



## Fire & Life Safety Council March 2008

### Fire & Life Safety Council Members

E. Floyd Phelps, CPP  
Chairman

Scott R. Gane, CPP  
Vice Chairman

Richard P. Bielen

Larry R. Collins, PhD

Martin Cramer, CPP

Joseph F. Donoghue,  
CPP

Kenneth L. Gentile, CPP

Donald L. Puck, CPP

Craig P. Rensburg, CPP

Newsletter Editor  
Martin Cramer, CPP



### A Word from the Chair

This is the Fire & Life Safety Council's first newsletter. The purpose of this and the succeeding issues is to provide a link to the members of ASIS International, find out their needs and meet their needs. Many Security Managers have the responsibility of maintaining fire equipment and fire safety for their organization, tacked on to their already full security plate. The same is true of Industrial Safety. Our council stands ready to help you. The Fire & Life Safety Council has a wealth of experience and we are willing to share. If you have a fire safety problem and our members do not have the answer, we will hook you up with someone who does. If you have a question that you think would benefit the entire ASIS membership, ask it and we'll put the answer in the newsletter. We want this newsletter to be your newsletter. Give us a try

### New Council Members

The first part of February the Fire & Life Safety Council sent out a letter from the Chairman, E. Floyd Phelps, CPP, requesting that ASIS International members who were interested in working on the council contact him. The letter was sent to those ASIS members who had indicated on their membership profile an interest in fire safety or industrial safety. After the letters were sent, it was discovered that the indentation was sent to over 12,000 members. The council had no idea that fire safety had such a following. That is one-third of the entire International membership of the organization.

The response to the e-mail was tremendous. Three hundred responses were received. This was to fill the six positions vacant in the council. All of the inquiries were reviewed and a response for more information was dispatched by return e-mail.

By the end of February the final selection was made. The Fire & Life Safety Council would like to welcome and introduce our new members;

**L. W. Baltissen (Indonesia)**

**Michael J. DuBose, CPP, PCI, CSP (New Jersey)**

**Michael Finnegan (Texas)**

**Forrest P. Franklin, CPP, PCI (California)**

**Stewart Kidd, CPP (United Kingdom)**

**William A Minear II, CPP (West Virginia)**

## **Who Are First Responders?**

**By E. Floyd Phelps, CPP**

When people talk about first responders, they are usually talking about the convergence of medical, fire and law enforcement personnel to a disaster. In many cases the actual first responders are security personnel, employees, media, or well intentioned individuals who are reacting to an emergency with little or no thought of safety issues. In the tragic university dorm fire at Seaton Hall University, one of the resident assistants made several trips into the burning building to help rescue students. He was one of the heroes of the tragedy where three students died. He lived. Like others, he was caught up in the need for action without considering the risks which included the actual fire, smoke inhalation, falling debris, structure collapse, and poisonous gases created from the burning materials.

An employee trudging through a flooded basement trying to salvage company assets rarely considers if the power to the building has been shut off.

There are numbers of stories where workers are overcome by carbon monoxide or other poisonous gases in a tank or pit and a co-worker finds them and goes down to help and becomes the next victim. It usually not until the third or fourth responder that someone realizes there something is wrong.

Safety training and guidelines should be a part of the emergency plan and incorporated into training and emergency exercises.

An appraisal of the situation should be the first step to a rescue and recovery process. There is always a potential of hidden dangers in a disaster situation.

In terrorist bombing situations, the perpetrators count on this lack of training and eagerness to help when they plant a secondary device to detonate after the responders are on the scene.

There are always dangers (physical, environmental, and technical) lurking in any catastrophe - plan for them. Train your employees on how to react. Warn your employees of the hidden dangers. Define what is and what is not their responsibility.

## **When Disaster Strikes**

**By Scott R. Gane, CPP**

It has been quite a winter season so far..... Blizzards, unusually large snow falls, floods, wild fires, severe thunder storms, tornados and all of them not restricted by the normal winter geography. Is this a sign? Add in the slowing economy and rising gas/oil prices and it spells disaster for many U.S. businesses. What is a small business to do in these uncertain times?

The economy is/has been very cyclical and will get better over time, but what about Mother Nature? While we can control how we manage our businesses in difficult economic times, we cannot control the weather; but, we can plan and prepare for it!

America's businesses form the backbone of the nation's economy; small businesses alone account for more than 99% of all companies with employees, employ 50% of all private sector workers and provide nearly 45% of the nation's payroll. Recent polls have estimated that over 80% of small businesses in the United States have no Disaster Management and/or Business Continuity Plan. Businesses without a plan have about a 20% to 30% survival rate after a disaster. That number drops to about 5% for small businesses.

Many business owners don't prepare for several reasons, but **you need** to have a "plan B". Many other business owners do make the conscious decision to look at his or her own risks and put together a plan and that's where it stops. They fail to communicate the plan and/or practice the plan with their employees. Experience has shown that these companies will fail just as fast as the companies that don't have a plan.

**Too big a task** for your small business you say, break it up into smaller more manageable plans:

**Strategic Plan.** This defines the vision, mission goals and objectives of the disaster management program.

**Emergency operation/response plan.** This plan assigns responsibilities to organizations and individuals for carrying out specific actions at projected times.

**Mitigation Plan.** This establishes interim and long-term actions to eliminate hazards.

**Recovery Plan.** This plan is developed to identify short-term and long-term priorities, processes, vital resources and time frames for restoration of the business.

**Continuity Plan.** This plan identifies the critical and time-sensitive applications, vital records, processes and functions that need to be maintained, and identifies the necessary personnel and processes.

All of these plans need to encompass how employees will communicate, where they will go and how they will keep doing their jobs. The details of these plans can vary greatly, depending on the size and scope of a company and the way it does business. But the critical point is that these plans cannot be ignored and physical, IT and human resource plans cannot be developed in isolation from one another. It should be a collaborative effort on everyone's part. Then TEST, TRAIN and TEST your plan to assure it does what your vision was in the beginning to "STAY IN BUSINESS WHEN DISASTER STRIKES"

Disaster Preparedness Tips:

- Keep an updated list off-site of employees, their home and cell phone numbers
- Identify critical employees needed for ongoing operations, a recovery team
- Consider alternative transportation for workers who live across rivers. Bridges could fail
- Train employees and their families on dealing with disasters
- Set up transportation plans for moving workers off-site and how to pay for it.
- Have a calling tree to contact all employees
- Tell your staff which radio station will have announcements about the company.
- Designate a spokesman to handle media questions
- Do a critical document inventory, such as business licenses, customer lists, contact lists, credit card numbers and credit card statements. Regularly update it.
- Back up and store off-site original documents in a tamper proof, locked box.

## Workshop Partners

The Crisis Management and Business Continuity Council produced a workshop on Advanced Topics February 11 – 14, 2008 in Houston, Texas. The Fire & Life Safety Council was asked to be a part of the program. Kenneth Gentle, F&LSC member, presented a program on Fire Incident Components for Emergency Action Plans. We will have to admit that the Crisis Management and Business Continuity Council under the leadership of Don Knox, the Chair of the Council, did most of the work and produced a fantastic workshop. They have been conducting workshops since 1999 and have

become pros at conducting a quality program. In 2006 they came up with the idea of Advanced Topics where they had speakers from other councils come in and present emergency needs from their prospective. I don't think that has ever been done before. We appreciate Don Knox asking us to partner with their council.

## **Fire Protection Systems Quick Story**

By Craig P. Remsburg, CPP

Are you testing and inspecting your fire protection systems properly?

How many times have you picked up an industry trade magazine, or be watching a TV news report in the evening and hear about fire protection systems not operating properly, resulting in catastrophic damage and even casualties. After reading or listening more, you find everything from control valves being shut off, signaling systems disconnected, and repairs not properly fixed are the reasons for the incidents. But, it really doesn't matter what the reason is, because more times than not, it could have been prevented if a fire protection system test and inspection program had been in place and maintained.

Businesses today have so many options available to them in to accomplish the task of properly maintaining critical fire protection systems. Use of internal maintenance personnel or craftsmen with proper training, contract with a local fire protection service provider, or working with a industry consortium that can leverage maintenance services for member companies.

However it is being conducted, careful consideration on several items are necessary to ensure the fire protection preventative program is working in your favor.

**Federal/State/Local requirements** – Federal OSHA requires the installed fire protection systems in buildings be properly maintained. At a minimum, if you are in a state OSHA program, the same requirements are present and perhaps additional considerations. The key is to know what the requirements are, and understanding the various tasks that need to be completed. In some states, while in the performance of testing and inspecting sprinklers systems, if the 'tester' (internal personnel or contractor) finds a system does not operate properly, they are required by law to notify the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) within 24 hours. Know if you are required to check valves weekly, monthly, quarterly or whatever frequency.

**Documentation requirements** – proper documentation is necessary to show the AHJ governmental entity, insurance company representative, or even internal corporate auditors that the test and inspection was accomplished. It will show the task that were completed, measurement or readings if necessary, and what malfunctioned or did not work properly documented. Without the documentation, it is like it wasn't completed, or obviously more difficult to prove. There are many forms and references available to ensure you are meeting the minimum standards, i.e. insurance company guidelines, model building code organizations, AHJ (local fire departments) and professional associations can assist in obtaining information.

In summary, if you are responsible for the fire protection systems in your business or facility, you need to understand the requirements and documentation, so your business or facility is not in the news or on the cover of the next trade magazine.



1625 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2818  
USA  
703-518-1447  
Fax: 703-518-1517  
Email: [councils@asisonline.org](mailto:councils@asisonline.org)