

## RISK PLANNING

### **Forming a Risk Team**

- Choose people who can be active members of the team and who can serve in an advisory capacity, including people from all functional areas (executive, meetings, accounting, marketing and legal).
- Ask management to give explicit authority to the group to take the steps necessary to develop an emergency management plan for the meeting.
- Have the risk team leader, supported by the organization's top executive, issue a mission statement regarding the organization's commitment to emergency management.

### **Risk Assessment**

- Conduct a risk assessment to determine which risks are most likely to affect a specific meeting and which risks may have the worst consequences if they occur.
- Start with an internal risk assessment.
  - Request information from the meeting facilities about their internal emergency plans and policies.
  - Review your own organization's internal policies related to insurance, finance and purchasing, employee manuals, and meeting registration policies relating to the collection and storage of emergency contact information for attendees.
  - Brainstorm with the risk team the possible risks associated with a meeting program or the nature of attendees.
- Evaluate external risks associated with the meeting destination or the meeting facility.
  - Be aware of events that may affect the meeting, such as travel warnings issued by the U.S. Department of State or a threatened strike by transportation or sanitation workers.

### **Risk Analysis**

- Estimate through risk analysis (1) the probability that a specific risk may occur and (2) the consequences if the specific risk does occur.
- List all possible types of emergencies or risks on a vulnerability analysis chart and use a scoring system to determine your priorities in the risk management plan.

### **Risk Planning**

- Compile the risk plan so that it is useful and usable; make sure it fits into a one- to two-inch binder and includes the following sections:
  - Overview (including the purpose, contact lists, and a listing of the emergencies, crises and disasters included in the plan).
  - Emergency response procedures (including general sections for each emergency, crisis or disaster, organized from broad categories to more specific categories for which response procedures are listed).
  - Supporting documents (such as emergency contact lists, facility floor plans, facility evacuation and shelter-in-place plans, facility and destination safety and security checklists, listing of attendees with special needs, listing of staff with special skills, and resource lists).



## RISK PLANNING – page 2

### ***Other Risk Management Tools***

- Use information to protect both attendees and your organization from the effects of realized risks.
  - Collect emergency contact information from attendees in advance.
  - Provide attendees with information to help them minimize personal risks.
  - Distribute maps and emergency instructions to all staff, exhibitors and service providers, and train key staff on what to do in case of emergency.
- Collect information about the safety and security of a given destination, facility or vendor during the site inspection and RFP process.
- Plan for security during an early site inspection trip.
  - Obtain a copy of security rules and regulations from the facility.
  - Provide detailed instructions to your security company and obtain references.
  - Monitor the performance of security personnel as frequently as possible.
  - Be vigilant about exhibit security, especially during move-in and move-out periods.
  - Send a special mailing to exhibitors shortly before the event with exhibitor security tips, and encourage all exhibitors to have their own security plans in place.
- Utilize badges as a security measure for attendees.
- Consider contracts in a risk management context, reviewing cancellation clauses, attrition clauses, and force majeure clauses for their role in the overall risk assessment and emergency management strategy.
- Consider general liability insurance, event cancellation insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and additional coverage to provide financial support for losses and expenses that your organization may incur in the event of an emergency, crisis or disaster.

### ***Planning and Responding to Specific Emergencies***

- Consider having a first-aid room or station staffed with a nurse during all scheduled hours of the meeting to help deal with medical emergencies.
- Take steps necessary to minimize disturbance if a demonstration or confrontation seems imminent; for instance, discuss the matter with local police officials, suggest a conference between organization leadership and leaders of the protesting group, or provide controlled opportunities for the dissident group to express its opinions.
- Consider predictable weather problems in selecting a site for the meeting.
  - Modify meeting arrangements to accommodate a small registration if weather affects arrival and departure patterns.
  - Negotiate longer stays at hotels if bad weather interferes with attendees returning home at the meeting's conclusion.
  - Be familiar with evacuation procedures in the area in case of severe weather like a hurricane.
- In case of a labor crisis or work stoppage during your meeting, identify which functions of the meeting will be most affected and consider innovative strategies to keep as much of the program intact as possible.
- Ensure that attendees are protected in case of fire and have adequate information available to them.
  - Consider developing a fire safety brochure to include in registration packets.
  - Become familiar with available safety features during your preliminary site inspection.

## RISK PLANNING – page 3

- Coordinate carefully with the meeting facility to plan for potential bomb threats and terrorist activities.
  - Train an evacuation unit consisting of management personnel about how to evacuate the building during a bomb threat.

### ***Media Management***

- Establish a crisis communication plan in advance so that in the event of an emergency or crisis, someone within the organization will be trained to handle the media appropriately.