforts need to be focused
- Revisit periodically to ensure training has accomplished the desired goals
Emergency Response Plans

- Do you have a written plan?
- Is it usable? Implementable?
- Do your employees know where it is?
- Is it up to date? What is the protocol for updating/refreshing?
Emergency Response Plans – cont’d

- How will it be used in an emergency?
- How do you know it works?
- Is it ready to be discovered in litigation?
- Does it contain “shall” and “must” that likely cannot be complied with in an emergency situation?
- Is it consistent with Mission Statements? Other pronouncements?
Language examples for discussion:

- “Level X Incidents pose major threats to life, health or the environment”
- “Utilizing resources effectively can minimize exposure, but cost effectiveness of using resources must be considered.”
- “If handled improperly, these products can cause extremely serious health impacts and pose threats to the community.”
- “Always” and “shall.”
Community Considerations:
Why are we concerned about social media?

- Because it is how people find out information today
- Because people on Facebook and Twitter will immediately know more about your crisis than you do
- Because a tweet from a survivor or eyewitness can reach tens of thousands of users around the world in minutes
- Because the public expects **you** to keep them informed
- And…
Because of this
And this
And this
BBC News asks for pictures and videos

- The Lac-Mégantic Train Derailment occurred in July 2013 on the outskirts of Ottawa Canada.
- Tweets were sent out immediately – before the company even knew what had happened.
- Facebook posts were all over the news within 30 minutes.
- A BBC news article on the accident includes a solicitation of information from the public that says “Are you in the area? Send your pictures and videos to yourpics@bbc.co.uk or text them.”
So what do you do about social media?

- You need to have a plan for social media.
- You need to update your current crisis communication plan to address social media – the new way information is disseminated and gathered.
- And if you don’t already have a formal crisis communication plan, you need to get one.
- And you need to train, drill, exercise and refresh.
On-line and conventional media channels flash “breaking news”

- Are you ready? The time to get ready is before an accident occurs.
- Do you have a media plan that takes into account instantaneous information – from outside your organization and inside?
- Who will implement it? How are they trained?
- How do you know it works?
- Have you tested it?
- Can you tell management you are ready?
Media Response Plan

- What is a plan?
  - Series of documents
  - Tasks
  - Teams
  - Training exercises
  - Drills

That are unified by a mission statement, a written policy statement and support of upper management
How does the Media Plan proactively interface with the public?

- Media Statements
- Who is your face to the public?
- Fact Sheets
- Talking Points
- Web Site
- Community Action
- Claims/Compensation
Media Statements?
What is your message?

- Who is your face to the public? What can they say? Can’t say?
- Confirm involvement – here is what we have learned although it is early
- Express sympathy
- We will help local authorities as they respond and provide details
- The focus right now is on stabilizing accident scene
- We will cooperate with authorities to determine the cause
- We are committing all necessary resources to provide information as it becomes available
- Here is how you get information if you are affected
- What else do you want them to know about you?
Communications Media – Consistent Messages

- Company website
- Employee intranet
- Individual or group briefings
- Customer communications
- Communications from internal representatives (law firms/insurers)
- Social media platforms (Company Facebook or Twitter accounts)
Develop your social media policy in peacetime

- Develop “dark website” during peacetime – activate during accident and refer to it in all press statements so people will know where to go
- To tweet or not to tweet – figure it out now
- Develop your basic talking points about what you already know about your organization
- Develop a template for press releases/fact sheets
- Know your Social Media platforms
- Audit all Social Media channels already used by the organization – including social media channel monitoring as part of your conventional media program.
- Social media commentary is your first jury research pool. Compile and follow it.
Keeping up with the plan

- Review/audit plan at least once a year
- Identify areas to update
- Evaluate employee knowledge and awareness
- Update plan to address new operations, locations, vendors, corporate structural changes
- Update contact information/new personnel
Who participates in a media plan?
Who needs to know about social media?

Everybody.

- External Team – Physical incident response (consultants/responders)
- Internal Team – Notifications (internally) and externally to regulators/insurers/public, others
- Law
- Government Relations
- Claims
- Operations
- Help people understand their roles
How does the media plan help employees be ready?

- Educate them not to “speculate” about cause of an incident.
- Ensure they know communication protocols
- Train them in organization’s code of ethics, policies, procedures
- Demonstrate that the organization takes every emergency incident seriously and will handle the situation with integrity, competence and care.
- Formal training, refresher training
Employee Social Media Policy

- Everyone in an organization is potentially a spokesperson
- Employees may identify their connection to the company (LinkedIn profile, Facebook page)
- Journalists may “friend” them
- Do you want an Employee Social Media Policy to address social media in times of company crisis?
Considerations for Employee Social Media Policy

- Guidelines of whether employees can access social media channels during working hours
- Prohibition on posting photographs or video on company premises or in course of employment
- Prohibition on posting comments on social media sites relating to their work for the company or senior executives, supervisors or colleagues
- Issue a reminder to all employees not to post information or engage in on-line discussions about the event
How do you know if your plan works?

Negligent failure to plan could lead to potential allegations of liability of management, officers and directors. What are you doing to protect your organization? How do you know it works?
Emergency Response and Social Media – How do we get ready?

- **Train** for emergencies, responses and notifications.
- **Test** the media response and social media plan
- **Update** the plan
Testing Organizational Readiness

- Accidents do not happen with plenty of warning, during working hours
- Neither should training exercises
- Run no-notice or controlled notice exercises at inconvenient times or when key players are absent
- Simulate real-time to test endurance/stamina
- This will test your true capabilities and your ability to respond
Testing Organizational Readiness - cont’d

- Review drill results - debrief
- Address opportunities for improvement
- Demonstrate training/readiness to management
- Show proactive approach to negate later external allegations of negligence or negligent management/training
- Show internal Management that your organization is proactive, preparing and training
Fail to prepare = Prepare to fail

- The proper time to prepare and train to engage with the media and address social media issues is before it occurs.
- Be quick to address social media and react and respond to it – have a plan.
- Social media response to an accident is not “business as usual” – it requires specific training.
- Help your company understand how to prepare the organization under pressure from media who may know more about the situation than they do.
Thank you.