

HR Trends - Technology

Disaster drill for employees

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Posted On Tuesday, December 16, 2008 at 11:42:57 AM

In the wake of the recent terror attacks, corporates are going all out to prepare the staff for a possible disaster at the workplace.

First it was 9/11 and now it's 26/11. The recent terror attacks in Mumbai have proved that no place is safe to be. In such a scenario, how secure is the place where you work? Many firms are going all out to upgrade their security measures, thereby, preparing their staff for a possible emergency situation at the workplace.

“Corporates have always subconsciously been aware of them being potential targets. I think the recent terror attacks have made them sit up and be more active towards securing their complexes,” says Ankush Khanna, group director, Hawk Security, a Delhi based electronic security solutions provider.

The need of the hour

Disaster management is certainly the need of the hour, but unfortunately it has not been given adequate thought till now. “We realise what a disaster is only after WE have been hit by it, and unfortunately the lessons learnt post a disaster is short lived,” opines Meena Nair, vice president, India Insure, Mumbai based insurance firm. “Be it a flood, tsunami, earthquake or terrorism, we need to respond to it proactively,” she adds.

Though large firms do have an emergency plan, not many have an actual tried and tested disaster management plan to ensure the safety of their employees. However, they have now risen up to the impending situation at hand and are going all out to make sure their employees are tuned to face any kind of emergency situation.

“Corporates are now demanding fool proof security and are also actively coordinating with government agencies to make sure they are ready for any kind of disaster,” adds Khanna.

Preparing for the worse

Judhajit Das, chief-HR, ICICI Prudential Life notes, "In the wake of increasing security threats and global

terrorism, corporates are exploring options to tighten security measures.” Citing his firm’s example, he says, “We conduct workshops on self defense and disaster management as well as regular fire drills to enable our employees to handle crisis situations better.”

Commenting on the beefing up of security at Inorbit Malls, Manoj Agarwal, AVP-Operations, Inorbit Mall notes, “As a part of our upgraded security measures, we have enhanced the checks in our traffic management and pedestrian management system, revisited our physical security manning, increased ERT (Emergency Response Team) personnel and inducted additional sniffer dogs to improve surveillance in the premises. Additional security personnel including armed guards have been deployed at entry points to enhance checks and physical frisking.”

The recent terror attacks at the Taj and Oberoi have undoubtedly proved that hotels need to ramp up their security measures to ensure the safety of their staff as well as the guests. “We have started conducting mock evacuation drills. We have also formed a team of floor marshals who will guide the employees in evacuation. Special security awareness classes are being conducted for the employees on Disaster Management Plan. We have formed a team of our own employees from various departments for patrolling in the premises,” avers Salil Desai, director-HR, Leela Kempinski.

Whatever the route, the staff should be trained to keep their eyes open, what to look out for, handling the latest security technology, knowing their property plan well, etc. And instead of going in total panic, calling up friends and family members, they should be prepared to act calmly in case of a disaster.