



## **Have a plan of action in order to control chaos during an emergency**

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Do you have a plan of action for emergencies? Do your tenants? Emergencies strike without warning and while planning is a good first step, the actual outcome is greatly dependent on the practice of a plan and sometimes good old fashioned common sense.

As a property owner, you need to build on this to prepare tenants to view what they have, as a foundation and go beyond.

If you haven't developed a detailed emergency plan, at the very least post an outline of what should be done and let everyone know where it is. This should contain information on where to shut-off utilities. If an evacuation from the site is ordered by authorities, not every item on your list may be possible, help tenants and employees prioritize and know how to react in an emergency.

### **Who Does What**

We all have a role to play during an emergency, some of us are better at it than others, so it is vital to know ahead of time who the person will be that will initiate your site's emergency response.

### **Know Your Region**

As mentioned different parts of the U.S. have different needs when it comes to responding to weather related emergencies. New Yorkers are not that familiar with what to do in the event of an earthquake as they are in their response to a hurricane or blizzard.

### **Hurricanes**

These violent storms which begin churning in the Caribbean are known to exist well in advance of landfall, in most cases, almost always hit their mark with plenty of warning to prepare for riding out or evacuating. Most retail outlets will be closed. A primary concern here would be following a contingency plan for the evacuation of the property, what to take, utility shut down procedures and looking ahead to the time of reopening, accessing damage and the ability to access the property safely.

### **Tornadoes**

These violent windstorms can appear suddenly often in the wake of warm, humid weather hitting in the afternoon or early evening, but have been known to strike at night as seen recently in Florida.

Again, think about the procedures to limit your liability and to keep people safe.

Tenants should not be encouraged to leave but instead seek shelter in a basement or an interior ground floor room such as a bathroom, closet or hallway. In all instances it is recommended to avoid seeking shelter in buildings or areas with wide-span roofs, such as atriums and interior plazas, as these designs do not have support in the middle and may collapse if struck by a tornado.

### **Earthquakes**

No one can reliably predict an earthquake, they really can happen at anytime and most residents living along active fault lines know they will experience this at least once in their lifetimes. There are

ways to make your retail property "quake safe" which will help to limit your liability.

## Floods

Floods can happen anywhere. Some are a direct result of large storms but others a result of storm surges such as what happens after a hurricane or large system that has passed by. The best way to prepare is to take precautions a head of time. If your property is in a flood-prone area, your knowledge of this is your first line of defense.

Reducing damage would include: protective sealants around ground level windows and doors. Also review drainage needs, make sure spouts are carried far enough away from the structure; look into a strong sump pump. To prepare, have a list of things that needs to be done, including: turning off basement furnaces and gas service, review safety procedures for turning off electrical service. Again, bringing in a specialist is time well spent to verse those responsible for keeping property and people safe in doing so the correct way.

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