CODEWAVES: What to do during an EAP implementation

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Here is the pressing question: What do you do when the incident occurs?

In a recent article, we discussed the concepts of situational awareness, decision-making and the OODA Loop. That article addressed the decision-making process in general terms and spoke to "how to think" instead of "what to think." It was, by design, hypothetical and addressed understanding the methodology of the decision-making process.

The reality is that emerging FS/EAP directors and Deputy FS/EAP directors (or "Building Staff Formerly Known as FSDs") who are experiencing FDNY's somewhat daunting Local Law #26 On-site Inspection are more concerned with the "here and now," rather than the "erudite and theoretical." When faced with the on-site inspector, who will spend at least two hours in the building, an aspirant cares little about the OODA Loop: he or she wants to pass the test, a test which does not permit references. How can one remember all of the various systems, methods, processes and procedures required?

CODEWAVES

The use of acronyms has long been a useful method for developing "mental checklists." CODEWAVES is an acronym developed which addresses each of the pertinent building systems, functions and considerations which must be addressed during EAP implementation, whether the implementation is an evacuation, in-building relocation, or shelter-in-place. It provides the FS/EAP director (the building's "Incident Commander" in the absence of first responding officials) with a checklist from which to refer during the very initial moments of a crisis. CODEWAVES addresses each of the systems which must be assessed during EAP implementation. Here is the checklist and some of the decision-making considerations for each system/category:

C - Communications. Have you called 911? Contacted the building staff? Notified the tenants? Critical operations staff? Corporate office? Other agencies and/or vendors?

O - Other Building Systems. Fuel oil? Pumps and piping? Steam? Gas? Ansul systems? Water? Electrical?

D - Doors (interior). Close and secure? Ensure open and accessible? Manually operate fail safe release?

E - Elevators. Recall and standby to assist? Recall and close doors and lock? Stop in place? Place selected elevators in independent operation?

W - Windows (for those buildings which have windows that open). Close and secure?

A - Assistance and Accountability. Procedures for addressing building occupants who require assistance? Staff accountability? Tenant accountability? Assembly area activation?

V - Ventilation Systems. Assess? Shut down HVAC? Close dampers? Remind tenants to shut down supplemental air?

E - Entrances and Exits. Close and secure? Ensure open for evacuation? Determine exits to use/not use?

S - Stairwells. Ensure open and accessible? Determine stairwells to use/not use?

While CODEWAVES is a useful tool, it is not intended to stipulate the order in which the tasks associated with each protocol are completed. The FS/EAP director, as he/she manages the incident, will make that determination. It has been created purely to ensure that all pertinent building systems are considered in the decision-making process during those very important initial moments of an incident.

To download a one-page template for CODEWAVES, please feel free to visit www.remluinc.com.

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