



RESPONDING TO DISASTER

TIPS FROM THE FRONTLINE



YOUR PEOPLE COME FIRST.

Establish a system that helps quickly identify which employees and facilities are impacted.



PUT YOUR TEAM AND PLANS IN ACTION IMMEDIATELY.

Business resumption plans and crisis response teams are essential at the facility, division, regional, and corporate levels. Engage them quickly, and ensure the point person(s) has decision-making authority, as well as a direct line to company leadership.



HAVE A PLAN A, B, AND MAYBE C.

That goes for people and communication methods. If members of your crisis teams live in the area where the crisis occurred, ensure there are alternates who can provide support. Also identify alternative means of communication if power or networks are knocked out. Don't underestimate the value of going back to the basics, like investing in battery-operated radios and keeping a printed list of phone numbers for important contacts.



BE DECISIVE, YET FLEXIBLE.

Every disaster is unique. Rely on a general set of guidelines for responding to various audiences (business partners, suppliers, customers, employees, media, etc.), but be open to change depending on what the circumstances demand.



OVER-COMMUNICATE.

People don't know what they don't know. Don't underestimate the power of talking to employees through internal communication channels, especially updates to key leaders. For external communications, be consistent in messaging and consider all available methods (e.g., websites, hotlines, newsletters, e-mails, texts, and social media, to name a few).



RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.

Fund disaster relief organizations in advance of disasters so they can act immediately and lower the cost of relief work.



HOW CAN I HELP?

People generally have big hearts and want to help. Identify specific ways they can show their support—whether it's with their time, money or resources—and communicate the greatest needs of those impacted.



DON'T FORGET THE HEARTS AND MINDS.

Invest in the community's mental wellbeing. Address the needs for those who were impacted and those who weren't. Provide post-traumatic stress support systems and other related services, and make sure an Employee Assistance Program is helping address emotional challenges.