EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS 2011
Ten Years Later
**Background**
Implementing their organization’s disaster response plan is a critical function for facility managers. Organizations rely on facility management to have plans and procedures already in place. To stay vigilant, there are a number of tools and documents that facility managers should have access to including: emergency notification systems, severe weather alerts, incident management programs, electronic documentation and situation awareness monitoring. Along with departments such as IT, human resources and communications, facility management often holds responsibility for ensuring business continuity after a disrupting event, such as a natural disaster or other unforeseen events. To gauge members’ level of preparedness, IFMA conducted a poll a decade after Sept. 11, 2001. The results and submitted comments are listed below.

1. Compared to 2001, how do you consider your facility’s current state of emergency preparedness and business continuity planning?

![Pie chart showing the results of the poll](chart.png)

- Better prepared: 88%
- Less prepared: 10%
- About the same: 2%

N=319

2. Which of the following do you have in place?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Preparedness Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency evacuation procedures</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis communication plan</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster recovery plan</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk management assessment</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=402
3. Since 2001, which of the following measures has your organization undertaken?

- More formalized emergency preparedness planning: 85%
- Better documentation of policies and procedures related to emergency management: 84%
- Enhanced communications with staff: 80%
- Enhanced security measures: 70%
- More simulation drills to test plans: 52%
- Modified plans to eliminate/minimize weaknesses: 51%
- Increased FM training related to emergency planning and preparation: 49%
- Acquired more back-up emergency equipment such as generators: 46%
- Larger investment in back-up sites: 36%
- Improvements to supply chain efficiency related to emergencies: 34%
- Other measures: 8%

Other measures:
- Increased communication with local agencies.
- Adopted newer technologies, such as solar powered emergency phones.
- Migrated plans online for easier access.

4. What major obstacles have you encountered when implementing emergency and disaster recovery plans?

- Other priorities take precedence: 60%
- Lack of personnel to execute plans: 43%
- Lack of funding: 39%
- Lack of senior management support: 18%
- Lack of coordination from landlord (if space is leased): 10%
- Other: 9%

N = 397

N = 362
Other obstacles:

- Time required to plan, train and keep plan updated
- Complacency amongst staff, especially if no emergencies have occurred
- Turnover of staff affects organization’s ability to keep plan updated


6. Has your organization implemented any measures to become certified under PS-Prep?
7. Are there any comments you would like to share related to facility preparedness?

**Support from the top is required.**

“Find the best information available, get the support of top management, help your people implement the plan, keep on practicing the plan and make adjustments as needed to keep it effective.”

“Emergency preparedness, disaster recovery and business continuity planning requires senior management support and collaboration across the company. It’s not just a facility management function.”

“Senior management support is absolutely necessary for the success of any program.”

**Need to keep emergency preparedness in the forefront.**

“It is still difficult to engage the average employee on matters of preparedness and security under normal operating conditions. The further away we get from any emergency situation, the more resistance there is to preparation, drills, or recruitment of volunteers for disaster preparation.”

“Overall, we have a greater awareness and are better prepared than 10 years ago, but we still fight to keep disaster preparedness on the table with resources that have other primary jobs.”

**Plans should be continuously updated.**

“I would just like to add that as the world changes, preparedness has to change and adapt, which is ongoing. It is not enough to just have a manual anymore.”

“It is very important to keep department call trees and vendor contact information updated and readily available. Plans will change at moment’s notice so having the right people in place or on standby is paramount.”

“We continue to find areas to tweak with each event, be it weather, manmade, etc. Our drills have become better by changing up the ‘event’ being practiced and blocking off an evacuation door or floor.”

“Key to develop a solid plan, gain senior leadership support and test periodically to find improvement opportunities.”

**Coordination at the local level is important.**

“You can never be over prepared for a disaster, training of personnel, and communication with local emergency responders is very important to your disaster preparedness plan.”

“Our emergency response team has gone through CERT Training, or Community Emergency Response Training.”

“In Washington DC, it doesn’t matter how prepared we are, there is no plan that will work to evacuate this city in a timely manner, should it be necessary. This has been demonstrated numerous times, most recently with the earthquake and during the snow emergencies that we experienced a couple of years ago. The joint government agencies need to come up with evacuation plans that have a chance of working or we are all in jeopardy.”
8. Countries represented in the survey

United States
Albania
Argentina
Austria
Brazil
Canada
Croatia
Hong Kong
Netherlands
Nigeria
Norway
Trinidad and Tobago
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom

Methodology

This survey was drafted with the assistance of several subject matter experts versed in emergency preparedness. The survey was fielded in early September 2011 and was posted to IFMA’s LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook sites with an invitation to participate. In addition to these sites, the survey link was sent to a global sample of IFMA members. A total of 454 responses were received by Sept.9. A confidence level and margin of error give readers some measure of how much they can rely on survey responses to represent all IFMA member organizations. Given the response level to this survey, IFMA is 95 percent confident that the responses given can be generalized to all IFMA member organizations with a margin of error of approximately +/- 5 percent. For example, 92 percent of the respondents say they have emergency evacuation procedures in place. With a 5 percent margin of error for the sample of 454, the reader can be 95 percent certain that between 97 percent and 87 percent of facility managers work for firms that have an emergency evacuation procedure.