

Safest in America

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UPMC WILL BUILD A STRATEGIC BIODEFENSE SYSTEM

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center is now building an \$8.5 million Strategic

Biodefense Emergency Operations and Communications System (SBS) so that in the event of a large-scale bioterrorism attack, pandemics or other major emergencies that could result in serious public health consequences, decision-makers across this region,

including the Pennsylvania National Guard, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, elected officials, hospital and public health leaders, and emergency responders will have up-to-the-minute information. When developed, the SBS will make Pittsburgh a model for the rest of the nation

“As was clear in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, emergency response organizations, hospitals and health agencies do not have efficient and clear means of communicating critical information among themselves or to the general public,” noted Dr. Roth. “This ambitious system will address many of these

logistical concerns in ways few health or federal agencies have done previously.”

This system will organize data from disparate sources in ways that allow responders to determine the best possible distribution plan for scarce medicine and supplies in a region, the most rational use of hospital beds and staff in the face of unprecedented numbers of patients, and the extent of disease spread in Pittsburgh and the surrounding region.

The SBS also will include a vital public information component through which critical information can be shared with the citizens of the region for coping with a disaster and its aftermath. Personal and business disaster preparedness information also will be available through this portal.

Another highlight of SBS will be innovative training programs for first responders called the “Biodefense Schoolhouse.” with the latest information tailored to the civilian and military first responder community that will be built into this system.

For a complete listing of existing UPMC bioterrorism initiatives, please visit <http://newsbureau.upmc.com>. For more information about the UPMC Center for Biosecurity, please visit www.upmc-biosecurity.org.



UPMC | University of Pittsburgh
Medical Center

Region 13 Emergency Managers to Gain Real-Time Tool

According to Chief Full, emergency managers in Western Pennsylvania will soon have a new software tool at their disposal to better enable emergency personnel to manage fires, chemical spills and a wide variety of other disasters.

“Emergency managers now mostly rely on written protocols, often stored in binders at county dispatch centers,” said Chief Full. “This software will contain databases of these protocols while also allowing e-mail, instant and text messaging among dispatch centers and emergency officials. The program also provides current weather, mapping and live

traffic videos. In addition, the program will have data about how to contain and avoid injuries from hazardous chemical spills.”

In addition to better communications, the system will allow more efficient use of emergency resources, such as fire trucks, ambulances and disaster supplies.

“It will be technology at our fingertips which certainly will certainly help our responders.”

The 13 counties that make up Region 13, is an area of 9,550 square miles with a population of some 3.1 million people and 706 municipalities, including the city of Pittsburgh.



What Do You Tell Employees? Communicating a Terrorist Threat

By Erik Battenberg

Despite all the communication being done on the national level — for better or worse — about apparent terrorist threats, many employees haven’t a clue about what their own company’s plans are for dealing with such an event. A recent survey done by the American Red Cross and Wirthlin Worldwide found that only about half of workers were familiar with the disaster plans in their workplaces.

In many ways, the threat of terrorism is similar to threats from other calamities, and components of standard crisis communications plans can often be applied to terrorism threats. At the same time, terrorism is unique.

“A terror alert does feel different because [there’s] this big, uncertain anxiety and fear,” says Alison Davis, CEO of Davis & Co., a Glen Rock, N.J.-based firm that specializes in employee communications. “It’s not like a hurricane where you can turn on the Weather Channel and see what’s coming.”

Experts contacted by The Strategist recommended not adopting a business-as-usual tone in an attempt to keep employees from becoming afraid.

“We compare it to having fire drills,” says Jean Erdtmann, health and safety specialist for *continued on page 4*

Membership Spotlight



According to the Harris Poll performed by the National Organization on Disability, 50 percent of people with disabilities who are employed full or part time report that no plans have been formulated or practiced for a safe evacuation at their workplace.

Does your company have an evacuation plan which includes those individuals with varying types and degrees of disabilities?

Coalition member, Accessibility Development Associates, Inc., (ADA, Inc.) wants to make sure that area businesses and organizations are prepared to protect their employees, tenants, visitors, and customers in the event of an emergency.

“Being prepared is critical to the safe and effective emergency evacuation of everyone in the building,” said ADA President and CEO Joan Stein, “whether or not they have a disability. We help businesses recognize what emergency preparedness challenges they face.

ADA, Inc., is a consulting firm specializing in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other accessibility related regulations for public or privately owned entities. Since 1992, ADA, Inc., professionals have provided services to more than 300 organizations nationally. Areas of expertise include: facility review; design consultation; expert witness; due diligence; emergency preparedness and customer sensitivity awareness.

Why did you join the Reg. Coalition for Homeland Security?

“ADA, Inc. joined the Coalition because meeting the needs of individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness and Response is a critical element that is often overlooked; particularly in the business community,” said Stein. “Many businesses and commercial building owners/managers do not realize that emergency evacuation is not as simple as directing people to the closest stairs and using those stairs to get out of a building.

As we’ve witnessed, emergencies take all forms, ranging from the attacks of September 11, 2001, the catastrophic results of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, to the water main break that forced the evacuation of Gateway Center this past summer. In all of these situations, the need to safely and effectively evacuate individuals with varying types and degrees of disabilities was crucial.

We see ourselves as a partner and resource to the business community to ensure the safe evacuation and/or shelter in place of individuals with disabilities in our region.”

For more information, visit www.adaconsults.com.

“Knowing where the fire extinguisher is and knowing what to do if there’s a fire doesn’t make people scared. It makes people feel empowered.”

Telling Employees, from page 2

the American Red Cross. “Knowing where the fire extinguisher is and knowing what to do if there’s a fire doesn’t make people scared. It makes people feel empowered.”

In addition, it’s important to talk to employees about terror threats and let them know what the company’s plans are for dealing with them.

“It’s getting your employees together to teach them the value of being prepared,” Erdtmann says. “That helps build that culture of preparedness and empowerment.”

When a terror alert is issued in your area, employees want to know what your company is doing to protect them. Be as specific as you can without compromising security measures. If you have additional security personnel on site, are searching the bags of people who come to your building or are taking other precautionary steps, explain to your employees what you are doing and why you are doing it.

When Prudential Financial found out its Newark, N.J., headquarters was specifically named in a terror alert issued in August, corporate leaders first focused on telling employees that the company was taking steps to make the building a safe place to work, says Bob DeFillippo, chief communications officer for Prudential.

The company put a double row of concrete barriers outside of its building, and the building was surrounded by police officers displaying automatic weapons, DeFillippo says. Other efforts included searches of cars and strict requirements that people show proper badges before being admitted to the building.

The company immediately began communicating these measures to employees and explaining the strategies behind them. It did this through an emergency telephone hotline that employees could dial into, and through e-mails from Art Ryan, the firm’s chairman. Letting employees know about such plans will make them feel better about the situation, says Barbara Edler, who runs internal communications for Hill & Knowlton in the United States and works in the agency’s San Francisco office. “It all comes back to the fact that smart employers show employees that they matter,” Edler says.

If your company is taking security steps that can’t be communicated openly because that would make them less effective, it’s OK to tell your employees this, Edler says. “If they see that there’s a mind-set of keeping employees safe, then they’ll understand that there could be some measures you can’t talk about,” she says.

Senior leaders and individual managers should be the ones to address employees, Davis says. “Everybody’s first choice for communication is their direct manager,” Davis says. “They know and trust their manager, and the manager can give them information specific to their group.” In a large company, it’s important to have communication plans that can be given to various managers so the managers know what to say, she adds.

“If they don’t know what’s expected of them, then they make it up as they go along, and that’s not ideal,” she says. Some plans can be communicated through e-mail or voice mail, but it’s best for managers to talk directly to their employees, Edler says.

“Face-to-face [communication] is critical, particularly when people are really freaking out,” she says.

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Telling Employees, from page 4

When talking to employees about the situation, it's valuable to give them opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns, DeFillippo says. "We had town hall meetings and employees were allowed to ask anything they wanted about the situation," he says. "That was extremely effective."

Another channel to consider is the media. Prudential was open about its security steps with the media. While that openness was part of an external communications strategy, it also had a positive impact on employees. Seeing the media report on what Prudential was doing gave the measures more credibility among employees, DeFillippo says.

The steps outlined here can help lessen fears among employees when terror alerts are issued, but the threat of terrorism still exists. People will continue to have concerns. "There's no way you're going to really feel good, but at least people will feel better knowing what the plan is," Davis says.

"The security steps we took helped people feel safer," DeFillippo says. "But there's no question everybody was anxious. The world as we know it has changed, and heightened security will be part of the new normal."

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"The security steps we took helped people feel safer,"

Upcoming Events: TRCPA March Meeting

When: March 10, 2006 at 1:00 pm

Where: EOC

Topic: 'Taking Care of Business; Including the Human Factor in Your Crisis Management Equation'

Speaker: Tonya Slawinski of Supportive Solutions, Inc.

Details: This presentation will focus on identifying the needs of the human workforce in times of crisis and providing flexible, time sensitive responses that will encourage competence, resiliency and recovery. The role of preparedness and evolving response practices will be addressed.

Registration: To pre-register, visit <http://www.trcpa.org/trcpa/meetings.asp>



Welcome New Coalition Members

These fine companies have joined the Coalition efforts

Sungard

(www.sungard.com)

Sungard is a global leader in software and processing solutions for financial services, higher education and the public sector

Wells Fargo

(www.wellsfargo.com) Wells Fargo provides banking, insurance, investments, mortgage and consumer finance – for more than 23 million customers.

Verizon

(www.verizon.com)

Verizon is a leader in delivering broadband and other communication innovations to wireline and 51.3 million wireless customers.

Federated Investors

(www.federatorinvestors.com)

Federated Investors is one of the nation's largest investment managers.

U.S. Life Safety

(www.lifesafety.com)

U.S. Life Safety is dedicated to helping owners, managers or administrators of schools, high-rise and commercial buildings better protect the lives of building occupants by providing the best emergency management tools available so all involved may be better prepared in any emergency.

Insurance Restoration Services

(www.disastercontractor.com)

Insurance Restoration Services is a full-service disaster recovery firm.

USING TERROR ALERT LEVELS TO ESTIMATE THE EFFECT OF POLICE ON CRIME

JONATHAN KLICK, Florida State University and

ALEXANDER TABARROK, George Mason University

Feb 16, 2005

Abstract

Changes in the terror alert level set by the Department of Homeland Security provide a shock to police presence in Washington, D.C. Using daily crime data during the period the terror alert system has been in place, we show that the level of crime decreases significantly, both statistically and economically, in Washington, D.C., during high-alert periods. The decrease in the level of crime is especially large in the National Mall. This provides strong evidence of the causal effect of police on the level of crime and suggests a research strategy that can be used in other cities.

If you'd like a complete copy of this research paper, email mcomiskey@pittsburghcoalitionforsecurity.org

