

FAQ

Date: 7/7/2004

Subject: Safety Manager's Role in Disaster Recovery

Q

What should Military Treatment Facility (MTF) Safety Managers do to ensure the safe resumption of operations after a disaster, such as a fire, tornado, flood or hurricane that results in damage to buildings?

A

MTF Safety Managers should work with the Facilities and Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security (PTMS) Sections to integrate safety procedures into the MTF's Disaster Recovery Plan. Safety procedures need to be developed based on the results of the Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA). Whenever there is a reasonable expectation that buildings or building systems may receive damage during a disaster (e.g., fire, tornado, flood, hurricane, ice storm, etc.), make sure your disaster recovery plans include safety procedures for the following:

- *Safe Entry:* Designating an individual by job title, who will ultimately be responsible for giving approval to resume occupancy of the building(s)
- *Structural Security:* Verifying the structural integrity of the building before allowing anyone to enter the facility
- *Interior/Exterior Exposures:* Inspecting walls and ceilings and verifying that no materials are loose and in danger of falling
- *Ventilation:* Checking vents; water heaters; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; and medical gas systems to make sure they are operable
- *Air Quality:* Identifying a qualified industrial hygienist(s) who will test for asbestos and other chemical/toxic agents
- *Fire Protection Equipment:* Testing fire detection and suppression systems and make sure that portable fire extinguishers are present and fully charged
- *Electrical Safety:* Checking electrical systems, computer cables, and telecommunication equipment to make sure there is no danger of exposure to electricity
- *Lighting:* Inspecting lighting, make sure illumination levels are adequate, and verify emergency lighting is operational
- *Clean-up:* Accomplishing clean-up in a safe and healthful manner
- *Solid/Hazardous Waste:* Removing broken glass, debris, and other sharp materials for immediate disposal
- *Health/Sanitation:* Inspecting for and removing toxic/contaminated materials
- *Office Furniture:* Inspecting furniture and make sure it can hold up under normal loads and use
- *Emergency Planning:* Verifying that there is a clear path of egress in the event that emergency evacuation is required
- *Surfaces:* Inspecting walking surfaces and verifying that they are free from damage that could result in slips, trips, and falls

The extent of each Safety Manager's duties may vary, ranging from reviewing or developing safety procedures for inclusion in disaster recovery plans to carrying out select hazard assessments and evaluations when he/she is qualified to do so.

(2004). "Emergency Response Disaster Checklist Aids Emergency Planning Process." Occupational Hazards Vol. 66 No. 6, 22-24.