What's Your Plan?

Why Organizations Should Invest in an Emergency Preparedness Solution

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The risk of disaster is always looming somewhere on the horizon. But whether or not we want to admit it, the reality is that disasters are not events that happen far away, in other places, and to other people. Emergencies happen every day – large and small, planned and unplanned – affecting not only the individuals but also the businesses, corporations, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and entire communities around us.

Businesses and organizations must be prepared for these events. Leaders and decision makers who fail to do so are essentially gambling with lives as well as the financial and operational fate of the organization.

Emergency preparedness solutions offer a real solution for organizations to plan for preparedness, response, and recovery.

Why an Emergency Preparedness Solution Makes Sense

Recent natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, have had a massive effect on businesses and communities. According to research company Aon, the last two years combined represent the costliest weather-related period in U.S. history, totaling over $650 billion. (Aon, Weather, Climate & Catastrophe Insight – 2018 Insight Report)

Also on the rise in recent years has been man-made disasters such as active shooters, workplace violence, terrorism, and cyberattacks. According to information from Ponemon Institute's 2018 Cost of a Data Breach study for IBM, the cost of the average data breach to a U.S. company is $7.91 million.

While both natural and man-made disasters as well as other emergencies can obviously be quite costly to corporations and other organizations, it's important to remember that the faster and more decisively you can respond to an emergency, the more you will be able to protect lives, mitigate the cost to property, and minimize financial loss and damage to brand reputation.

Situational awareness is central to faster and more decisive response, and that's where emergency preparedness solutions play a key role. An effective emergency preparedness solution allows organizations of all sizes to maintain awareness of actual or potential incidents, and to respond effectively and recover quickly.
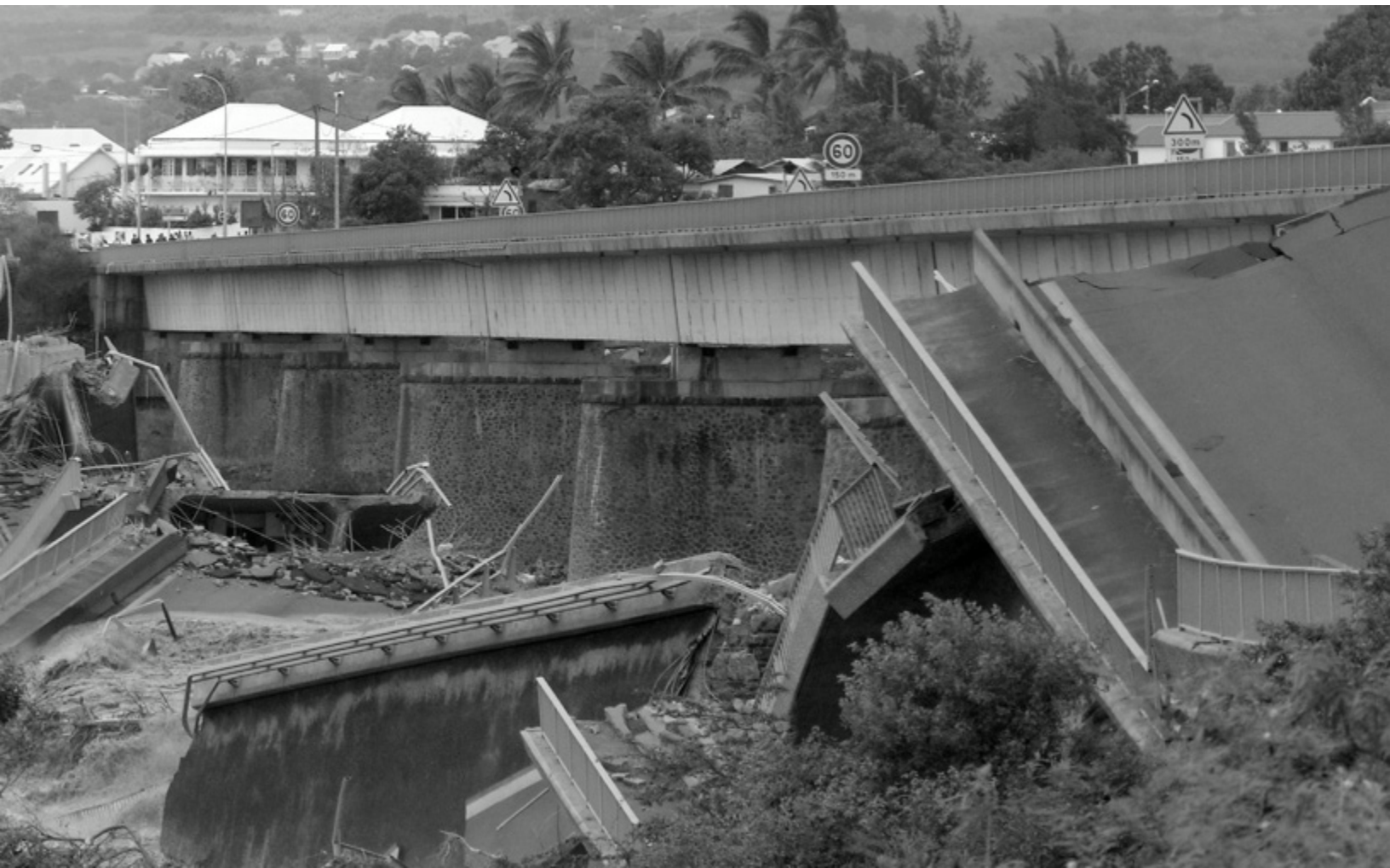
Features of an Effective Emergency Preparedness Solution

An emergency preparedness solution allows organizations or corporate enterprises to be more aware of situations that may have a damaging effect on operations. That awareness allows you to respond quickly and more effectively, to maintain operational continuity, and speed recovery.

Some of the benefits of an emergency preparedness solution include:

- A view of company and state-level information – a common operating picture – providing a full view of day-to-day incidences and occurrences as well as organization-wide summaries

- An accurate status and visibility of surrounding local government and businesses to better determine the impact to your organization and employees

- Awareness of incidents occurring in your geographic area, allowing advance preparation for emergencies

- The ability to quickly identify needs and allocate resources appropriately when an emergency occurs

- Standardization of communication efforts with employees, partners, and other stakeholders

When considering a emergency preparedness solution, look for these features and components to provide the cornerstone of an effective solution for your business or organization:

1 **Event Reporting** – Allows you to organize and keep track of all events or incidents within your organization on a day-to-day basis, and especially when emergencies occur. You should be able to track event details, status, priority, contact information, name and position of those reporting, and area maps, and also to generate comprehensive reports with all status information about an incident.

2 **Resource Requests / Task Assignments** – This feature gives you the ability to submit, assign, and track missions, resource and task requests during an incident. Key personnel can then dispatch resources needed to respond to a specific incident while maintaining a common operating picture. This should be able to match your current organizational process, not require you to adapt your process to meet the solution.

3 **Situation Reporting (SITREPs)** – Gives your organization situational awareness and a common operating picture, which allows strategic management decision capability for leaders, decision makers, and other stakeholders during an emergency. An effective emergency preparedness solution should also have the capability to generate daily reports and leadership briefings, so that published reports can be viewed and tracked regularly.

4 **Team Tracking / Status** – Leverage the ability to communicate immediately and effectively to inform and provide direction to employees and teams. An important component of an effective platform is to have integrated web and mobile applications that allow details and assignments to be communicated and managed in real time as situations unfold.

5 **Maps** – Visualize crisis information data and activities on a map to make better decisions during an emergency. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capabilities should include tools necessary to create a dynamic, geographically-based common operating picture through an intuitive interface. Maps should be able to display information from the system as well as external data feeds using standard GIS data formats.

6 **Dashboards** – Organize and summarize critical information quickly and efficiently, in an easily viewable format, so that information can be easily provided to the right people in the right positions at the right time – enabling a prompt, well organized, and effective response to an incident. The dashboard should provide information about current, active incidents, identify the type of emergency, and supply a means to communicate details to all relevant stakeholders.

7 **Data Exchange** – Exchange information, data, and resources with other organizations and stakeholders across public and private sectors, including Emergency Management, Police, and Fire Departments. This capability creates greater opportunities for collaboration in response to an emergency, leading to a more rapid response and recovery.

These are just some of the main components that would make your emergency preparedness solution effective. Ideally, the solution you use could be scaled and configured to meet your organization's unique needs and workflows.

The Bottom Line: Emergency Preparedness is a Sound Investment

Considering the enormous costs a disaster can inflict on a business or organization, it is a wise investment of your time to thoroughly assess current emergency action plans as well as the platform you currently use to prepare and respond to a disaster.

Is your current platform robust and flexible enough for your organization's needs? Are your processes and emergency management solution sufficient to protect your people, property, business continuity, and brand?

A disaster or other emergency can inflict massive costs to your organization including business downtime, health and safety of employees, as well as damage to property and other assets. Not only that, but how you respond to an emergency can have a serious effect – positive or negative – on your brand reputation.

What would a disaster cost your company or organization? For some companies – and there are many examples – it has taken years to rebound from the impact of a disaster, primarily due to a poor response.

Preparedness, response, and recovery can be greatly aided and enhanced by using a centralized platform that provides your organization a real-time view or common operating picture of an emergency and helps you achieve the situational awareness needed to assess risks, minimize impacts, and manage response to safeguard employees and maintain business continuity.

An added benefit is that a emergency preparedness solution can also be used on a day-to-day basis to record all types of various events, incidents, and activities.

An emergency preparedness solution is a sound investment in your organization's future, protecting your people, property, facilities, operation, and brand from catastrophic results in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

Juvare Works With Businesses and Organizations to Help Them Prepare, Connect, and Respond – Faster

At Juvare, our mission is to strengthen and optimize information sharing to empower preparedness and response professionals to protect people, property, and brands.

Over 500 corporations, healthcare facilities, higher education institutions, and government agencies rely on Juvare solutions every day to provide situational awareness and improve communications as well as information management before, during, and after all types of critical events.

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juvare.com | info@juvare.com | 866.200.0165

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