

Be Prepared: The 7 Components of an Emergency Plan

If you have an emergency preparedness plan or are creating one, you are moving in the right direction. Being prepared can help minimize the loss of property and life.

Emergency preparedness must be a living and evolving process. Regular reviews and updates account for changing tenants, situations and threats. Recovery efforts are equally important. Getting employees back into buildings safely, communicating restrictions and bringing in qualified vendors to make repairs will all need to happen quickly. Consider all of this when developing your preparedness plans.

1. **Planning** – Work through many emergency scenarios. The unexpected, the unheard of, the “it could never happen here” – all should be considered in the development of emergency preparedness plans.
2. **Training** – Both classroom and situational training are important to help those responsible for executing the plan become knowledgeable, confident and prepared.
3. **Drills** – Bring those plans to life with physical drills involving all service providers: security, janitorial, engineering, fire wardens and tenant representatives. Your security team can help facilitate these drills.
4. **Education** – The integrators who install emergency systems need to actively participate in educating security and management on the accurate and efficient use of those systems.
5. **Technology** – Utilize technology to help consistently communicate emergency plans. Tools such as these can be customized to meet the specific nuances of your property. For example, develop a training CD or online module that houses floor plans, evacuation routes and factors such as fire extinguisher locations.
6. **Coordination** – In multi-tenant buildings, some may have their own emergency plans. Those tenants should be applauded for their efforts but everyone needs to coordinate plans to ensure there are no conflicts and to eliminate confusion during an emergency.
7. **Communication** – Emergency plans should be communicated to anyone within your building as well as local authorities. Sharing plans in advance will help ensure smooth execution in an emergency situation. Your security team will most likely have a relationship with local emergency services and can serve as a liaison.