# Be Prepared for A Disaster Meeting Kit

Effective, time-sensitive communication is imperative before, during and after disasters and emergencies. In the event of an incident, the first employee on the scene must make contact with someone in a supervisory capacity after contacting authorities (if needed) or taking other steps to deal with the emergency at hand. If you don't immediately reach a supervisor, keep trying.

## EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

In emergency situations, it is important that all employees are accounted for and that they understand the critical role they play in controlling the flow of information.

A contact list should have each employee's cell phone number, email address and an emergency contact. Properties may want to consider having a "call tree" so all employees can be located and notified quickly. In some cases, such as a natural disaster, cell phone service may be disrupted, and it may be easier to communicate via email. Messages relayed to employees should be clear and concise to ensure consistent delivery.

## BOTTON LINE COMMUNICATION

In any communication, it is important to be very specific about the incident so that exaggerations are not intensified as they are being communicated. Stick to the **facts** and not speculate!!

## BEST EMPLOYEE PRACTICES FOR ALL EMERGENCIES:

**Know your company's designated point person during a disaster or emergency.**

- The first employee who arrives at the scene should call 911,

if necessary. The employee should then contact the onsite manager or other company designated contact who will provide additional instruction.

- Make sure the answering service, your website and voicemail greeting are updated with important emergency instructions and information for residents.
- Clearly communicate tasks with all onsite employees to ensure adequate staffing.
- If residents are unable to occupy their apartments following a disaster, work with them to secure interim housing, preferably at the community. Remember, the property is under no obligation to pay for interim housing. Encourage residents to stay with friends or family. Your property supervisor will need to give approval before commitments are made for the residents who are asking for hotel accommodations at the property's expense.

**Following these best practices may help you respond and recover more quickly in the event of a disaster or emergency:**

- Keep an inventory of all office and shop furniture, equipment, computers, copiers, fax machines, tools, machinery, golf carts and any other equipment on property. Record serial numbers and keep this inventory in a safe location. A copy of this inventory should be kept off- site.
- Take pictures of the equipment noted in the inventory and keep the pictures in a secure location.
- Try to have a set of plans for the physical property showing all locations for mechanical equipment, water and gas shutoffs, main electrical panels, elevators, roof access and standpipes. Keep these plans on hand for emergency service providers.

# SUGGESTED SUPPLIES FOR DISASTERS

- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Bottled water
- Canned food and can opener
- Carpet fan blowers

- Digital camera
- Extra clothes and blankets
- First aid kit
- Generators
- Hose
- Mops
- Plastic sheeting
- Poster board and markers for signs
- Pumps
- Sandbags
- Sturdy shoes and work gloves
- Tape and rope to cordon off dangerous areas
- Tarpaulins
- Two-way radio

# FINAL WORD

All communications in a disaster must repeat and relay only facts about the impending disaster and not speculate or exaggerate what is being reported. Clear, concise, and correct is the communication mantra.